

Tips to Boost Fruits and Vegetables in Your Kids' Diet

Fruits and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fiber, which are essential to keeping your child healthy. Most kids need about 2 to 4 cups fruits and vegetables every day. The older they are, the more they need!

Getting kids to eat their veggies and fruits can be challenging. Below are some easy ways to get your kids to increase their fruit and vegetable intake.

1. **Keep it colorful**

Challenge your younger children to try fruits and vegetables of different colors. Make it a red/green/orange day (apple, lettuce, carrot). You and your kids can also pick one color and see how many fruits and veggies of that color you can find.

2. **Add it on**

Add fruit and vegetables to food kids already love. Try adding frozen peas to mac'n'cheese, veggies on top of pizza, and slices of fruit on top of breakfast cereals or low-fat ice-cream.

3. **Try Smoothies**

Smoothies are a fabulous way to increase the amount of fruit your child eats and are really easy to make. A basic smoothie is just frozen fruit, some low-fat or fat-free milk and/or yoghurt, and 100% fruit juice all processed together in a blender until smooth. Let your children experiment with different fruit to find out what they really like.

4. **Camouflage them**

Hide fruits and veggies in your children's meal. Camouflage produce in other foods by chopping up and mixing vegetables in pasta sauces, lasagna, casseroles, soup, chili, and omelets. Folding fresh or frozen berries into pancakes, waffles or muffins is another great trick!

5. **Fruit Pops**

Put 100% fruit juice in an ice tray and freeze it overnight. Kids can eat the fruit cubes as mini-popsicles or put them in other juices. Frozen seedless grapes make natural mini-popsicles and are a great summer treat.

6. **Vegetable Dippers**

Chop raw vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Try bell peppers, carrots, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower and celery and let kids dip their favorites into low-fat or fat-free dressings. Dip tip: read the food label of sauces and dressings to make sure they are not overloaded with saturated fat and salt.

7. **Let them choose**

Involve your kids in the fruit and vegetable shopping decisions at the supermarket and let them help you in preparing dinner. Kids will want to taste what they helped create.



8. Roast away

Try roasting vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, onions, carrots, tomatoes, or eggplant. Long exposure to high heat will cause the vegetables to caramelize, which both enhances their natural sweetness and reduces bitterness.

9. Track it

Try the Alliance's "Stick with it Chart" that can be downloaded at www.HealthierGeneration.org (in the 'For Parents' section) to track the fruits and veggies your child eats. Kids' love to set a goal that they can strive for and the sticker chart is a fun way to track progress.

10. Take the family fruit & veggie challenge!

Use this alphabetical list of fruits and vegetables to see how many different types you can try! Kids can check items off the list as you've tried them.

Fruit: Apples, Apricots, Avocados, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Kiwifruit, Lemons, Limes, Melons (Cantaloupe, Casaba, Crenshaw, Honey Ball, Honey Dew, Persian), Pineapple, Nectarines, Oranges, Passion Fruit, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums and Prunes, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangerines, Tomatoes, Watermelon...

Vegetables: Alfalfa sprouts, Asparagus, Arugula, Artichoke, Peas, Bamboo Shoots, Beets, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Chard, Chicory (Endives), Cauliflower, Collards, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplants, Kale, Lettuce, Iceberg lettuce, Butter-head lettuce, Romaine lettuce, Leaf lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Leeks, Parsnips, Peppers (green, red, and yellow), Potatoes, Radishes, Rhubarb, Rutabagas, Spinach, Squash (Acorn, Butternut, Spaghetti), Sweet Corn, Sweet Potatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini...