

Tips for Families: Eating More Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and may protect against excess weight gain. Start the habit of eating fruits and vegetables daily at a young age. Your child will carry this habit through life. Use these ideas to help your family eat more fruits and vegetables.



1 All Fruits and Veggies Count.
Try fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits without added sugars, sauces, syrup, and salt. They all count and can be used different ways. Your child may prefer one kind over the other so try them all.

2 Be a Role Model.
Your child watches and learns from others. Everyone in the house should eat fruits and vegetables daily. Children watch you eat squash and enjoy it, making them want to try the squash, too.

3 Color Your Plate.
Everyone eats with their eyes first. Use colorful vegetables to make meals look tasty to your child. If every food on the plate is yellow, try adding some green vegetables to add more color to the plate.

4 Put More into Meals.
Add veggies to meals every chance you get. Add veggies to sauces, soups, pizza, lasagna, and casseroles. The more veggies your child gets the better nutrition he or she gets daily.

5 Try Different Ways.
Your child is still building his taste buds. The more ways you can make the same food, the better. Try grilling, baking, roasting, boiling, steaming, or serving raw vegetables. You could turn it into a game. Have your child guess which vegetable you are making.

6 Feature a Veggie.
Choose a weekly vegetable and feature it in several meals over the week. Tell your child about where it grows, how we cook it, and why it is healthy. It may take your child up to 10 times of trying a food before he decides he or she likes it.

7 Explore the Five Senses.
Talk about the taste, texture, smell, crunch, and color of vegetables in meals. Talking about the five senses may interest your child in eating vegetables.

8 Grow a Garden. It can be a small garden. Try a few tomato plants in pots or green beans in the flower bed. Your child can help take care of the garden. It helps a child feel important and teaches how vegetables are grown.

9 Plan Ahead.
Have fruits and vegetables ready for snacks at all times. Cut up raw vegetables ahead of time and store them where your child can get to them. Wash fruit and place it in a bowl ready for your child to grab when he wants a snack. Use bagged salads, pre-cut broccoli, and baby carrots. The work is already done for you. These easy bagged veggies are a quick source for healthy food!



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