



# 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 why it is important to eat vegetables.

Learn what cucumbers and bell peppers look like.

Experience the taste of different colored bell peppers.

## Supplies Needed

January

Pick a **better snack**™ & **Act** bingo card

Green, yellow, and red peppers

Cucumber

Knife

1<sup>st</sup> Grade – “Vegetables to Color and Count” worksheet

## Tasting Opportunities

Featured vegetable:

Peppers

Cucumbers

## Background

Vegetables are a good source of vitamins A and C. The darker green and darker yellow vegetables are especially high in vitamin A. Vitamin A helps our eyes adjust to dim light, keeps our skin healthy and keeps the lining of our mouth, nose, throat and digestive tract healthy. Vitamin C helps heal cuts. Vegetables also are a good source of fiber which helps to keep food moving through our bodies.

The featured vegetables for January are bell peppers and cucumbers. Both of these vegetables are commonly used in tossed salads.

Bell peppers can be green, yellow, or red. They grow on a plant that looks almost like a shrub. Peppers need to be washed before using them, seeds need to be removed as they can be bitter-tasting.

The colors of the bell pepper are determined by the level of ripeness of the vegetable. Red bell peppers are green peppers that have ripened on the vine. They are milder and sweeter when compared to green bell peppers. The variety of bell pepper also influences the color and flavor.

Bell peppers should not be confused with spicy chili peppers or black pepper “the spice.” Pepper we use on the table comes from peppercorns that are ground up and come from a different plant.

Bell peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C. Red and yellow bell peppers have two times the amount of vitamin C compared to green peppers. Red peppers have nearly ten times more vitamin A than green and yellow bell peppers.

Cucumbers are a long green vegetable that grows on a crawling vine. One plant can grow eight or more cucumbers. Their skins are green and the flesh is white.

Cucumbers are crisp and cool when you bite into them. The temperature on the inside of the cucumber can be as much

as 20 degrees cooler than the air outside of the cucumber. Cucumbers were first grown in India and brought to Europe by Christopher Columbus. They arrived in North America in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

Cucumbers are low in calories and have small amounts of vitamins A and C.

### Web Site Resources

[www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack)  
[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)  
[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### Do the Activity: Kindergarten

Imagine being a plant. Take off your shoes, close your eyes, and “plant” your feet firmly on the ground. Let your toes “grab” the ground, and imagine they are sending roots deep into the soil in search of food and water. Feel that fuel moving up into your body. Is the sun shining on you? Let your arms reach up, and feel its life-giving warmth. Do you hear birds in the trees? Is it fun being a plant?

Let’s be a green pepper plant. You are shaped like a bush and have bell-shaped green fruit hanging down. Pretend your hands are the bell peppers hanging down. Here comes a big wind! It’s a good thing you are rooted to the ground. Bend and sway like a plant.

Now let’s become a cucumber vine. Sit down on the floor and twist your legs to look like a vine. Pretend that your hands and arms are the long green cucumbers that are growing. Stand up with your legs still twisted, and let your cucumber arms hang down.

Cucumbers and peppers grow for one season. The summer is over. Shriveled down to the ground. Your seed will grow new plants next year.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade:

Give each student a copy of the “Vegetables to Color and Count” worksheet. Have each student color the vegetables the color written in the box.

### Talk It Over: Kindergarten

Who has eaten a cucumber?

What color are cucumbers? (*green*)

How many ways can you eat a cucumber? (*For a snack,*

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

*salad, plain, cucumber sandwich.)*

What color did you color the pepper? (*red*)

What other colors can peppers be? (*green and yellow*)

How many vegetables are on the worksheet? (*nine*)

Have the students write a nine in the blank at the top of the worksheet.

What color are cucumbers? (*green*)

How many different colors did you use? (*six*)

**Apply:**

What are pickles made from? (*cucumbers*) *Cucumbers are made into pickles! Pickles often have had salt and sugar added to them so you need to be careful not to eat too many. You usually eat raw cucumbers with either a dip, sliced with a lettuce salad, or made into fancy sandwiches.*

Why are peppers and cucumbers good for you? *Peppers are rich in vitamin C that helps our cuts to heal. Cucumbers have lots of water and add flavor and crunch to our meals and snacks. Vegetables are a good source of vitamins to help keep our skin healthy and help our eyes adjust to dim light.*



**Tasting Opportunity**

Have students sample cut up pieces of peppers and cucumbers. Have the students close their eyes and taste samples of red and green peppers. Do they taste the same or different? (*The red pepper should taste sweeter.*) 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 January bingo card vegetables to get it ready to eat as a snack?

Peppers – **Wash. Seed. Eat. (How easy is that?)**

Cucumbers – **Wash. Cut. Eat. (How easy is that?)**

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

On the back of the Pick a **better** snack™ & **Act** bingo card for each month, there is information for parents and grandparents and grandparents. Have the students take the bingo card home and have their family pick out a snack idea to try at home.

**Extend the Activity**

Model jumping to a classic jump rope rhyme.

**Mabel, Mabel**

Mabel, Mabel, set the table,  
 Just as fast as you are able.  
 Don't forget the apples, bananas, celery, cucumber...  
*(Continue naming fruits and vegetables.)*  
 And don't forget to dip them in hot salsa!  
*(Jump as fast as possible.)*

*Adapted from Wee Sing and Play by Pamela Conn Beall and Susan Hagen Nipp*



**Art, Music  
& PE**



**Language Arts  
& Reading**

Read Pumpnickel Tickle and Mean Green Cheese by Nancy Patz, Watts, 1978.



**Math**

Create a graph indicating which pepper color the students liked the best when they sampled all three colors.



**Science &  
Health**

Place a copy of Dog Food by Saxton Freymann, Arthur A. Levine Books, 2002 in a learning center. Highlight the peppers and cucumbers on the end papers and pages of the book.



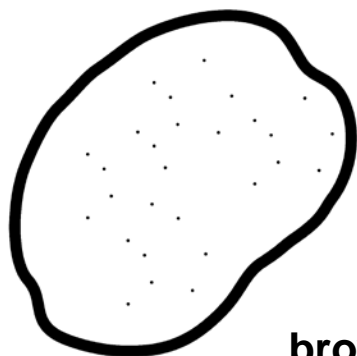
**Social Studies**

Encourage the students to go to the grocery store to locate peppers and cucumbers. Ask them to report back to the class if they noticed any unusually shaped peppers or cucumbers.

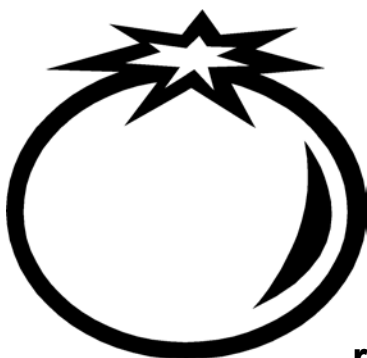
## Vegetables to Color and Count

Look at the vegetables below. Color the potato, tomato, bean pod, broccoli, eggplant, carrot, sweet potato, pepper, and onion the correct color.

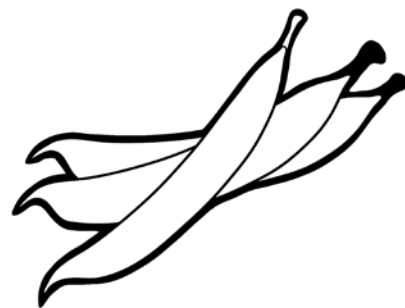
How many vegetables are on this page? \_\_\_\_\_



brown



red



green



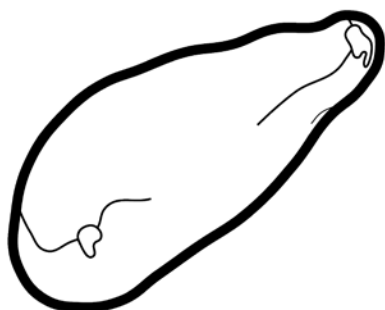
green



purple



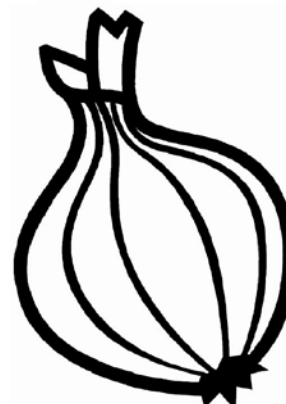
orange



orange



red



yellow