



## Eat More Veggies for St. Patrick's Day and Beyond

Written by Kayla Colgrove ([kayla.colgrove@unl.edu](mailto:kayla.colgrove@unl.edu)), MS, RDN, ACSM-CPT, Extension Educator

Most Americans aged 2 and older do not eat the recommended amounts of vegetables. Vegetables provide vitamins and minerals, and most are low in calories and fat, so it is important to add more vegetables to your meals and snacks. It is important to vary your veggies and eat the colors of the rainbow for more nutrients.



### Clover Power Smoothie

$\frac{3}{8}$  cup 100% apple juice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh baby spinach  
2 cups frozen pineapple chunks, no sugar added  
1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt  
1 banana

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Gently wash spinach under cold running water. If spinach is marked "pre-washed" or "ready-to-eat", you can use without further washing.
2. Add apple juice and spinach leaves to blender. Blend first to help make it smooth and avoid leafy chunks.
3. Place the remaining ingredients in the blender.
4. Blend until smooth and serve.

#### Notes:

- Substitute low-fat or nonfat milk or 100% white grape juice for 100% apple juice. Adding milk instead of 100% fruit juice will lower the calories and sugar while adding extra calcium to help strengthen bones.
- Use kale instead of spinach. Kale does have a stronger flavor than spinach.
- Replace low-fat vanilla yogurt with nonfat vanilla yogurt or nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt.

### 5 Ways for Children to Eat More Veggies

- Dip raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, bell peppers or cauliflower in hummus, yogurt-based dip, or another low-fat dip. Raw vegetables are considered choking hazards for young children. Make raw vegetables safe by chopping finely or cutting into thin strips before serving them.
- Make mini pizzas by using whole-wheat English muffins as the crust and top with pizza sauce, low-fat mozzarella cheese, and chopped veggies.
- Create bugs on a log by choosing celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and top with peanut butter or another type of nut butter, and raisins or cranberries for the bugs.
- Let children help with food prep, based on their age and skills, and they are more likely to eat foods they normally do not like.

#### Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>
2. MyPlate, United States Department of Agriculture: <https://www.myplate.gov>