## November - Lesson Plan Grades 2-3

# VARY YOUR VEGGIES



Begin each nutrition education lesson with a short physical activity break from the card set provided by IDPH. Have fun and get active with your students!

### **Objectives**

Learn the special characteristics of pumpkins and sweet potatoes.

Learn that a sweet potato can be eaten in similar ways to a white potato.

### **Supplies Needed**

November
Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> & **Act**bingo card

Large sweet potato

Large white potato

"Grow a Sweet Potato Vine" worksheet

## **Tasting Opportunities**

Featured vegetables: Pumpkin Sweet potato

Pumpkin and a sweet potato snacks for tasting (Optional)

### **Background**

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines suggest that you "Vary Your Veggies". Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, garbanzo beans, split peas and lentils. The featured vegetables on this month's bingo card help kids meet the recommendation of eating more orange veggies.

Pumpkin: The pumpkin is native to warmer parts of the United States and is an economically important member of the gourd family. Pumpkins come in many varieties, with such names as Spooktacular, Funny Face, Jumpin' Jack, Munchkin, and Sweetie Pie. They also range in sizes from Jack-be-Little miniatures to giant Mammoth Golds that weigh in at hundreds of pounds. The current world record holder topped the scales at 1,131 pounds! The seeds from a carved jack-o'-lantern make a great snack and addition to salads, soups and casseroles. If you are interested in cooking fresh pumpkins, look for those labeled as "pie pumpkins" or "sweet pumpkins".

**Sweet potato:** Sweet potatoes are a Native American plant that was the main source of nourishment for early homesteaders and for soldiers during the Revolutionary War. These tuberous roots are among the most nutritious foods in the vegetable kingdom. They are packed with calcium, potassium, and vitamins A and C. This is why one colonial physician called them the "vegetable indispensable." Sweet potatoes are often confused with yams, but yams are large, starchy roots grown in Africa and Asia. Yams can grow up to 100 pounds and are not common in American supermarkets. Nutritionally, sweet potatoes greatly outweigh yams. Because of the common use of the term "yam," it is acceptable to use this term when referring to sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes contain an enzyme that converts most of its starches into sugars as the potato matures. This sweetness continues to increase during storage and when they are

cooked.

#### **Web Site Resources**

www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org www.choosemyplate.gov

### Do the Activity: Root for Sweet Potato!

Review the parts of a plant (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds). Roots anchor a plant in the ground and absorb water and minerals. A fruit is the part of a plant that contains and protects the seeds. The fruit can be big or small, hard or soft, but it must have seeds to qualify as a fruit.

What part of the plant is the pumpkin? *Fruit* What part of the plant is the sweet potato? *Root* 

"Root Root Root for the Sweet Potato!"
You can become part of the sweet potato fan club just by trying it and telling other people how good it is.

Review the various ways the children like eating white potatoes. Cut open the sweet potato to show the orange color inside. Can they eat the sweet potato prepared in the same ways? Yes, even fries can be made in a healthier way.

Think of other vegetables you eat and identify the part of the plant they come from.

Reference for teachers;

Roots: carrots, beets, radishes, parsnips, turnips

**Stems:** asparagus, celery, rhubarb, leeks and onions

Leaves: lettuce, spinach, parsley, cabbage

Flowers: broccoli, cauliflower

Fruit: tomatoes, pumpkins

Seeds: corn, beans, peas

#### Talk It Over:

Orange vegetables are especially good for you. Sweet potatoes are more nutritious than white potatoes. So join their fan club and root, root, root for sweet potatoes!

Pumpkins and sweet potatoes belong to what color group?





#### Yellow/orange

What are the different ways pumpkins and sweet potatoes are sold? *Fresh, canned* 

It is important to "Vary Your Veggies." You should try to eat more orange veggies like sweet potatoes and pumpkin.

## Apply:

Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> reminds you that it is easy to eat vegetables as snacks.

The featured vegetables on the November cards are pumpkins and sweet potatoes. Can you think of ways to eat pumpkin as a snack? Sweet potatoes?



Try one of the suggestions below for students to sample. They can then put an "X" through the bingo square of the vegetable(s) that they sampled.

What would you do (with adult help) to the featured November bingo card vegetables to get them ready to eat as a snack?

Pumpkin seeds – Wash. Bake. Eat. (How easy is that?) Sweet Potatoes – Wash. Cut. Bake. Eat. (How easy is that?)

This pumpkin pudding recipe could be prepared ahead or in class and stored in a cooler. Place a small amount in a paper cup for each child to have a taste.

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 (3.4 ounce) package instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk (2% or skim)
- 1 (15 ounce) can 100% pure pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

Beat pudding mix and evaporated milk according to package directions in large bowl; refrigerate for 5 minutes. Add pumpkin and pumpkin pie spice; mix well. Refrigerate for 10 minutes or until ready to serve.

On the back of the Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> & **Act** bingo card for each month, there is information for their parents and grandparents. Send the bingo card home and ask students to encourage their family to pick out a snack idea to try at home.





## **Extend the Activity**



Art, Music & PE

Using a variety of small gourds, students can use markers to create unique jack-o-lanterns. Using garbanzo beans, pinto beans, split peas and lentils, students make mosaic pictures.



Language Arts & Reading

Explore rhyming couplets in <u>The Runaway Pumpkin</u> by Kevin Lewis, Greenwillow Books, 1986. In this book, a child plants a pumpkin seeds and after watching it grow, carves it, and saves some seeds to plant in the spring. Challenge students to continue the story with a rhyming couple of their own.

How many words with three letters or more can you make using the letters from "sweet potato?"



Math

Take an average sized pumpkin and ask students to estimate how many seeds they think it might contain. Cut the pumpkin open and have the class help count the number of seeds inside to see who had the closest estimate.



Science & Health

Grow a sweet potato vine. In the classroom. For instructions, refer to the take-home activity sheet.



**Social Studies** 

Explore the history and origin of the sweet potato on this fun web site: <a href="www.sweetpotato.org">www.sweetpotato.org</a>. Click on Teachers & Kids/Fun & Games and then Yamster stories. Scroll down to the story titled "Yamster Visits the Sweet Potato Farm" and "Bringing Sweet Potatoes to Your Table".





## **VARY YOUR VEGGIES**

# Grow A Sweet Potato Vine

#### You will need:

adult supervisor, a sweet potato (some sweet potatoes have been treated to inhibit sprouting; look for one with little purple bumps on the skin or a few white roots showing), toothpicks, a quart-size glass or plastic jar with wide mouth and water.

Later you will need: a hanging pot and potting soil.

- 1. With the help of an adult, pierce the middle of sweet potato with 2 toothpicks, one on each side. (Make sure pointier end of potato faces down into the water.)
- 2. Place it in jar.
- **3.** Add lukewarm water until it covers half the sweet potato.

- Place jar in a warm, shady place, making sure to maintain water level.
- S. Change water about once a week. In about 2 weeks you should see roots. Two weeks later you should see tiny red sprouts.
- 6. Move plant to a bright window. Leaves will begin to grow. When the growth is 6" high, transplant to hanging pot.
- **7.** Fill pot with potting soil to an inch from the top. Plant sweet potato seedling in the center and gently pack soil around it. Keep plant in sunny spot and water every couple of days.







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