



Vitamin A

Most of the vitamin A we eat comes from fruits and vegetables. It is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables because they provide us with different vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytochemicals, and antioxidants that promote good health and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as cancer.

Why do we need vitamin A?

Vitamin A is important because it helps us see in the dark (prevents night blindness), fight infections, and makes our skin healthy. Not getting enough vitamin A can cause night blindness, dry rough skin, and an increased risk of infections.

How can we get enough vitamin A?

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables that contain vitamin A and dairy products that are fortified with vitamin A are the best ways to make sure you are getting the recommended amount of vitamin A. Healthy individuals who eat a balanced diet rarely need to take a vitamin A supplement because vitamin A is a fat soluble vitamin that is easily stored in our body. Try to eat 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cup of vegetables each day. Eat at least one good source of a vitamin A-rich food each day. (See the list below.)

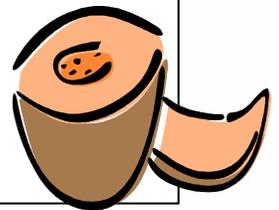
Best Sources of Vitamin A

Sweet Potatoes
Carrots
Pumpkin
Squash
Red Bell Peppers



Good Sources of Vitamin A

Cantaloupe
Apricots
Mango
Nectarines
Peaches
Papaya
Broccoli
Eggs
Avocado



Know how. Know **now.**

Daily Vitamin A Needs

Children, 1-3 years	210 µg (or mcg)
Children, 4-8 years	275 µg (or mcg)
Males, 9-13 years	445 µg (or mcg)
Males, 14-18 years	630 µg (or mcg)
Males, 19+ years	625 µg (or mcg)
Females, 9-13 years	420 µg (or mcg)
Females, 14-18 years	485 µg (or mcg)
Females, 19+ years	500 µg (or mcg)
Pregnancy, 14-18 years	530 µg (or mcg)
Pregnancy, 19-50 years	550 µg (or mcg)
Breastfeeding, 14-18 years	885 µg (or mcg)
Breastfeeding, 19-50 years	900 µg (or mcg)

National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine 2007.

Too much of a good thing?

Large doses of a vitamin A supplement can cause major health problems including vomiting, bone and joint pain, dry scaly skin, and liver damage. Pregnant women should not take vitamin A supplements (in retinol form) because high doses during pregnancy can cause birth defects. **Do not take more than 3,000 µg (or mcg) of vitamin A in the form of retinol each day.**

Sweet Potato Pie

Makes 8 servings

2 cups baked and mashed sweet potato (about 2 medium sweet potatoes)

½ cup sugar

½ cup brown sugar, packed

½ cup evaporated skim milk

2 egg whites

2 teaspoons lemon juice

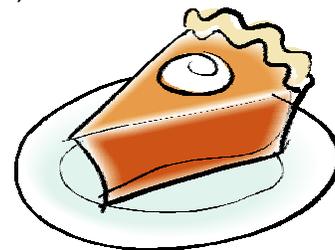
1 teaspoon vanilla

½ teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg

2 Tablespoons margarine, melted

1 deep dish pie shell



1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Wash and bake sweet potatoes 45-55 minutes or until done. Peel and mash potatoes. Measure 2 cups.
3. In a large bowl, use a hand-held mixer to slowly mix together sweet potatoes, sugar and brown sugar.
4. Add evaporated skim milk, egg whites, lemon juice, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and margarine. Mix well.
5. Pour mixture into a deep dish pie shell. Bake at 350°F for about 45 minutes or until done. The center of the pie should not be firm when removed from the oven. The pie will become firm once it cools.

Nutrition Information per Serving: 150 calories, 2.5 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 23 g sugar, 3 g protein, vitamin A 200%, vitamin C 15%, calcium 6%, iron 4%

Sources: University of Florida Extension <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>, *Facts about Vitamin A*

Revised 09/2007