



**Media Release**

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### **Making Vegetables Fab with Herbs and Spices**



We all know that vegetables are packed with nutrients and fibre and are an essential part of our daily diet. However a recent report from NSW Health\* shows a staggering 95% of men, 90% of women and 80% of children do not eat the five vegetables a day recommended for a healthy lifestyle.



Leading Australian dietitian, Karen Inge APD, says the study is far from just a NSW problem and is a reflection of the national dietary picture. To improve the situation, she encourages Australians to be innovative in their vegetable preparation and has developed an easy to use Veggie Chart.

*"We all know vegetables are nutrient rich and contribute to good health, protect against a number of diseases and help maintain a healthy weight. They supply us with vitamins like A,C and E and folate, minerals like iron, dietary fibre and other bioactives that have potent antioxidant activity"* said Karen.



*"So why don't we munch them down? My guess is that we serve them the same way, every day, stick to a few staples and boredom quickly sets in."*

Karen suggests including lots of unusual vegetables in your diet rather than just the tried and tested few. Mastering a variety of cooking methods and adding stimulating flavours to your greens are the keys to increasing consumption.



*"Firstly, for maximum nutritional benefit and taste satisfaction you need variety. The more colours on the plate, the better - Red, green, orange, yellow from corn, even purple from eggplant. Remember the more colours, the more nutrients you are eating,"* said Karen.

Karen recommends a raft of cooking methods like a quick stir-fry, lightly steaming or microwaving, sautéing with herbs and spices, roasting with a dash of balsamic vinegar and oregano, barbecuing for a rustic taste with some garlic or simply serving fresh with a wonderful dressing, bursting with flavours.



*"Go for quick cooking techniques. Long exposure to higher temperatures can lead to loss of nutrients so use as little water as possible when cooking vegetables and serve your veggies just tender. Mushy veggies are a thing of the past!"*

*"There are lots of simple ways to add extra flavour and this is where herbs and spices are a cook's best friend. For convenience sake and all year round availability I have used Gourmet Garden's fresh tasting herbs and spices in these examples, but you can always use some sprigs from your garden."*

Karen's Fab Veggies Made Easy Chart has lots of great ideas to increase the vegetable quota, but here's a few to inspire.....

- \* Combine steamed broccoli and beans with a mixture of Gourmet Garden Chives and Parsley; bring peas to life by tossing through some mint.
- \* For a perfect rustic flavour, roast vegetables like onion, potatoes or pumpkins. Cook at 180 degrees C for 45-60 minutes depending on size of vegetable pieces. Turn vegetables a couple of times during cooking and toss through some Gourmet Garden Garlic and Rosemary during the last 10-15 minutes.
- \* Dress up cooked carrots with a touch of Gourmet Garden Ginger and Coriander and a touch of honey.
- \* Kick start your vegetarian stir-fry with lemon grass, ginger and chilli for some serious zing.
- \* Barbeque mushrooms – choose some large flat ones, add a mixture of garlic and any other Gourmet Garden Herb or Spice mixed in a little olive oil and barbeque for about 5 minutes.
- \* Lycopene rich tomatoes can always go Italian, slow-roasted at low temperature about 120 degrees C for 45-60 minutes.
- \* Toss whole or halved cherry tomatoes in a little olive oil and cook in a non-stick pan. Just before serving toss through some Gourmet Garden Garlic and Basil.
- \* Mix Gourmet Garden Coriander and Chilli, through stewed tomatoes for an Asian style dipping sauce.
- \* Roast capsicums by coring the seeds and standing on an oven tray – squeeze into the heart of each capsicum Gourmet Garden Italian Herbs and a dash of balsamic vinegar and roast in a hot oven (200 degrees C) for 10-20 minutes until the skin is blackened over 50% of the surface. Remove immediately and put in a brown paper bag for 15 minutes – the steam will help the skin come away from the fleshy capsicum. Store in the fridge to throw in a pasta or salad, or serve with some low fat ricotta on a toasted sandwich. These roasted capsicums can also be pureed with some tomato puree, olive oil and herbs, or even yoghurt, for a fantastic pasta sauce or sauce for BBQ meats.
- \* Vegetables make great kebabs. Cut some vegetables into similar size pieces, try zucchini, capsicum, onion, cherry tomatoes and button mushrooms and cook in a non-stick pan, grill or Barbeque. Brush with a small amount of olive oil and Gourmet Garden herbs in the last couple of minutes of cooking. Pre-soak the wooden skewers to reduce the risk of burning.
- \* Supersize your salad and consider your salad as the main part of your meal, not as a “side”. Be innovative with your vegetable combinations, and flavour with dressings based on olive oil, lemon juice or vinegar, and a squeeze or two of your favorite Gourmet Garden herbs.

*“Vegetables are fabulous. They are full of vitamins and minerals, they're naturally low in fat, sodium and kilojoules and contain no cholesterol but we don't have to eat them plain. Mix them with Gourmet Garden herbs and enjoy your five servings a day”* concluded Karen.

Please find attached Karen Inge's fab vegetable made easy chart.  
For more fantastic recipe ideas go to [www.gourmetgarden.com](http://www.gourmetgarden.com)

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\*The Report of the Chief Health Officer - Released by NSW Health December 2006