



Tips for Getting Children to Eat Fruits and Vegetables

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Trying is believing.

There are so many great-tasting fruits and vegetables, and kids realize this when they get to try ones they've never tasted before. Sometimes a child will love a new fruit or vegetable the first time he tries it. Other times, it may take two, three or even ten tries before a child gets used to the taste of a new item. Ask kids to try one bite. If they don't like it, that's fine. Allowing them to stop at one bite makes trying new foods less scary. If, after trying a new fruit or vegetable two or three times, your child still does not care for that food, move on to other new fruits and vegetables. Forcing a child to eat something he truly does not like will only create a bad association with that food. However, it's important to keep offering new fruits and vegetables. Despite repeated refusals, a child may suddenly decide to try a new food.

Seeing is believing.

Children learn many of their behaviors by watching what older siblings and grown-ups do. Modeling healthful eating habits is a great way to make sure your kids develop healthful eating habits. When it comes to eating fruits and vegetables, the actions of older family members will definitely influence how kids react to fruits and vegetables. So watch what you say and do; kids are watching and quickly will mimic your actions and words. The next time the tossed salad is passed to you, take a large helping and say, "I love salad!" Soon the kids around you will be eagerly eating it and saying they love it, too.

Offer choices.

When it comes to serving fruits and vegetables, offering kids two to three fruit or vegetable choices is a smart idea. Choosing between orange juice and pineapple juice for breakfast lets kids make decisions and exercise power. Likewise, choosing between baby carrots or celery sticks for lunch lets kids know their opinions matter. Also, asking kids to pick the fruits and vegetables for a meal allows them to choose their favorites or suggest new ones to try.

Make it easy.

When kids come racing home hungry for a snack, chances are they'll grab the most convenient item. Make fruits and vegetables convenient by placing them in spots where kids will see them first. Fill a large basket or bowl with fresh fruit and place it on the kitchen counter or table. Put bottles or boxes of 100% fruit juice on lower shelves where kids will see them when they open the fridge looking for a cool drink. Have "grab and go snacks" in small plastic bags (cut up raw vegetables, peeled and segmented oranges, seedless grapes, etc.) ready and waiting in your refrigerator.

Make it fun.

Capturing the imagination of kids can make eating fruits and vegetables more exciting. Present young kids with cut up fruits and vegetables, and then let them create funny faces or animals. While creating their masterpiece, they're likely to snack on the tasty building blocks.

Crunchy and sweet can't be beat.

There's no doubt about it - kids love bite-size pieces of fruits and vegetables. Crunchy, raw vegetables with dip are always a hit, and sweet pieces of ready-to-eat fresh fruit make great snacks. So if your 8-year-old won't eat steamed broccoli, try offering him raw broccoli florets with a low fat dressing for dip. Chances are, he'll gobble it up and ask for more!

Kids like to eat what they make.

Kids are more likely to try something they've helped prepare. To get your kids interested in making fruit and vegetable recipes, have them help find recipes to try. They can look in cookbooks, magazines, newspapers and online for recipes the whole family can enjoy. Once they find a recipe they want to try, have them develop a shopping list. At the supermarket they can have fun hunting for the fruits and vegetables needed for the recipe. Back at home, the fun of preparing the recipe will only be surpassed by the excitement of trying it.

Add fruits and vegetables to favorite foods.

Adding fruits and vegetables to favorite foods is an easy way to get a child to eat more fruits and vegetables. Put sliced bananas on top of cereal. Add slices of green and red pepper to cheese pizza. Make strawberry milkshakes with frozen strawberries, low-fat frozen yogurt and milk. Put some shredded carrots and lettuce on a turkey sandwich. Add carrot 'coins' to chicken noodle soup. Put slices of tomato inside cheese quesadillas. Add pureed red peppers and zucchini to spaghetti sauce. The possibilities are endless. Simply use your imagination to come up with other ways to add some more fruits and vegetables to your child's diet.





If You're Healthy and You Know It

Sung to "IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT"

If you're healthy and you know it, eat your carrots – chomp chomp
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your carrots – chomp chomp
If you're healthy and you know it, then your EYES will really show it
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your carrots – chomp chomp!

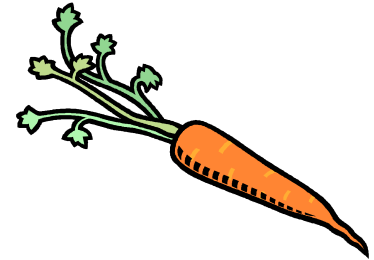
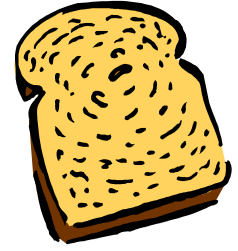
If you're healthy and you know it, drink your milk – slurp slurp
If you're healthy and you know it, drink your milk – slurp slurp
If you're healthy and you know it, then your BONES will really show it
If you're healthy and you know it, drink your milk – slurp slurp!

If you're healthy and you know it, eat your toast – crunch crunch
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your toast – crunch crunch
If you're healthy and you know it, then your ENERGY will show it
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your toast – crunch crunch!

If you're healthy and you know it, eat your chicken – bock bock
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your chicken – bock bock
If you're healthy and you know it, then your MUSCLES will really show it
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your chicken – bock bock!

If you're healthy and you know it, eat your lunch-chomp chomp-slurp slurp-crunch crunch-bock bock
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your lunch-chomp chomp-slurp slurp-crunch crunch-bock bock
If you're healthy and you know it, then you SMILE will really show it
If you're healthy and you know it, eat your lunch-chomp chomp-slurp slurp-crunch crunch-bock bock

From "Food, Glorious Food" Club Moo 1998-99, Info pak, Alberta Milk Products



The Vegetable Song

Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"

Carrots, Peas, and Broccoli,
Vegetables are good for me.
For my snack and in my lunch,
Veggie sticks are great to munch.
Carrots, Peas, and Broccoli,
Vegetables are good for me.

