



B.C. Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association

MEMBER UPDATE

ReFresh

May 11, 2022



This week...

Try a New Vegetable Challenge!

Most of us need to eat more vegetables. It's that simple. Vegetables are critical to our health, and there is a long list of reasons why. Vegetables:

- Fight inflammation because they are rich in antioxidants and phytochemicals
- Improve blood pressure by providing potassium-rich foods and lots of fibre
- Increase our fibre intake which is important to our heart health and digestion, and mitigates the risk of weight gain and developing diabetes
- Help your eyes due to the presence of lutein and zeaxanthin that help reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Improve your skin, keeping it elastic and hydrated with lycopene
- Benefit our blood sugar levels due to the high fibre, low calorie content

- Help to reduce the risk of certain types of cancer – particularly through cruciferous vegetables (brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage)
- Keep our brains young as the antioxidants and folate deliver key nutrients for our brains and keep inflammation low
- Improve immunity due to the high levels of Vitamin C

Variety is key: experts recommend eating a varied diet of vegetables to maximize the nutrient potential.

Which brings me to the point of my article - ***When was the last time you tried a new vegetable?***

We are fortunate to live in a province that is home to a variety of cultures that have introduced many different types of foods, including vegetables! I appreciate that those of us in the Lower Mainland and even Vancouver Island will have better access to different options, but check out your local grocery or farmers market this spring and summer, and pick out a vegetable you have not tried before!

Try these:

Fiddleheads

These are the new sprouts of baby ferns, found in our own BC rainforests. This is the time of year you can head into the woods and pick your own. Look for a tight coil and only an inch or two of stem beyond the coil. Choose small, firm, brightly coloured fiddleheads with no signs of softness or yellowing.

Fiddleheads can be roasted, grilled, boiled, or sautéed (in butter and garlic they are delish!). Always boil fiddleheads in fresh water for at least 10 minutes before any use.

Kohlrabi

Kohlrabi – also called German turnip – is a variety of wild cabbage and is full of anti-cancer properties. It is a cruciferous vegetable, in the same family as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, brussels sprouts, collard greens, savoy cabbage, and gai lan. It can be eaten raw or cooked. Look for small, smooth bulbs that may be green, white, or purple with blue green leaves.

Kohlrabi has a mild turnip flavour with crunchy texture and colour of cabbage. The leaves are also edible and taste like spinach.

Chayote

Chayote is also called vegetable pear, mirliton, or chocho. It is part of the gourd family and is grown for its edible fruits. The fruits are boiled, baked, or sautéed and taste similar to cucumber or zucchini.

Choy Sum

Choy sum is a leafy green member of the diverse Chinese cabbage group. Choy sum – while technically a Chinese cabbage – does not form heads, but instead forms bunches of long, thick stalks. Look for bright, vibrant greens without obvious yellowing or damaged sections; smaller stalks are generally milder and more tender. You can eat the flowers within the stalks and leaves; however, the more flowers there are, the more likely the choy sum will be bitter.

Jicama

Jicama is a root vegetable with thick skin that looks like a light brown beet. It's white inside and is crisp and slightly sweet like an apple. It looks and feels like a raw potato, but it has fewer carbs and is low in sugar. It is delicious simply raw: just peel and slice!

Wing Beans

The wing bean is a tropical legume plant native to New Guinea, also known as dragon bean, goa bean, and four angled bean. The beans have four ruffle-edged wings running lengthwise down the pods, and the plant grows as a vine, reaching more than 9 feet. Every part of the plant is edible: the beans, the leaves (cooked like spinach), the seeds (dried like flour), and the roots (which are similar to potatoes).

This legume has a high protein content, it provides 20% protein!

Seaweed

Another vegetable native to our province that has provided a highly nutritious food source to Indigenous people for thousands of years is seaweed. There are many ways to serve seaweed: it can be added to soups, dried and toasted, and mixed with rice. Seaweed is rich in protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C and B vitamins, and is a good source of iron and protein. Half a cup of fresh seaweed contains more than half of your daily nutrient needs for vitamin A and vitamin C.

Daily Servings

The Canada Food Guide suggests that half of your plate should contain fruits and vegetables. Adults should eat upwards of 8 – 10 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Most studies note the greatest health benefits occur when people eat 3–4 vegetable servings per day; you can fulfill the remaining servings with fruit. One serving equals:

US and Canada

Raw vegetables (excluding leafy vegetables)	1/2 cup (125 ml)
Raw leafy vegetables	1 cup (250 ml)
Cooked vegetables	1/2 cup (125 ml)
100% vegetable juice	1/2 cup (125 ml)

Vegetables are a versatile food that can be steamed, roasted, stir-fried, and more. They're an essential part of cuisines all around the world, served as either a main dish or a side dish in countless recipes.

[Click here](#) to explore 17 ways to eat more vegetables.

[Here is a PDF chart](#) that shows the best place to store particular types of veggies – who knew?

Try out a new vegetable this week, or try a different version of a favourite – purple carrots or yams, or Taiwanese cabbage (*so sweet and crunchy*). Remember: variety is the key to your vegetable intake, for a healthier you!



If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.

Sources

Diversivore | [How to Find, Choose, and Use Choy Sum](#)

EatingWell | [10 Health Benefits of Eating Vegetables, According to a Dietitian](#)

First Nations Health Authority | [First Nations Traditional Foods Fact Sheet](#)

Half Your Plate | [Veggies From A - Z](#)

Healthline | [How Many Servings of Vegetables Should You Eat per Day?](#)

Gardening Know How | [Asian Winged Beans](#)

WebMD | [Jicama](#)

WebMD | [Health Benefits of Vegetables](#)