Healthier Bodies with Vitamin A

We need Vitamin A because:
✓ Protects against illness
✓ Helps body to recover more quickly from illness
✓ Promotes eye health for good vision
✓ Helps to keep the skin, gut, hair and lungs healthy.

Vitamin A can be found in variety of plant and animal-based foods.

Sources of Vitamin A:

Orange and yellow vegetables:
✓ Orange and yellow kamote
✓ Kalabasa
✓ Carrots

Green leafy vegetables:
✓ Saluyot, talinum, kamote tops
✓ Kulitis, pechay, sigarilyas
✓ Kangkong, mustasa, malunggay

Orange and yellow fruits:
✓ Ripe mangoes, papaya
✓ Tiesa, and tomatoes

Animal Sources:
✓ Liver (chicken, pork, beef)
✓ Eggs (eggyolk)
✓ Milk, butter, margarine and cheese

Foods for recommended daily Vitamin A intake:

½ medium piece (or 1/2 cup) of boiled orange kamote can provide 100% of recommended daily intake of Vitamin A for children (6-12 years old) and almost 80% for adults (19 years old and above)

1 cup of kalabasa (boiled) can give children (6-9 years old) 15 % of their daily recommended Vitamin A intake

1 cup of boiled leaves of katuray or kulitis can provide more than 100 % of the recommended vitamin A intake for children, teenagers (except 16-18 year-old males) and adults (19 years old and above). Nonetheless, the same amount of this food can give males (16-18 years old) almost 80% of recommended daily vitamin A intake

1 cup of saluyot leaves (boiled) can give more than 100% of the recommended daily Vitamin A intake of children (6-9 years old) and almost 90% for 10-12 year old children.

1 serving (3/4 cup) of boiled lagikway leaves can give children (6-12 years old) more than half of their vitamin A recommended intake

1 slice (3/4 cup) of ripe papaya contains Vitamin A equivalent to 15% of the recommended daily Vitamin A intake of children (6-9 years old)
Lack of Vitamin A results in:

- Low body resistance to disease
- Poor growth
- Eye sensitivity to bright light
- Inability to see in dim light or “night blindness”
- Dryness of the eye
- Blindness (in severe deficiency)
- Rough dry skin and membranes of nose and throat

Vitamin A deficiency is a threat to the health, sight, and lives of millions of children in the developing countries. People who do not get enough vitamin A are more likely to become sick and die. Children especially are at high risk. Thousands of children die every year because of lack of vitamin A.

Get Enough Vitamin A!

- Eat at least one vitamin-rich food per day. Alternately eat from variety of plant food and animal sources of vitamin A. Example, one medium-sized boiled orange sweet potato with butter for snack or 1 serving papaya or ripe mangoes after meals.

- Add green leafy vegetables to stews or soups or even in dishes like sinigang, nilaga, tinola, sopas and other soups. This will help add to your vitamin A intake at the same time enjoy your regular dishes without compromising flavor, most of the local green leafy vegetable have a neutral flavor except for malunggay.

- Introduce leafy vegetables at an early age. Give plenty of vitamin A-rich foods to children 6 months and older. It will prevent illnesses and night blindness.

- Let children enjoy their vegetables. Let them learn or see how to cook vegetables. Tell them how it can make them healthier or stronger every time they eat these vegetables.

- Vitamin A-rich food is recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to stay healthy and ensure their child grows healthy.

The darker the green vegetables are, the more vitamin A they have. Some fats and oils helps increase vitamin A absorption.

Breastmilk is the best source of vitamin A for babies under 6 months.

Warning!
Vitamin A supplements might be given to young children and women within 6 weeks after giving birth. High dosages of vitamin A supplements should not be given to women during pregnancy because it may pose harm to the unborn baby. Consult local health centers or a health care professional before taking any vitamin A supplements.

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2009, Healthy Eating Resources