

Helping Your Child Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Why are fruits and vegetables important for my child?

- Enjoying healthful foods helps your child grow and be healthy.
- Eating many different fruits and vegetables helps children get the vitamins, minerals and fiber they need each day.
- Getting children interested in eating healthful foods can help them develop good eating habits that they may continue throughout life.
- Teaching your children to eat more fruits and vegetables at a young age is an investment in their future health.

How many fruits and vegetables should your children eat each day?

| | Dietary Recommendations | Examples of what equals 1 cup |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Children 2 to 3 years | 1 cup vegetables | 1 cup chopped or cooked vegetables, 2 cups raw leafy greens, 1 cup beans, about 12 baby carrots |
| | 1 cup fruit | 1 cup sliced or chopped fruit, 1 cup applesauce, 32 seedless grapes (quartered), 1 medium grapefruit, ½ cup raisins |
| Children 4 to 8 years | 1½ cups vegetables | 3 5-inch broccoli spears, 1 cup cooked greens, 1 cup peas, 1 cup mashed potatoes |
| | 1 to 1 ½ cups fruit | 1 small wedge of watermelon (1 inch thick), 2 large plums, 1 medium pear, 1 large peach, 1 cup 100 percent juice |

Children should get at least these amounts of fruits and vegetables daily and may need more with greater physical activity. You should serve portion sizes of ¼ to ½ cup of fruits and vegetables to young children.

Books help children learn

Green Eggs and Ham
by Dr. Suess

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato
by Lauren Child

D.W. the Picky Eater
by Marc Brown



How to encourage your child to eat more fruits and vegetables

- Include fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Have fruits and sliced vegetables accessible and ready to eat in a bowl or self-serving packages they can see readily.
- Be a good example. Eat fruits and vegetables with your child.
- Let children choose which fruit or vegetable they want to eat at home and buy while grocery shopping.
- Children like to make their own snack or meal – bugs on a log (celery sticks spread with peanut butter and topped with raisins), graham cracker faces with fruits, banana sandwich, fruit kabobs (for older children).
- Encourage your children to enjoy fruits and vegetables in a way that appeals to their taste. Add condiments (a sprinkle of powdered sugar or small amount of honey, cheese or ranch dressing) or mix them (applesauce and squash—a new food with one they like).
- Most importantly, keep trying. Children are open to new foods but may need to see and try them many times before they will like them.
- Encourage your child to try a bite but don't force it.



NDSU
Extension Service

North Dakota State University
 Fargo, North Dakota 58105

JUNE 2008



Enjoy new fruits and vegetables with your children



What are some strategies to introduce new fruits and vegetables to children?

Let your child explore the new food. Learning about how the food grows and where it comes from is fun for children.

Teach children about which foods are healthful and help them grow and stay strong.

Encourage your child to choose new fruits and vegetables and help you clean and prepare them.

Offer the new fruit or vegetable with some of your child's favorite foods so some of the food is familiar.

Garden with your child. Growing fruits and vegetables and learning about them can lead to the child's increasing acceptance of the new food.

Many children are familiar with very sweet juices and canned fruit. Condiments (honey, powdered sugar, cheese or ranch dressing) used in small amounts may help parents introduce less processed fruits and vegetables.

Be patient. Children are often more open to new foods than even adults. It may take many tries before a child will accept it.



Desiree Tande
Extension specialist

Kelly Martin
undergraduate
research assistant

Fruit Salad in Yogurt Sauce

Encourage your child to help choose fruit for the salad and the topping to personalize their treat. This is a light, low-sugar dessert.

- 8 ounces *plain low-fat yogurt (no added sugar)
- 2 teaspoons of honey (after 1 year of age)
- 1 teaspoon of lemon juice (after 1 year of age)
- 3 kiwi, peeled and sliced or chopped
- 1 cup raspberries, blueberries or other berry
- 1 cup apples or pears, cut to bite size
- ¼ cup pecans pieces (after 2 years of age), coconut or granola (or bits of granola bar)

Combine yogurt, honey and juice in a small bowl until smooth. Add fruit to yogurt mixture; stir gently. Serve individually with topping of choice to personalize dessert.

* For a sweeter salad, substitute vanilla yogurt for plain yogurt or combine 4 ounces of plain yogurt with 4 ounces of whipped topping. Most children prefer very sweet foods. You may want to start with a sweeter sauce and slowly decrease the amount of sugar so your child is more accepting.

Makes 6 servings: 100 calories, 16 grams (g) carbohydrate, 2.5 g fat, 4 g protein, 3 g fiber

Keeping your child safe

- Wash all produce with plenty of water.
- Feed your children only when they are sitting down and you can be attentive.
- Serve strawberries, citrus and citrus juices only after 1 year of age.
- Cook hard vegetables.
- Cut firm fruits and vegetables into very small pieces and quarter grapes.
- Avoid serving chunks of hard vegetables and raw peas.

Tips to save \$ on fruits and vegetables

- Look at grocery store sales flier, price tags and unit prices.
- Become familiar with typical produce prices.
- Shop for produce in season.
- Grow fruits and vegetables yourself.
- Buy only what you can eat to avoid waste.
- Buy frozen, canned and dried produce on sale so you have them on hand.

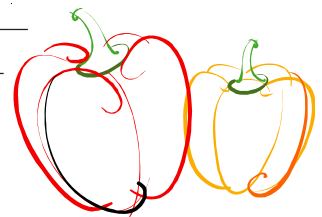
Additional information

For more information about nutrition, contact your **local NDSU Extension Service office** or visit www.ag.ndsu.edu.

Grocery List

- 1 cup berries
- 1 apple or pear
- 3 kiwi
- 1 fresh lemon or juice
- 1 small bag of pecan pieces or granola
- 1 small container of plain, low-fat yogurt

Other items



This publication may be copied for noncommercial, educational purposes in its entirety with no changes. Requests to use any portion of the document (including text, graphics or photos) should be sent to permission@ndsuxt.nodak.edu. Include exactly what is requested for use and how it will be used.

For more information on this and other topics, see: www.ag.ndsu.edu