

Fruits Vs.Veggies ... Texture, Size and Shape Matter

Parents often struggle with getting their kids to eat vegetables and wonder if fruit is just as good? Fruits contain many of the same vitamins and minerals as vegetables, but in different proportions. It's ideal for kids to get a mix of both. But if fruit is all your child will stomach, it's certainly a great choice.

The Cons of Shunning Vegetables?

Vegetables contain some unique compounds that fight cancer and heart disease, and many of these are not available from fruits.

Fruit also tends to be higher in calories than vegetables.

Helpful Tips to Get Your Kids to Eat More Fruits and Veggies:

Get Colorful: Be sure to continue to offer a wide range of colorful fruits and veggies -kids tastes change and you don't want to miss out on your child adding a new food to his/her diet.

Experiment:

Try adding a vegetable that you do not typically serve, or offer it in a different form, or shape.

Spring rolls with lettuce and carrots (not fried) or lightly steamed edamame, (which kids enjoy popping out of the pods) served with soy sauce, are also kid- friendly choices. Sometimes it's just a matter of texture over taste.

Live a Grocery Adventure: Have your child find a new veggie to try at the grocery store. Check out these fun activities with the Super Crew: [All the Colors of the Super Market](#) and our [fun grocery store activities, recipes and lesson plan](#).

Familiarize:

Less familiar veggies such as jicama (pronounced Hic-a-ma), celery, or sugar snap peas may spark his/her interest.

Twist it Up: A slight tweak in preparation may change your child's mind about a certain vegetable:

- For example, he/she may not like cooked broccoli, but he/she may like raw broccoli slaw mixed with his/her favorite low-fat ranch dressing.
- Another possibility is trying a variation on that cruciferous staple. For example, cauliflower and broccolini/baby broccoli are less bitter and kids may be more willing to eat them.
- Your kids may not like cooked zucchini cut into coins, but they may like shredded, cooked or raw zucchini.
- Puréed cooked carrots in tomato sauce served with their favorite shaped pasta.

- Try cooked butternut squash in fruit smoothies, pumpkin pancake dinner and shredded zucchini in whole grain muffins.

Fruit for Dinner?

Consider adding fresh fruit with dinner if your child repeatedly skips veggies:

- Mandarin oranges, sliced pears, dried cranberries, dried apricots or chopped apples make good additions to salads, rice or stuffing
- Applesauce is a good side dish, and don't forget other fruity sides such as mango or pineapple salsa
- Include orange or grapefruit slices, baked apples or baked pears, fried bananas (slice and heat with a teaspoon of canola oil -it's delicious) or frozen fruit pops for an after dinner dessert. Check out [Super Crew kid](#), [Baby Tom-Tom's watermelon pops](#).

The Psychology of Veggie Talk:

- Kids don't miss a beat, and hearing you talk about what they don't like will likely increase their resistance.
- Don't bribe or reward kids for eating their vegetables, it can backfire later.
- "Sneaking" veggies into foods is controversial, but don't be afraid to sneak in veggies. I make a mean turkey meatloaf with all sorts of undetectable vegetables including minced and pre-cooked onions, chives, herbs, carrots, and zucchini.

All of these tips help create an open environment of trying new foods. Always let the choice of whether to try a food rest with your child. With small children, you can even tell them they have to try one bite, but if they don't like it, spit it out. Gently let your child know it can take a few times before they like the taste - so be sure they consider trying it again the next time you're cooking that vegetable or serving that fruit. Think of a food they didn't like before and enjoy now, and use this as an example.