

Helping Your Children Love Vegetables



If you want your child to like and eat vegetables: offer them early and often! Feed your child a variety of fruit and vegetable purees as soon as you introduce solid food (5-7 months) (Schwartz, 2011).

Both children and adults like and eat foods they are familiar with. The best way to get your children to like vegetables is to keep offering them. In one study, children had to taste a new vegetable up to 15 times before it was accepted (Maier, 2007).

It is normal for young children to be wary of new foods. If your child rejects a new vegetable or refuses to try it, don't give up! Just try again another day.

Try to avoid showing a negative reaction like frustration if your child refuses their vegetables. Never pressure your children to finish food or force them to clean their plate. Pressure to eat may alter your child's enjoyment of eating food causing them to eat those foods less often in the future (Jansen, 2012). Encourage your child to try a bite, but don't force the issue (Galloway, 2006).

Why Are Vegetables So Good for Us?

A diet high in vegetables is associated with a lower risk of obesity and diet-related disease such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease (Li, 2014; Boeing, 2012; Bazzano, 2006).

Vegetables are generally low in calories, high in fiber, and increase satiety (fullness) after a meal.

Vegetables also contain vital nutrients that everyone needs to be happy and healthy, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, vitamin C, and many more!

Nutrient	Health Benefits	Sources
Potassium	Keeps muscles and nervous system working properly.	Potatoes (sweet & white with skin), legumes (white beans), tomato paste (canned), spinach

Nutrient	Health Benefits	Sources
Fiber	Helps reduce constipation and makes you feel full.	Beans (any kind), lentils, potatoes with skin, celery
Folate (folic acid)	Red blood cell formation.	Dark leafy greens, beans and peas
Vitamin A	Keeps eyes and skin healthy and protects against infection	Bell peppers (red/orange), carrots, dark leafy greens
Vitamin C	Heals cuts and wounds. Keeps teeth and gums healthy.	Bell peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, kale

How Much Is Enough?

Most children in the United States don't eat enough vegetables, but how much is enough? It depends on how old your children are, whether they are boys or girls, and how active they are. To get a personalized recommendation for you or your child, check out: www.supertracker.usda.gov On this website you can nutritional facts on products and track diet intake. Super Tracker allows you to create meal plans based off of MyPlate recommendations.

Age	Girls	Boys
2-3 years old	1 cup	1 cup
4-8 years old	1 1/2 cups	1 1/2 cups
9-13 years old	2 cups	2 1/2 cups
14-18 years old	2 1/2 cups	3 cups

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calories needs

10 Ways to Help Your Child Eat More Vegetables



1. Be a good example. Keep vegetables in the house, serve them at every meal, and let your child see you eating and enjoying them (Blissett, 2013).
2. Offer vegetables first, when children are hungry. Try vegetables as an after-school snack or have a salad or soup at the beginning of dinner (Roe, 2013).
3. Take your child shopping and let them pick out the vegetables or let your child choose between two different vegetables to have with dinner (Rohlf, 2013).

4. Get your child involved in cooking. If children help prepare a vegetable, they will be more likely to try it (Heath, 2011).
5. Growing a vegetable garden, visiting a farmers market, or a trip to a local farm can be fun ways to help your child explore new foods (Heath, 2011).
6. Make eating vegetables fun by playing with your food. Try ants on a log, rainbow salad, or pizza faces (Heath, 2011).
7. Try preparing vegetables in different ways: raw, steamed, roasted, etc. (Bongoni, 2015).
8. Try a small reward, like a sticker or praise to help convince your child to taste vegetables. Don't use food as a reward or punishment (Cooke, 2011).
9. Use marketing in your favor! Put stickers of your child's favorite book or TV characters on containers of vegetables to encourage intake (Keller, 2012).
10. Offer vegetables with a low-calorie dip or use a small amount of sugar when cooking to help your child be more willing to taste and eat vegetables. This will help your children become more familiar with the taste of vegetables, and they will learn to like the flavor more, even without the dip or sugar (Fisher, 2012).

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{ prevControl.setAttribute('aria-label', 'Previous'); }); document.querySelectorAll('.carousel-control[data-
slide="next"]').forEach(function(nextControl) { nextControl.setAttribute('aria-label', 'Next'); });
document.addEventListener('DOMContentLoaded', function() { // Query all images within the carousel const images =
document.querySelectorAll('.columnCarousel .img-fluid'); images.forEach(img => { // If the image alt attribute is empty, set
it to "Article thumbnail" if (img.getAttribute('alt') === "") { img.setAttribute('alt', "Article thumbnail"); } }); });
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