
NE LESSON CODE GN-000-20

Let's Get Cooking: Vegetables

LESSON DESCRIPTION

This lesson includes a class discussion and a cooking video that features two recipe demonstrations - a broccoli recipe and a zucchini recipe. Participants will learn basic cooking and nutrition tips, as well as guidelines for choosing, storing, and using these vegetables.

OBJECTIVES

After attending this class participants will be able to state at least one vegetable tip or recipe from the video or discussion that they plan to try at home sometime in the next two weeks.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Television
- VCR/DVD
- DVD: *Let's Get Cooking*, stock no. DV0037 English and Spanish. Produced by Texas Department of State Health Services; 11:50 minutes.
- *Broccoli-Garlic Recipe Card*, stock no. 13-06-12405, English/Spanish
- *Summer Squash Medley Recipe Cards*, English/Spanish for all participants in the class
- *Let's Get Cooking Magnets*, stock no. 13-06-12371, English/Spanish
- *Let's Get Cooking Posters*, stock no. 13-06-12413, English/Spanish.
- Samples of broccoli and various summer squash (Look for especially good quality produce that's on sale and/or from a local grocery store or farmer's market. You may also want to choose some poor quality examples to show participants what to avoid; you can even purchase some a week earlier and let it deteriorate a bit).
- Iron Skillet or other cast iron cookware (optional)

Note About New Lesson Survey Forms:

The first few times a new lesson is presented, staff and participants need to complete the survey forms attached at the end of this lesson. Note that the *Staff Survey Form* is different from the *Participant Survey Form*. Please send in 30 completed *Participant Surveys*. Mail all completed surveys to:

Delores Preece
Texas Department of State Health Services
Nutrition Services Section
1100 W. 49th St
Austin, TX 78756

TEACHING PREPARATION

- Before the class starts, set out samples of broccoli, summer squash, and an iron skillet or other cast iron cookware (cast iron cookware is optional).
- Tape or mount the nutrient data charts for 1 cup raw broccoli and 1 cup raw summer squash onto card stock or poster board or some other display surface (charts are included with lesson on page 8). Have these two charts ready to display during the lesson.
- Option: Prepare one of the recipes from the video and have forks, napkins and small plates or condiment cups available so that participants can taste one of the recipes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/ INTERNET RESOURCES

- 1) The following web page has an extensive table that lists the nutrient data for more than 100 fruits and vegetables: http://www.dole5aday.com/pdf_global/FVNutritionFactsChart2004COL.pdf
- 2) The following website offers brief summaries related to the various health benefits of vegetables: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fruits.html>
- 3) The following websites reviews the nutritional benefits of using cast iron cookware:
<http://whatscookingamerica.net/Information/CastIronPans.htm>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seasoning_\(cast_iron\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seasoning_(cast_iron))
- 4) The following websites discuss how to season, clean, and restore cast iron cookware:
<http://extension.osu.edu/~news/story.php?id=2724>
<http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/2378.html>

ICEBREAKER

Welcome everyone to the class. Then ask the parents in the class to tell:

- one of their favorite vegetables that they prepare at home for their family, and
- the last time they served it (yesterday, last week, last month, last year?)

Also, ask the children in the class to name their favorite vegetable.

CLASS AND VIDEO INTRODUCTION

Say something like:

- **Today's class is one of our *Let's Get Cooking* lessons, and it's all about cooking vegetables. The most recent U.S. Dietary Guidelines say we should eat about 5 servings of vegetables each day (that's in addition to 4 servings of fruit). But many of us don't reach that goal on a regular basis. Hopefully today's class will inspire you to cook and eat *more* vegetables *more* often.**
- **The video we are going to watch will show us how to cook two vegetable recipes:**
 - 1) **Broccoli with Garlic, and**
 - 2) **Summer Squash Medley**

Handout copies of the two recipe cards.

- **After the video we will talk more about these vegetables. When you leave today, you should have some new ideas to help you and your family eat more vegetables.**
- Show the video.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Discuss nutritional aspects of vegetables:

- Say something like: **Why are the experts always telling us to eat more vegetables? or Why are vegetables so good for us?** Prompt some of the following responses; provide additional details if needed:
 - Vegetables are very low in calories (*but not all vegetable recipes are low in calories!*).
 - Some vegetables are high in vitamin A (carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, broccoli).
 - Some vegetables are high in vitamin C (sweet bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts).
 - Some vegetables are high in folic acid (broccoli, leafy greens like spinach and collards).
 - Most vegetables are a good source fiber.
 - Eating lots of vegetables is associated with lower rates of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer.
 - Eating lots of vegetables helps prevent diseases that cause vision loss (not only because of vitamin A, but also because of other components called antioxidants that are present in various vegetables).
- **So from a nutritional standpoint, vegetables get a high score. Unfortunately, many people like to add lots of extra fat and calories to vegetables. All too often, we cover them with things like cream sauces, heavy salad dressings, butter, and cheese sauce. Or we deep-fry them like when we make french fries, fried zucchini, or stuffed and fried peppers. The good news is that there healthier ways to cook vegetables, just like we saw in the video.**

- **Let's talk specifically about broccoli. Broccoli is one of the star vegetables when it comes to nutrition. Who can list some reasons why broccoli is so great?** Wait for input; prompt as needed. Then display table tent with nutrient information for ½ cup broccoli and review/confirm participant's responses.
 - it's very low in calories and fat
 - it's high in vitamins (especially vitamin C and folic acid)
 - it provides some calcium
 - it's a cruciferous vegetable, which means it's related to the cabbage family. (Cruciferous vegetables have certain properties that may be associated with lower rates of certain types of cancer. Other cruciferous vegetables include bok choy, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and cabbage.)
- Then say something like: **When you cook broccoli and other vegetables, heat and water can destroy some of vitamins. So it's best to avoid cooking them in lots of water for a long time. Steaming broccoli or sautéing it in just a little bit of oil are both good choices.**
- **Can anyone explain what to look for when choosing broccoli? What are the signs of good quality broccoli?** Prompt/confirm the following responses, using the sample(s) of broccoli. Teaching tip: pass around samples of both good and poor quality broccoli.
 - the heads (or florets) should be bright green, or they may have a blue or violet color. Florets that are dark green, purplish, or bluish green contain more vitamin A and vitamin C than paler or yellowing ones.
 - the florets should have small, fine and tight buds.
 - the stalks should be very firm and crisp, not soft and rubbery.
- **Store unwashed broccoli in an open plastic bag in a crisper drawer in the refrigerator. It's best to use it within a day or two, but in some cases, it will last up to about four days after you buy it.**
- **And what about the stems? How many of you peel and eat the stems of the broccoli?** Wait for responses. **As the video mentioned, you can peel, slice, and cook the larger stems along with the rest of the broccoli. Then stems have lots of fiber and some people think they're the best part of the broccoli.** Teaching tip: Cut and peel stems and allow participants to try them.
- Ask participants to share some of their own favorite ways to cook and use broccoli. Write ideas down on a flipchart or dry erase board. When participants mention ideas that include cream soups, cheese sauces, etc., remind them to choose low-fat ingredients and encourage them to try lower-fat cooking methods.
- Then say something like: **Now let's talk about squash. There are many different types of squash, and they're typically divided into two groups: summer squash and winter squash. What types of squash are you familiar with?** Refer to the boxes below to prompt responses and explain the difference between summer squash and winter squash. Show any samples of summer squash that you have as participants mention different types of squash.

Summer Squash – Summer squash are more tender than winter squash (they're harvested before the rind hardens and the fruit matures). The skins are edible and provide extra fiber and vitamins. Examples include:

- Zucchini
- Yellow Crookneck
- Yellow Straightneck
- Scallop
- Pattypan
- Chayote
- Tatum

Winter Squash - Winter squash have hard thick inedible skins or rinds, and large, tough seeds. Typically you cook these squash with the peel on and then scoop out the cooked flesh. Examples of winter squash include:

- Acorn Squash
- Spaghetti Squash
- Turban Squash
- Butternut Squash
- Banana Squash
- Hubbard Squash
- Pumpkin

- Comment on summer squash: **Summer squash used to be available mostly during the summer months. But these days, you can usually buy varieties of summer squash all year round. But as with any type of vegetable, if you buy them in season, they will usually taste better and cost less.**
- **Can anyone tell me what to look for when choosing summer squash? What are the signs of good quality summer squash?** Prompt/confirm the following responses, using the sample(s) of summer squash. Teaching tip: pass samples of both good quality and poor quality squash among participants.
 - the squash should be firm and fairly heavy for their size, otherwise they may be dry and cottony inside.
 - squash should have bright, glossy exteriors. Avoid buying squash that have nicks or bruises or pitted areas on their skins and ones that have soft spots.
- **To store summer squash, put it in plastic bags and store in the refrigerator. Fresh summer squash should keep for up to a week. Thicker-shinned varieties such as chayote will stay fresh for two weeks or longer.**
- **Compared to broccoli, squash is not packed with the same levels of nutrients, but it does provide some fiber, folic acid and vitamin C.** Show nutrient data for 1 cup raw summer squash. Highlight nutrients like fiber, vitamin C, and calories.

- Then say something like: **Summer squash is very versatile in terms of recipes. What are some healthy ideas for using summer squash?** Encourage participants to share some of their own favorite healthy ideas for cooking and using different types of summer squash. Write ideas down on a flipchart or dry erase board. Possible examples may include:
 - Use summer squash in spaghetti sauce
 - Use it in lasagna and other casserole type dishes
 - Slice it and using it raw for dipping or in salads
 - Slice it and use it as a pizza topping
 - Use shredded zucchini in meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, or muffins.
 - Add squash to soup or stews
 - Grill it (it's great on kabobs along with other vegetables)
- Then say something like: **Most varieties of summer squash have a similar flavor and texture so you can use them interchangeably in recipes. The video featured zucchini, but yellow squash or combination of yellow squash and zucchini should work just as well.**
- **The video mentioned an important point that applies to all vegetables, which was about washing them before you cook or eat them. Just rub vegetables briskly with your hands under clean, running water. Also be sure to keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing them.**
- Then say something like: **Lastly, let's talk about using a cast iron skillet. How does cooking in cast iron add to the nutritional value of a recipe?** Correct answer: cooking in a cast-iron skillet increases the iron content of foods.
- Confirm and elaborate: **Right. Food actually picks up a little iron from the skillet when it's cooked in cast iron, and it's iron that our bodies can use. But the amount of absorbed iron depends on what you're cooking. Acidic foods tend to take up more iron, so that's why adding the lime juice to the zucchini dish in the video increased the iron in the recipe. In general, cooking in cast-iron can add up to 3 milligrams of iron for every 3-ounce serving of food (more for some foods, less for others). That's pretty good considering most of us need 18 milligrams of iron each day.**
- Show example of cast iron cookware if you have it available. **As they mentioned in the video, it is important to season the pan before you use it the first time in order to prevent food from sticking and prevent rusting. To season, wipe the entire pan with oil - including the handle - and then put it in a 300-degree oven for about an hour. When you are done with the skillet, wash it with water and a small amount of soap or diluted soap. Gently clean it with a sponge, but don't scour it with a hard brush. After thoroughly rinsing the soap off, dry it thoroughly and completely. Then recoat the pan with a little oil.** (Optional: demonstrate how you would recoat the skillet with oil after you wash and dry it. See suggested websites listed on page 2 of this lesson for further information.)

- **If you don't own a cast iron skillet or pot, it's something to think about. Professional chefs love cast iron, and if it's seasoned properly, it will have a really great non-stick surface. If you have used cast iron before and the food stuck to the pan, it is because it was not seasoned correctly. Cast-iron skillets are inexpensive, and you can often find them at garage sales second-hand stores. There is lots of information on the Internet and at libraries about how to restore old cast iron that has become rusted, and how to care for cast iron cookware.**
- Ask to see which participants use a cast-iron pot or skillet at home. Ask those participants to talk about the types of foods they cook in it and offer any tips they have learned about using cast iron.

WRAP-UP / EVALUATION

Summarize the class by saying something like, **I hope today's class has motivated you to cook more vegetables. Before we leave, I would like for you to share at least one tip or recipe from today's video or discussion that you plan to try at home sometime in the next two weeks.**

Possible answers:

- Try using cast-iron cookware
- Try one of the recipes from the video.
- Start buying and trying new and different vegetables.
- Try grilling vegetables
- Try adding vegetables to pizza etc.

As participants share the tip they learned or write it down on the back of one of their recipe cards, then give them a *Let's Get Cooking Magnet*.

Thank participants for coming to the class.

Broccoli (raw)

1 cup, chopped

Amounts Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 31	-
Total Fat 0.3g	0%
Dietary Fiber 2.4g	10%
Vitamin A 567 IU	11%
Vitamin C 81mg	135%
Folate 57mg	14%
Calcium 43mg	4%
Iron 0.7mg	4%

Summer Squash
(raw, all varieties)
1 cup, chopped

Amounts Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 18	-
Total Fat 0.2g	0%
Dietary Fiber 1.2g	5%
Vitamin A 226 IU	6%
Vitamin C 19mg	32%
Folate 33mg	8%
Calcium 17mg	2%
Iron 0.4mg	2%

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Staff Survey

LA# _____

Date _____

1. Was the lesson easy to read and follow?

Yes No

2. Did you like the video included with this lesson?

Yes No

3. Did you like the activity included with this lesson?

Yes No

4. What did you like best about this class?

5. What would make the class better?

6. How well did participants respond to the class? Participation was (check one)

Good Negative Indifferent

7. Do you plan to use this lesson again?

Yes No

8. Comments: _____

Thank you for your comments!

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Participant Survey

LA# _____

Date _____

1. My ethnic group is:

___ White

___ Asian

___ Hispanic

___ Native American

___ African American

___ Other

2. How much did you like this class?

A lot b

A little

Not at all

3. What change do you plan to make to your cooking habits?

4. What is the most useful thing you learned from the class today?

5. What would make this class better for you?

6. Comments:

Thank you for your comments!