

# Five-a-Day: The Vegetable Challenge

Adults and children are encouraged to eat at least three vegetables and two fruits each day. As good sources of fiber and vitamins A and C, they promote health, growth, and development. They add color and texture to the plate, and flavor to a meal.

- **Add veggies to a child's favorites.** Mix peas into macaroni and cheese. Add carrot shreds to spaghetti sauce, chili, lasagna, even peanut butter. Put zucchini shreds into burgers or mashed potatoes.
- **"Fortify" ready-to-eat soup with extra vegetables or canned beans.**
- **Offer raw finger-food veggies.** Children may prefer uncooked vegetables. Offer salsa, bean dip, or plain yogurt flavored with an herb or spices as a dip.
- **Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top of veggies.**
- **Start a "veggie club."** Try to taste vegetables from A to Z, and check off letters of the alphabet as you go! As you shop, let children pick a new vegetable as a family "adventure." Post a tasting chart on the refrigerator to recognize your family tasters.
- **Let your child help you prepare it for eating.** Even young children can shell peas, pop beans, separate broccoli florets, shuck corn, and wash lettuce.
- **Give the vegetable a funny name.**
- **Serve it when your child is hungry, not when he/she is filled up on other food items.**
- **Seat him/her next to a child who loves vegetables and let peer pressure work its magic.**
- **Eat it yourself, with obvious enjoyment.**
- **Grow veggies together.** If you don't have a garden, plant a container garden. Most children eat vegetables they grow!
- **From your library, check out children's books about vegetables.** Read the story, then taste the veggie together!
- **Don't assume he/she will never like it.** Some children take longer than others to feel comfortable with certain foods, so let it reappear occasionally.
- **Nothing works?** Offer more fruit, which is another source of Vitamins A and C!

Source: Duyff, RL. 1996. The American Dietetic Association's Complete Food & Nutrition Guide. Minneapolis, MN: Chronimed Publ. OCHD Nutrition Services February 2004



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