

Vegie Month 2024

Educator Resource

Putting Veg Under the Microscope this Vegie Month

This year Vegie Month encourages services to put veg under the microscope. The activities explore vegetables through a science lens. We hope to make this year's Vegie Month and the Big Vegie Crunch bigger and better than ever!

Vegie Month runs from Monday 4th to Friday 29th March, 2024.

What is Vegie Month?

Vegie Month has been running for seven years in Northern NSW and other areas within the state. It encourages services to intentionally plan vegetable focused nutrition learning experiences into daily programs. In addition to this year's science focus, other activities could be through songs, stories, art, discussions or gardening. The last week of Vegie Month coincides with Vegetable Week in primary schools. It includes the Big Vegie Crunch.

Vegie Month is designed to ignite curiosity and make vegetables fun for children. It creates interest in vegies without any pressure to eat them. It's important for children to have opportunities to explore vegetables without pressure to eat them. Research shows that this can increase the chance that a child will learn to like vegetables over time.

How Vegie Month works

You can do as little or as much as you like for Vegie Month at your service. This year's Vegie Month resources include many science themed ideas to get you started. We've also included a book list, family challenges to post on social media, a recipe eBook, and tablet and smart board activities. It's up to you what, and how much you do!

We do encourage you to let parents know about Vegie Month and the activities you are doing. Use social media to invite them to take part in the family challenges. Share your Vegie Month journey through daily diaries, your communication platforms and pictures. We want to spread the word that vegetables can be fun and interesting.



Why put veg under the microscope?

Children are inquisitive. They enjoy asking questions and discovering about the world around them. This year we encourage services to use science exploration with their nutrition learning experiences. There are many fun activities such as sprouting seeds or using magnifying glasses to look closely at the skin and flesh of familiar and unfamiliar vegetables. These activities help children become familiar with vegetables. This can lead to an increased willingness to try them, particularly for children who are hesitant to try new vegetables.

Research shows the greatest benefits are when services schedule vegetable learning experiences for at least four consecutive weeks. So, using science to explore vegetables during Vegie Month is a perfect match! This year's resources are filled with ideas. By the end of the month, you may have lots of vegie scientists! Repeat these ideas and activities beyond Vegie Month. The children will continue to grow their knowledge and skills.

We want to hear from you!

One of the Vegie Month resources is a weekly 'activity chart'. Many services use it to plan activities across the month. They often display it to share the information with parents too. It is also a great way for you to share with us what you did. We love to hear about the amazing activities you did with the children during Vegie Month. Many services go above and beyond!

We will email your service a Vegie Month weekly activity chart. Use this to record vegetable focused learning experiences across each week. At the end of Vegie Month, scan the activity charts and email them to us.

As always, at the end of Vegie Month we will ask you to complete a short survey. Providing feedback is optional, though we value it. Your feedback helps us to understand how Vegie Month influences nutrition learning experiences in services. It also helps us to make improvements.

Vegie Month educator session

Want to know more about Vegie Month?

Watch a short 10-minute professional development video as part of Vegie Month. We will explore the research and evidence behind the importance of eating vegetables. This year's Vegie Month resources and activities will also be discussed.

Share it with all educators at your service. It can be accessed at:
healthupnorth.info/vegiemonthvideo

It's Vegie Month! This is what we are up to... 

Room name: Week starting:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Science activities					
Art-based activities					
Books					
Food Preparation / Cooking					
Gardening					
Mealtime discussions					
Taste testing					
Other vegetable related experiences e.g. other games, bingo, puzzles					

Northern NSW Local Health District 

Click image to download

The Big Vegie Crunch

This year the Big Vegie Crunch is set for the 21st March at 10am. This is a time where NSW attempts to set a record for the greatest number of children CRUNCHING on vegetables simultaneously. However, your service can host its own CRUNCH every day or at any time in the last week of Vegie Month. You will join thousands of preschool and school-aged children crunching along.

Some ideas for running the Big Vegie Crunch at your service include:

- Ask parents to send in whole vegetables that can be cut up and shared with all children.
- Ask parents to send vegetables in their child's lunchbox to crunch on.
- Approach local grocers for vegetable donations.
- Crunch to a vegetable themed song.
- Use a countdown timer to count down to the CRUNCH.
- Download a sound meter and measure the loudness of your service's crunch.



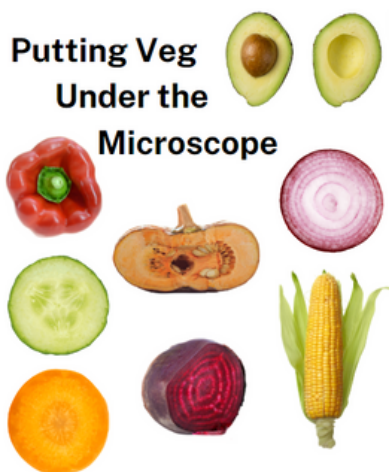
Crunch with us!

Stream our Big Vegie Crunch video from YouTube while you CRUNCH at your service. It includes a countdown, music and dancing vegetables! It is available from:

healthupnorth.info/crunchcountdown

Vegie Month Resource Suite

A number of other resources are available as part of the Vegie Month resource suite. You can download them at healthupnorth.info/vegiemonthresources or by clicking each of the images below.

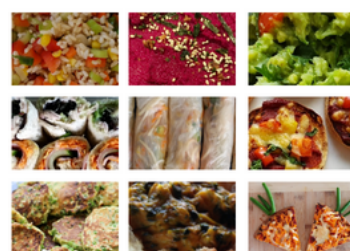


Northern NSW
Local Health District



I've tasted the rainbow

I KNOW		And what I thought about it was:	
NAME	LIKED IT	MY TASTE buds weren't ready for it	COMMENTS
Red	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Orange	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Yellow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Green	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Veg it up

Recipes for Vegie Month

Northern NSW Health Promotion



Family Challenges

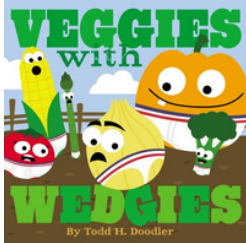
Here are some fun family challenges to include in your newsletters or on social media. They encourage families to be involved at home. Share the challenges from the [‘Kids Eat, Move & Play’ Facebook page](#). A new challenge will be posted every Monday during Vegie Month.



During Vegie Month we will also post other information on the Kids Eat, Move & Play Facebook page. It will be available for you to share across your services social media platforms.

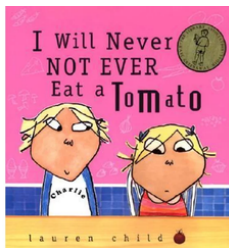
Veggie Month Book List

Use books with vegetable themes to engage children. Here are some favourite vegetable related stories and questions to prompt discussion. If available, stream them online if you can't find a hard copy.



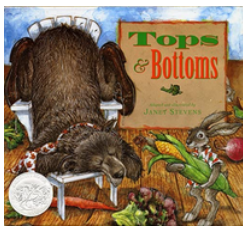
Veggies with Wedgies by Todd Doodler

What types of vegetables can you see on the front page? What coloured vegetables can you see throughout the story? What do you notice about the size and shape of the vegetables? Are they all the same?



I Will Never, Not Ever Eat a Tomato by Lauren Child

Talk together about Lola's feelings about her dinner at the beginning of the story and at the end. What made her change? Were there any surprises?



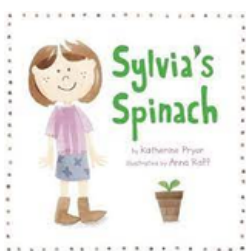
Tops & Bottoms by Janet Stevens

Did hare trick bear? What do you think the main message in this story is? Can you think of any vegetables you can eat the top off? How about the bottom?



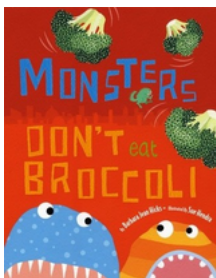
Carrot Soup by John Segal

Who has tried carrots before? Do you know how carrots grow? Do you eat the root or the leaf of carrots? Do they grow above the ground or under the ground?



Sylvias Spinach by Katherine Pryor

What is your favourite vegetable? What did you learn about growing vegetables from this book? What type of vegetables could we grow in our garden?



Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks

After looking at the title page, what do you think will happen in this book? Have you tried broccoli? What do monsters like to eat to grow big and stay strong? What types of foods do children eat to grow and stay strong?



What I do with Vegetable Glue by Susan Chandler

What do you think vegetable glue is (after looking at the front cover)? Why do you think vegetables are important? What are some of your favourite vegetables? Do you have any vegetables you'd like to try?



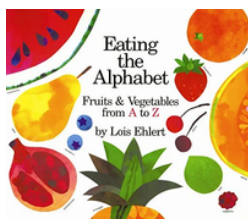
The Great Big Enormous Turnip by Alexei Tolstoy

Has anyone tasted a turnip before? Have you grown vegetables before? How many people did it take to harvest the turnip? What does this story tell us about teamwork?



Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

What type of tools do you use in the garden? What vegetables would you plant for your very own soup? Do you help grow vegetables at home / at preschool? What is your favourite part of growing vegetables - planting, watering, harvesting, or tasting?



Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert

What vegetables and fruits have you tasted before? Did you like them? Can we taste our own alphabet of vegetables and fruit? What does each vegetable feel like / smell like / look like? Can we draw it?



Rah, Rah Radishes! A Vegetable Chant by April Pulley Sayre

Looking at the front cover, what do you think the story will be about? Has anyone tried a radish before? What did it taste like? Did you like it? How many different types of vegetables can we count in this book? Are there any that you would like to try?



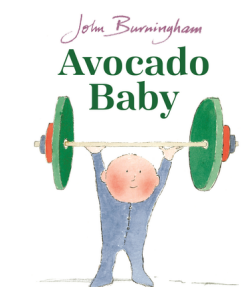
A Few Bites by Cybele Young

Who has tasted "Dinosaur Food" (Broccoli) before? How about "Orange Power Sticks" (Carrot)? Do you know of a vegetable that gives you superpowers?



Vegetables in Underwear by Jared Chapman

Looking at the front and back cover, what types of vegetables can you see? Can you name all of the colours? How many different types of vegetables can we count in this book? Are there any that you would like to try?



Avocado Baby by John Burningham

Is there anything unusual about this baby? Have you seen / tasted avocado before? What are some other foods avocado baby could try? What is your power food? Help children fill in the blanks: My power food is _____. It helps me to _____!

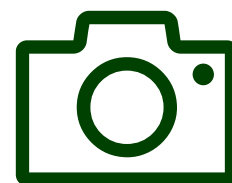
Tablet and Smart Board activities

Tablet and smart board devices can be used to engage children in vegetable focused activities. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Plant some sprouting vegetables and use the **'1 Second Everyday' App** to record their growth across the month. Your devices may also be used to record your Vegie Month activities to share with your community. For example, take pictures or short clips of children doing one of the science experiments.



Create a **vegetable themed photo booth** at your service. Include real vegetables and vegetable toys to get the children involved. There are many photo booth apps that you can download on tablets to create pictures to share.



Fruit and Veg Power E-Book, created by Healthy Kids Association
<https://healthy-kids.com.au/fruit-veg-power-es1/>



Vegetable Science Quiz, from Healthy Kids Association
<https://healthy-kids.com.au/early-stage-1/>

Interactive plant growing experience
<https://tvokids.com/preschool/games/get-growing>



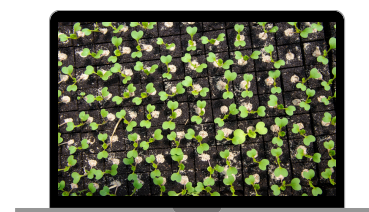
Watch YouTube clips from creators such as **Dirt Girl**
<https://www.youtube.com/@dirtgirlfromdirtgirlworld>. This page includes videos on gardening, composting, vegetables and many other environmental themes. These can be used to support learning and gardening activities. Dirt Girl also has a website
<https://www.dirtgirlworld.com/>.



Research one or more vegetables. Use a laptop / tablet / computer to research everything you can about a vegetable.

For example, what season does it grow in? Does it grow on a tree, on a vine, out of the ground or under the ground? What part of the world does it grow best in? How long does it take to grow? Is it smooth or bumpy?

Create some science hypotheses with children and test them out with the real vegetable. For example, will it sink or float when we put it in a bucket of water? What will it look like when we cut it?



Vegie Month is over... what next?

Keep the momentum rolling with all things vegie throughout 2024. Continue to use the ideas in this year's Putting Veg Under the Microscope resources and schedule activities regularly throughout the year.



Think outside the box...

Use vegetables such as corn and stems of broccoli or celery, for art. This gives children a chance to engage with vegetables hands on. Establish or keep a vegie garden, even if small. Use the garden produce to continue to encourage children to try different foods. Snow peas and cherry tomatoes are great options.

***Only one in 20 children eat
enough vegetables each day.***

Be a Veg Explorer

Use the Be a Veg Explorer resource. Have fun with the children as they learn about their five senses through exploration of vegetables. Download it here healthupnorth.info/vegiemonthresources.



Crunch Time

Encourage parents to pack a vegetable snack in lunchboxes each day. If you are a service that provides food, include lots of vegetable options across your menu. Consider introducing 'Crunch Time' at your service. This is a specific time where children can eat their vegetable snack. Introducing Crunch Time is a great way to normalise snacking on vegetables. It also helps with transition to the Crunch&Sip program in primary schools.

