



Getting kids to eat fruits and vegetables

Summer is here and fresh fruit and vegetable will be plentiful but getting kids excited about fruits and vegetables can be a challenge. You may offer fruits and vegetables at mealtimes, but your child refuses. If you have a picky eater who won't touch a plate with leafy greens or an unfamiliar vegetable, you may be wondering what to do. Try these tips:

- At the grocery store, let children pick their own fruit or vegetable.
 - For variety, try a different color each week.
 - Fill the shopping basket with a fruit or vegetable from every color in the rainbow.
- Let them play with their food. Use slices, dices, pieces and whole fruits and vegetables to be creative.
 - Make colorful and funny fruit and vegetable faces. Make a game out of it (who can make the funniest face), then eat them together.
 - Make an edible landscape. For example, use a banana slice as the sunshine, broccoli as trees, leafy greens for grass, etc.
 - Give fruits and vegetables a funny name.
- Let children help prepare fruits and vegetables. They can:
 - Wash fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating
 - Snap the peas or break apart the broccoli
 - Tear the lettuce for salads and sandwiches
 - Measure the vegetables before cooking
 - Peel fruits and vegetables
 - Slice soft vegetables with a plastic knife
- Read books about fruits and vegetables with your child.
- Introduce children to gardening to teach them how fruits and vegetables grow.
 - Plant seeds together and watch them grow.
- Set a good example — eat and enjoy fruits and vegetables with your child.
- Have your child eat with another child who loves fruits and vegetables.

Establishing a love for fruits and vegetables while your children are young will help them be healthy now and in the future. A diet high in colorful fruits and vegetables will provide a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber that children need to grow. Studies show that eating fruits and vegetables can help your child maintain a healthy weight, keep bowels regular, and decrease the chance of diseases like heart disease and cancer. Start now to establish a lifetime of healthy eating habits for your children.