



## CHALLENGE:

*Enjoy at least 1 winter seasonal vegetable each day*

Fresh vegetables are our best sources of vitamins, antioxidants, and unique phytonutrients. Choosing vegetables that are in season, freshly harvested, and ripe will dramatically increase their nutritional value. This month, try some new recipes and incorporate these seasonal vegetables into your daily routine.

## WINTER VEGETABLES

**Broccoli:** Research studies on broccoli have found it to be highly related to cancer prevention by way of addressing chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and inadequate detoxification. Very high in vitamin C and K, broccoli can support the immune system and improve vitamin D metabolism. Choose broccoli with floret clusters that are compact, not bruised and uniform in color. Store in the refrigerator and wash just before use. Broccoli can be enjoyed raw, steamed, roasted, or boiled.

**Cabbage:** Like broccoli, cabbage is a member of the cruciferous family and provides cancer protective nutrients. Cabbage has also been shown to provide cholesterol-lowering benefits. Cabbage can be eaten raw, though it may be difficult to digest for some. Macerating with vinegar dressing or simply braising the cabbage will make it easier to eat. Look for cabbage heads that are firm with crisp, colorful leaves. Cabbage should be kept cold in order to retain its vitamin C content. It should keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

**Endive:** While endive is available all year, its peak is in the winter months, when other greens are not as available. Use it chopped up in salads, or whole leaves served with dip. Look for endive heads that are crisp and bright green. If choosing Belgian endive, select heads with tips that have a pale, yellow-green color. Store in a plastic bag in the fridge.

**Fennel:** Fennel has a crunchy, sweet taste and is common in Mediterranean cuisine. It's a great source of both vitamin C and fiber. Look for fennel with bright white bulbs and no discolorations or soft spots. While many producers trim the stalks, finding fennel with long branches and fresh looking greens ensures freshness. Keep it stored in the crisper section of the refrigerator and enjoy it raw, roasted, or sautéed.

**Garlic:** Garlic is one of the best immune-supportive foods. Look for garlic heads that are firm, with no nicks or soft cloves and are also free of dark, powdery mold. Store unpeeled garlic in a cool, dry place – don't refrigerate or freeze. Garlic should keep up to three months. If you notice green sprouts growing from your garlic, simply discard them before using as they can be quite bitter. You can also plant these sprouted garlic cloves and grow them to about 6 inches to use like chives in salads. If you find your garlic sticky and difficult to peel, that means it's fresh! Garlic shrivels as it matures and becomes easier to peel.

**Kale:** While kale is available throughout the year, its peak season is during the winter through early spring. As a cruciferous vegetable, kale provides many of the same cancer-fighting nutrients as broccoli and Brussels sprouts. Look for kale with firm, deeply colored leaves and moist, thick stems. Select kale with smaller-sized leaves as they will be tender with a milder flavor. Store kale in a bag in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. When kale is stored longer, it can develop a bitter taste. Kale is best served cooked since the heat breaks down some of the fiber and makes it easier to digest than raw kale.

**Onions:** Due to their unique combination of flavonoids and sulfur-containing nutrient, researchers recommend including a serving of allium vegetables (onions, garlic, shallots, scallions) in your diet every day. Choose onions that are clean, well shaped, and have crisp outer skins. They should be stored at room temperature and can keep for a month or more. When preparing onions, be sure to keep as much of the outer layers as possible as the flavonoids tend to be more concentrated in the outer layers of the flesh.

**Radicchio:** A bitter, leafy vegetable, radicchio adds a complex flavor to winter salads. The flavonoids that give radicchio its color are known to support eye health and the bitter principle in the leaf is a potent anti-malarial agent and has a painkiller effect. Look for firm (even hard) heads with vivid colors. If there are signs of darkening, it's probably not fresh. Store radicchio in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and add it to salads or use it to serve dips as an appetizer.

**Spinach:** Spinach is often considered one of the healthiest vegetables due to its nutrient richness. Very high in vitamins K and A, manganese, folate, magnesium, and iron, spinach may protect against inflammatory problems, oxidative stress-related problems, cardiovascular problems, and cancers. Look for spinach with vibrant green leaves that are tender. Store spinach in the refrigerator and wash just before use.

**Sweet Potato:** Though a potato, sweet potatoes are actually quite low on the glycemic index and provide a rich source of antioxidants and carotenes. Select sweet potatoes that are firm and don't have any cracks, bruises, or soft spots. Store them at room temperature as refrigeration negatively alters their flavor. The skin contains many valuable nutrients, so don't peel them! Sweet potatoes are great baked, mashed or roasted with other winter vegetables.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Month Completed\_\_\_\_\_

### Harker School Wellness Program / **Winter Vegetables Challenge**

Track and record the winter vegetables you eat each day. Incorporate one or more options from the list into your meals daily. Submit completed log to HR to earn 10 wellness points. (100 points max in this category)

Week 1

Day 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2

Day 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 9 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 13 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3

Day 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 16 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 17 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 18 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 19 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 21 \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4

Day 22 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 23 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 26 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 27 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 28 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

I, the employee named above, guarantee that the information contained in this verification is true and accurate and I understand that HR may verify any forms submitted for the purpose of obtaining a wellness discount. I understand that any inaccurate and/or false statements on this form may lead to the loss of all or a portion of my wellness discount.

**To receive credit, this form must be submitted to HR within 30 days of completion and no later than December 5, 2019.**