

TIPS FOR HELPING KIDS EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Be a good role model. Children are influenced by what their parents and caregivers do.
- Make fruits and vegetables available and limit junk food. We all tend to take the path of least resistance. If healthy snacks are available....they will eat them.
- Make children part of meal planning and preparation.
 - Fruits and vegetables are the perfect subject for teaching young children about colors, shapes, and aromas.
 - A trip to the supermarket is a wonderful opportunity to talk with children about how fruits and vegetables will help keep them healthy and strong.
 - Include children in food shopping and have them choose a fruit or vegetable from each of the color groups.
 - Having children participate in age-appropriate meal preparation ups the chances that they will eat the fruits and vegetables on the menu.
- Make it fun, particularly for young children. It only takes a few minutes, a few raisins and banana slices to turn an open-faced peanut butter sandwich into a piece of kid-pleasing art.
- Get out the blender; low fat yogurts and canned, frozen or fresh fruits provide an infinite number of combinations for a quick breakfast or snack.
- Freeze 100% juice boxes and add them to lunch packs. It will keep them cold and the juice will be ready to drink by lunch time.
- Keep it bite-sized. Young children may find a large piece of fruit or vegetable daunting. Choose smaller sizes of whole fruits and vegetables for them or cut the larger ones into manageable pieces.
- Don't make it a "big deal" and keep trying. Very young children often will need to try a new food many times before accepting a new taste. As they get older the Tom Sawyer approach can be helpful..."When you are more grown up you may want to try (fill in the fruit or vegetable)."
- Pair new fruits and vegetables with foods a child is already fond of: try celery filled with peanut butter and topped with raisins, add frozen mixed vegetables to canned soups, dip sliced fruit in melted chocolate, serve cut up vegetables with low fat ranch dressing, and baby spinach to sliced strawberries to a turkey sandwich, and make it the "veggie deluxe" on pizza night.
- Be adventurous; try a new fruit or vegetable once a week.