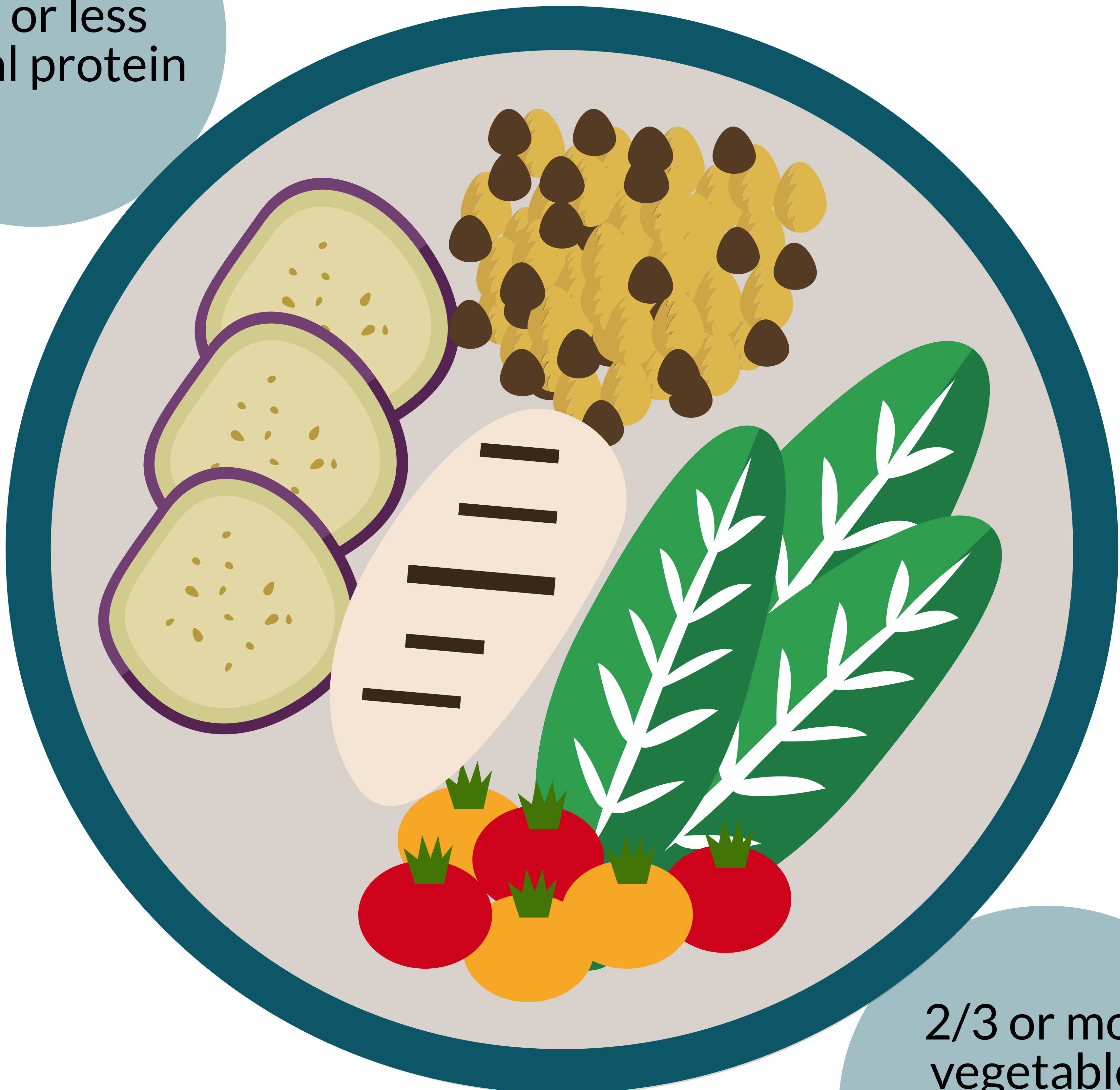


Arranging a Better Plate

1/3 or less
animal protein

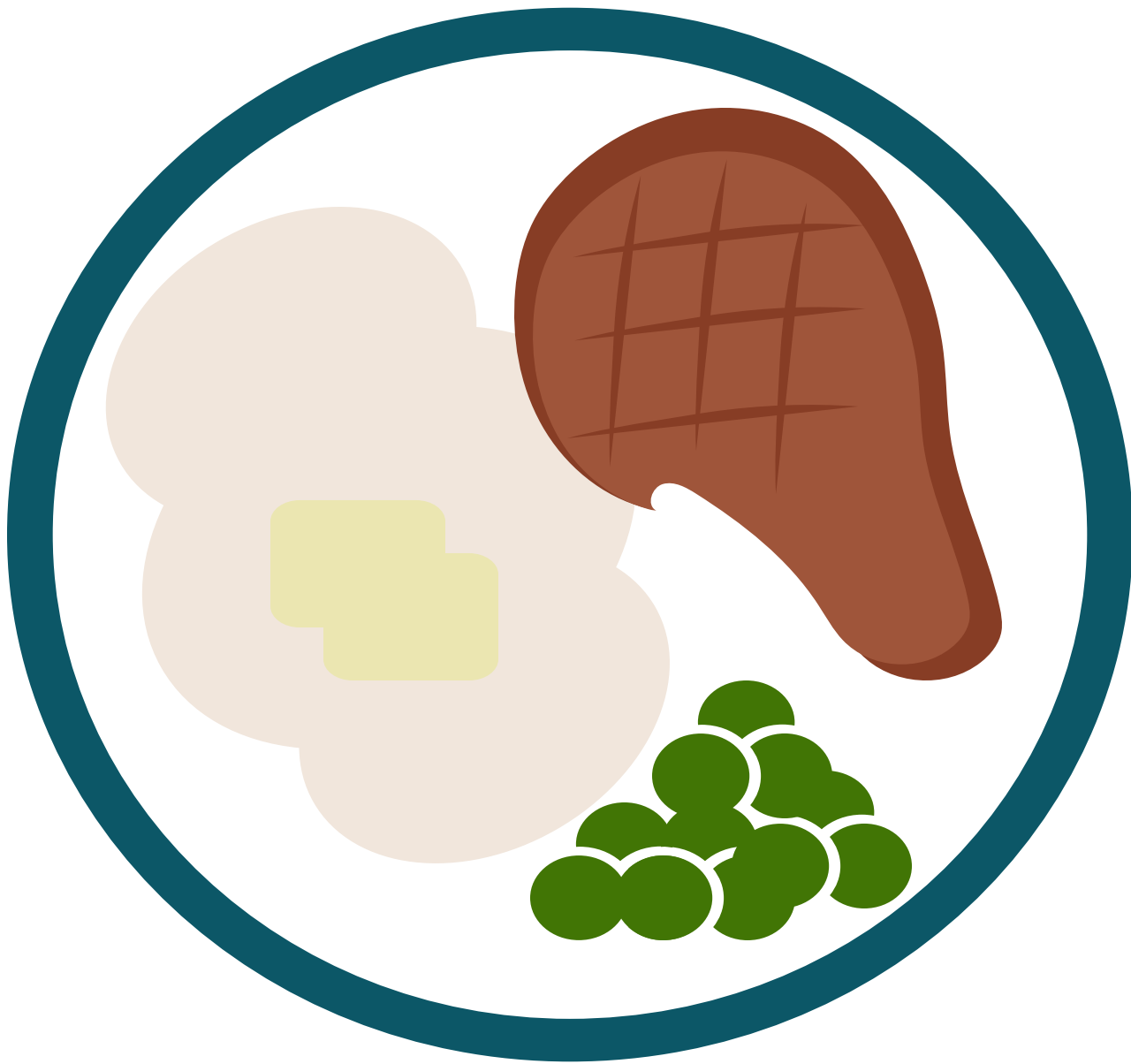


2/3 or more
vegetables,
fruits, whole
grains, and beans

Making the Transition to a Better Plate

Source: [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)

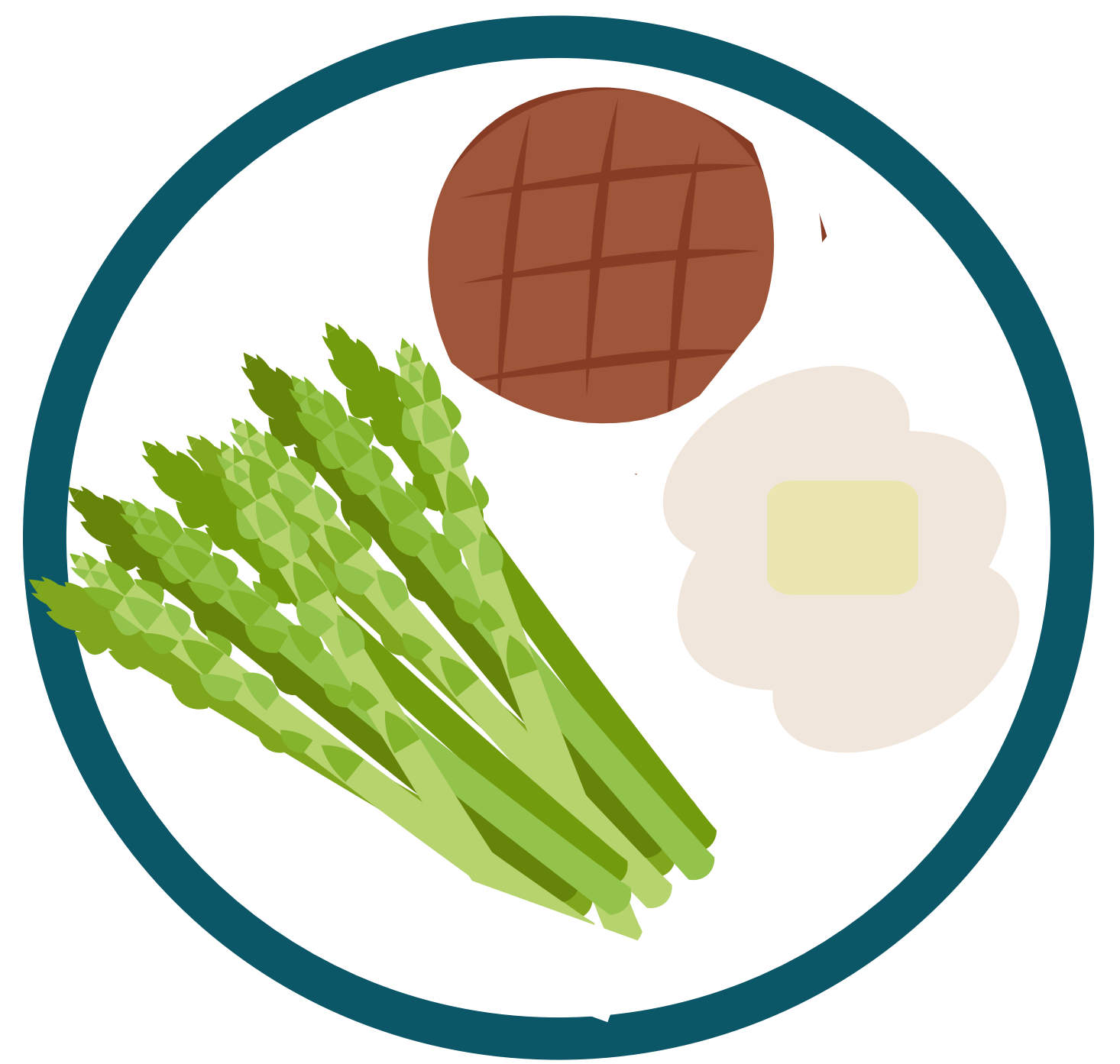
Traditional Plates



Traditional American plates tend to be heavy in meat and starches. Almost half of this plate is taken up by a large portion of red meat (8-12oz steak) and the remainder is filled with large serving of buttery mashed potatoes and some peas. This meal is high in calories and low in antioxidants, micronutrients, and fiber.



Transitional Plate



The transitional plate features a smaller serving of meat (4-6oz) and a smaller portion of mashed potatoes. This plate also has a larger serving of vegetables, increasing the fiber and nutrient profile of the meal. This plate is an improvement from the traditional American plate, but there is still room for adjustment.



Ideal Plate



The ideal plate has a more modest serving of leaner meat (3oz) like poultry or fish. Around half of this plate consists of numerous plant-based foods, resulting in a diverse assortment of nutrients. The higher-fiber carbohydrate source (brown rice, barley, kasha, bulgur, millet, and quinoa) completes the meal.

What Food Goes Where on MyPlate?



Vegetable Preparation

Prepping foods like vegetables ahead of time can make it much easier to add them into meals during busy weeks.

Helpful kitchen equipment for vegetable prep and storage:

- Glass or plastic container set with lids
- Salad spinner for drying washed produce
- Paper or cloth towels
- Freezer bags
- Glass mason jars (note: you can repurpose glass sauce or soup jars as storage containers)

Raw Vegetable Prep and Storage

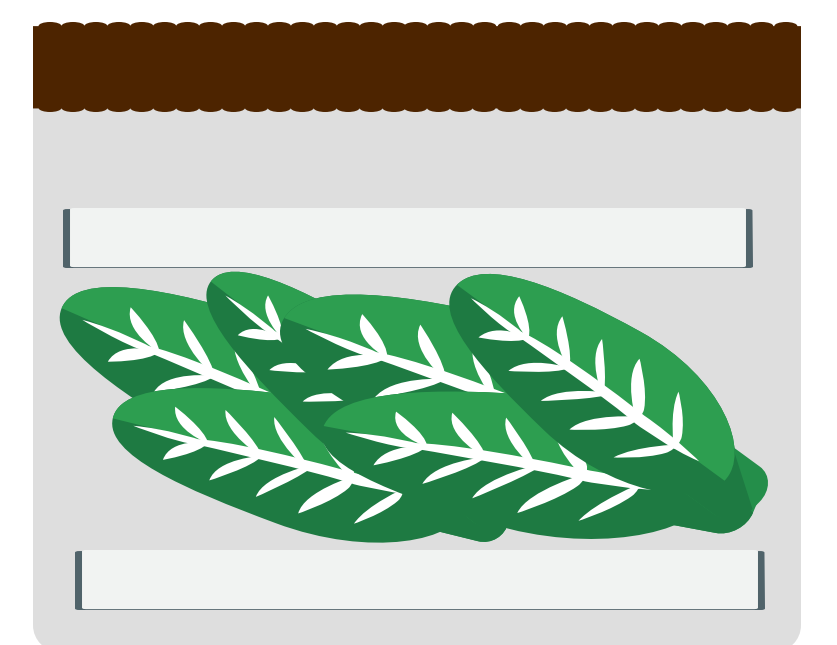
Whether you are tossing into a stir-fry, adding to a salad, or using to dip into guacamole, having raw veggies prepped in the fridge can make it easier to incorporate them into meals and snacks.

• Leafy Greens

Great for using as bases for salads, adding to sandwiches or smoothies, or sautéing with garlic and oil

Wash greens thoroughly with water. If purchasing greens in bulk, remove stems and chop into desired size. Remove as much moisture as possible via salad spinner or with paper towel. Line the bottom of an air-tight container with paper or cloth towel and place and additional paper or cloth towel over the top of the greens.

Fridge life: over 1 week - discard or compost with any wilting or yellowing

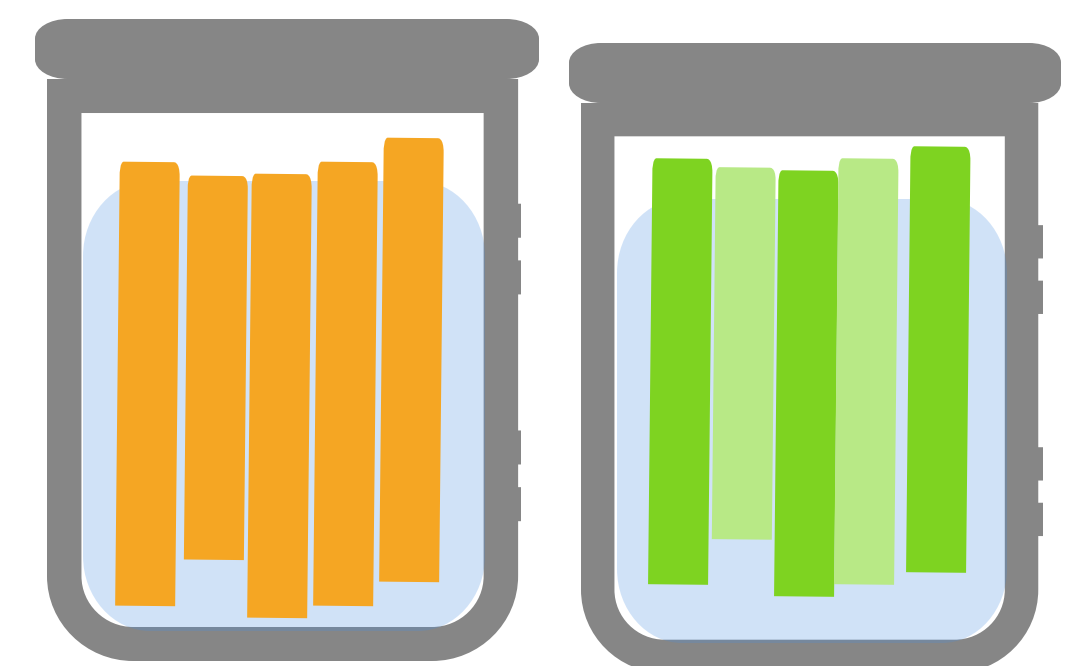


• Celery and Carrots

Great for chopping up and adding to salads, cooking into soups, or pairing with dips at snack time

Wash and trim celery sticks and carrots. Peel carrots if desired. Store in air tight jars or containers. Add a water bath to help to retain crispness for longer.

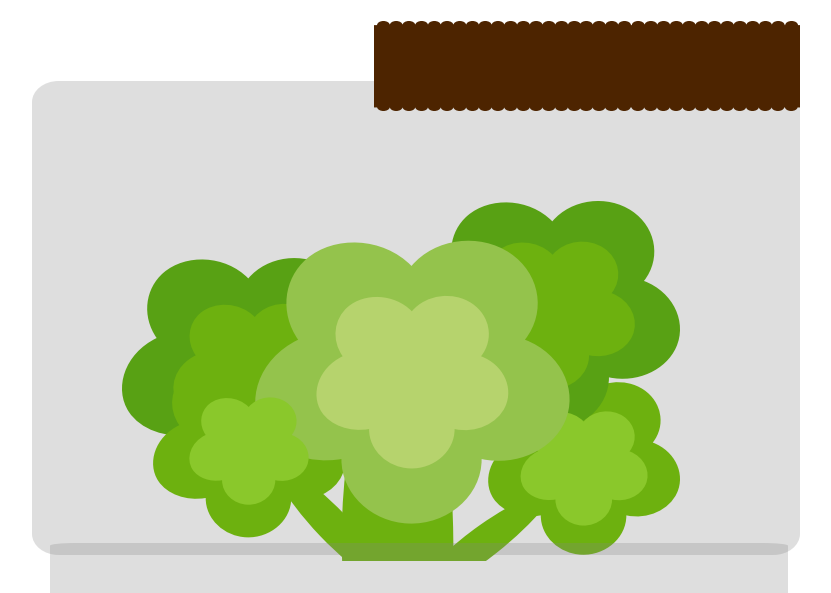
Fridge life: 1-2 weeks



• Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower)

Break apart broccoli and cauliflower into florets. Rinse and remove as much moisture as possible. Store in container with vented lid or loosely wrap in paper towel to allow airflow. Plan to use these earlier in the week.

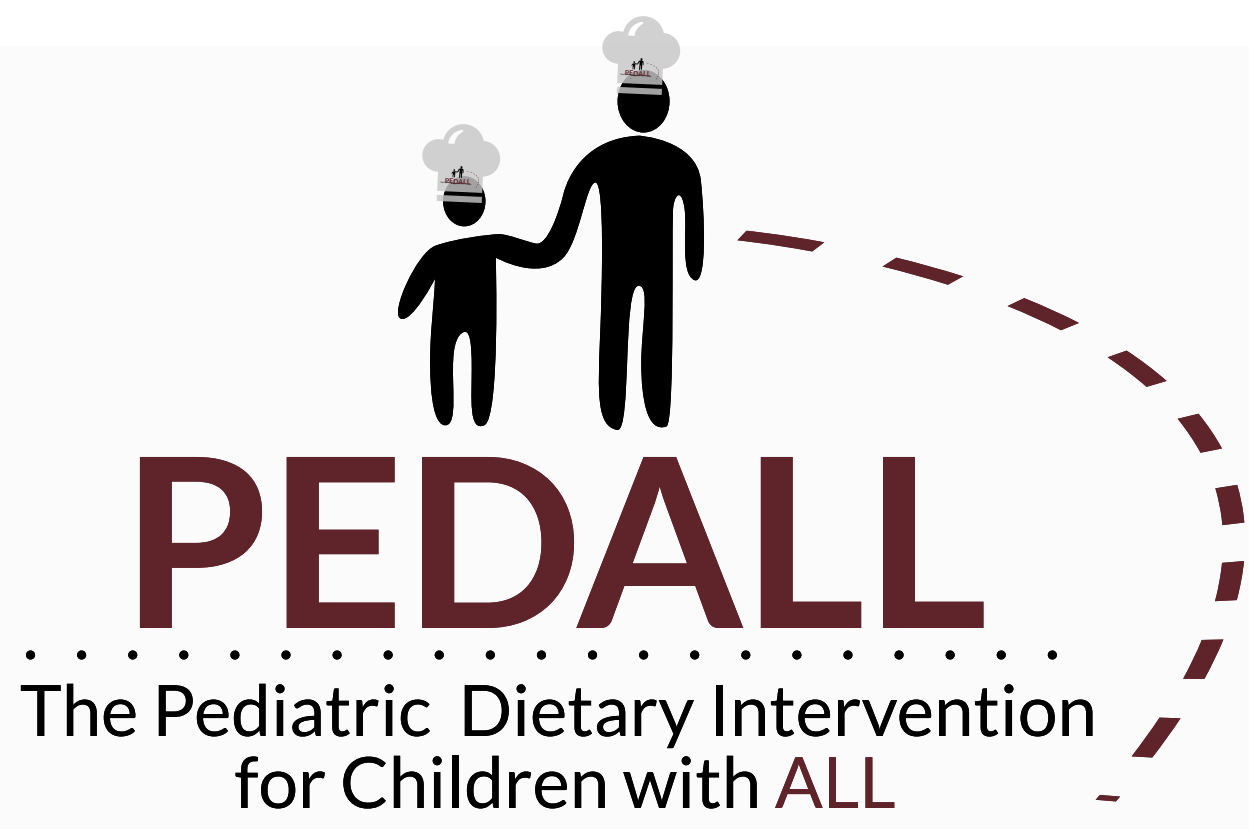
Fridge life: 3-4 days



• Fruity 'vegetables' (cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, squash)



Although technically fruits, cucumbers, peppers, tomato, and squash usually fall into the vegetable category at meal time. Because they are softer, these foods tend to do better when left uncut. Cut peppers and squash remain crisp for 1-2 days refrigerated in an airtight container. Tomatoes and cucumbers are best left whole until they are ready to be eaten.

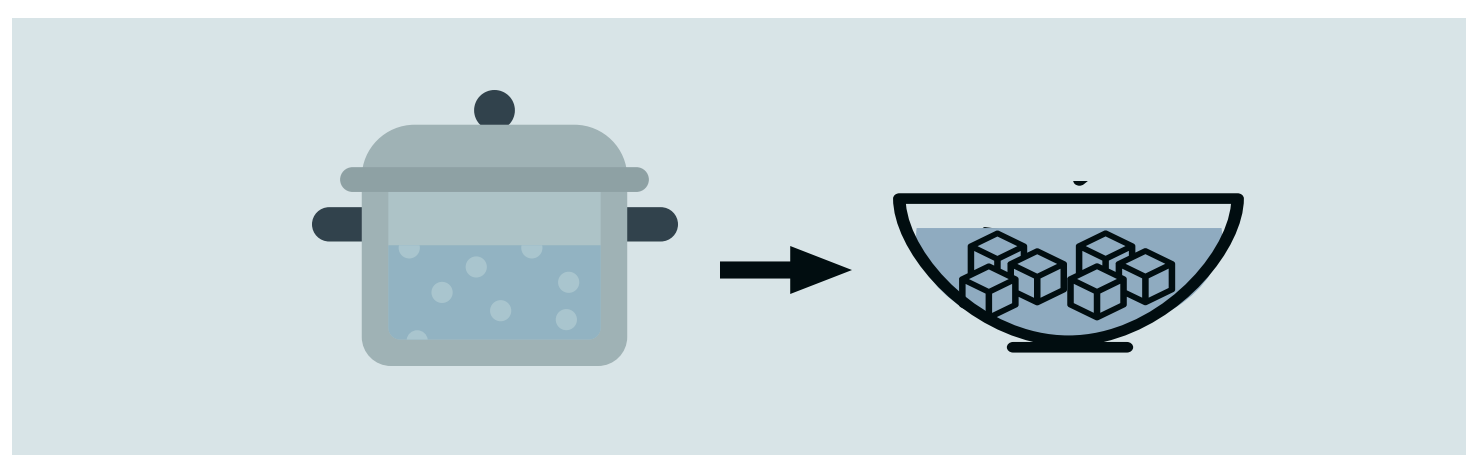


Vegetable Preparation

Frozen Vegetables

Having cut, chopped, and peeled vegetables ready to go in the freezer can be a convenient way to cut down on food waste if you are struggling to use vegetables while they are fresh. Frozen vegetables can be quickly accessed from the freezer to add into omelets, stir fry, sofritos, or incorporated into pasta dishes. You can buy pre-frozen vegetables at the store or you can freeze your own. If buying pre-frozen, remember to be cautious of added sauces or flavorings that could limit your use and add unwanted ingredients.

In order to freeze your own vegetables, you will first need to blanch them. Blanching is a process that slows down or inhibits the action of enzymes that cause vegetables to lose flavor, texture and color. Blanching involves heating vegetables in boiling water and promptly following with an ice bath.



[Click to learn more about blanching](#)

Cooking Methods for Vegetables

There are many ways to prepare vegetables, each technique producing a slightly different look, flavor and texture. Experimenting with preparing vegetables in different ways can aid in adding variety to meal times, and can help you and your family to find your favorite versions to prepare and eat.

Boiling

Chop vegetables into equal sized pieces. Cover and simmer in water just until desired tenderness is reached. Try to use as little water as possible to help retain the vitamin and mineral content of the vegetables.

Sautéing

Cut vegetables into desired shape and size and toss with oil in a pan over medium heat. Add garlic, herbs, and spices as desired.

Steaming

Cut vegetables into uniform size. Fill pot with 1-2 inches of water under a steamer basket and bring to a boil. Once boiling, add vegetables to steamer basket and cover. Use fork to test tenderness.

Roasting

Toss chopped and trimmed vegetables with oil and seasoning. Place in oven on baking sheet until desired tenderness/crispiness is achieved. Roasting is a great alternative to frying as it provides crispiness without the excess fat that is needed for the frying process.