

Encourage Kids to Eat More Fruits & Veggies

Eating fruits and vegetables is part of a healthy diet* for both children and adults. Finding creative ways to encourage fruits and vegetables in your child's diet can be fun for the entire family.

There are more fruits and vegetables available in fresh, frozen, canned, and dried forms than ever before. Taking the time to introduce a variety of fruits and vegetables to kids can help develop a lifetime of healthy habits.

10 Ways to Help Kids Eat More Fruits & Veggies

1. Keep a bowl of fresh fruits on the counter. Refrigerate cut up fruits and vegetables in small bags for easy snacks on the run.
2. Serve fruits and vegetables at every meal. Add grated or cut vegetables into entrees, side dishes, and soups. Top off cereal with fruits or add frozen fruits to smoothies.
3. Set a good example. Snack on fruit and order low-sodium, low-fat salads, soups, or vegetable sides when at restaurants.
4. Pack the refrigerator, freezer and cupboard with pre-cut, frozen and canned vegetables so that it is easier for you to prepare meals and snacks that include vegetables.
5. Challenge family members to reach their daily fruits and vegetable goal. Reward the winner with a prize of his or her choice.
6. Ask that fruits and vegetables be offered at school functions, after school programs, and in vending machines.
7. Let children choose which fruits and vegetables to serve and how to incorporate them into their favorite meals.
8. Make fruits and vegetables fun. Try dressing up sandwiches with faces and smiles made from fruits and vegetables.
9. Keep trying. For some foods, it may take multiple times before a child acquires a taste for it.
10. Encourage friends or relatives to offer vegetables and fruits to your children.

Important Elements—Smell, Texture, and Color

- Kids are turned off to trying new foods if the smell, flavor, or color is not appealing to them. It may be more appealing to a child if the fruits or vegetables are served raw.

- Try feeding different textures of fruits and vegetables to your child. Some children prefer smooth food, where as others like lumpy, and some children like crisp foods, but others like soft.
- Offer new fruits and vegetables in combination with old favorites to show your child a variety of smells, textures, and colors. Various vegetables can be added to any whole grain pasta dish or pizza, and fruit is a great topping for low-fat or fat-free yogurt.

*In addition to fruits and vegetables, a healthy diet also includes whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk products, lean meats, fish, beans, eggs and nuts, and is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars. A healthy diet also means staying within your daily calorie needs.

Kid Friendly Recipes

Trees in a Broccoli Forest

This fun recipe allows kids to be creative with their food.

2 carrots, peeled

3 cups broccoli florets

4 cherry tomatoes

3 Tbsp parsley leaves

Dipping Sauce:

1/4 cup plain non-fat yogurt

1/4 cup low-fat sour cream

2 teaspoons honey

2 teaspoons spicy brown mustard

- To prepare dipping sauce, combine yogurt, sour cream, honey, and mustard in a small bowl.
- Hold carrots against cutting board and trim off ends. Cut each carrot in half, crosswise, then lengthwise to make four pieces. Arrange each plate by putting two carrot pieces side-by-side in the center. Arrange broccoli around the carrots forming a cluster. Arrange the tomatoes at the top of the plate.
- Spoon dip around the base of carrots and sprinkle with parsley. (Makes 4 servings.)

*Nutrition info per serving: Calories 73kcal; Fat 1.5g; Sodium 88mg; Carb 13g; Fiber 3g; Protein 4g; Vit A 180%; Vit C 100%; Calcium 10%; Iron 4%

Fruity Breakfast Parfait

Breakfast is an easy time to include fruits in a child's diet. This easy breakfast parfait is as fun for kids to make as it is to eat!

2 cups chopped fresh pineapple
1 cup frozen raspberries, thawed
1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
1 firm, medium banana, peeled and sliced
1/3 cup chopped dates
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

- In glasses, layer pineapple, raspberries, yogurt, banana, and dates.
- Sprinkle the top with almonds. (Makes 4 servings.)

*Nutrition info per serving: Calories 207kcal; Fat 4.2g; Sodium 42mg; Carb 41g; Fiber 5g; Protein 5.6g; Vit A 2%; Vit C 70%; Calcium 15%; Iron 4%

Carrot and Raisin Sunshine Salad

This salad is colorful and provides kids with many important nutrients, including vitamin A. It makes a good snack, side dish, or dessert.

1 pound carrots (5-6) peeled and shredded
1/2 cup raisins
1 carton (8oz) low-fat vanilla yogurt
4 to 6 iceberg lettuce leaves

- Mix all ingredients together except lettuce leaves in a mixing bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 15 minutes.
- Toss again before serving. Serve on lettuce leaves. (Makes 4 to 6 servings.)

*Nutrition info per serving: Calories 126kcal; Fat 1g; Sodium 95mg; Carb 28g; Fiber 3g; Protein 4g; Vit A 310%; Vit C 10%; Calcium 10%; Iron 4%

*Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron listed as % of daily value based on 2,000 calories

Seeing Is Believing

Model healthy eating habits to kids by eating fruits and vegetables often. Kids tend to follow the actions of older family members.

Keeping Your Toddler Safe

- **Modify the shape and texture of firm foods.** To avoid choking, cut grapes into quarters, chop apples and firm fruits into very small pieces, and cook carrots and hard vegetables until soft, then cut into small pieces.
- **Keep an eye on small children when they are eating.** Small children may eat in a hurry, stuff too much food in their mouths, or chew their food inadequately

which may cause a child to choke.

- **Prevent injuries by prohibiting children from running or playing while chewing food.** Feed small children only when they are sitting down and are in a relaxed atmosphere. Train toddlers to chew their food thoroughly before swallowing.

To find out how many fruits and vegetables you need plus more recipe ideas, please visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov