



## Tips for Helping Children Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

- **Offer your child vegetables when he/she is most hungry.**

Have a plate of vegetables ready for kids to eat a half hour before dinner, **before** offering any other foods. Sugar snap peas, baby carrots and grape tomatoes pour right onto the plate. Red peppers and cucumbers are easy to cut, are colorful, and are widely accepted. Vary the assortment, and spice it up if necessary with a cup of dressing for dipping. Always let it be your child's choice to eat. Make this a habit and with time, you'll see great success.

At dinner, serve the salad and vegetable first. Let your kids eat these for a few minutes before serving the remaining food.

Don't let your child graze on foods between meals and scheduled snacks. Allowing him/her to build up an appetite will help immensely with fruit and vegetable consumption at meal time.

- **Don't let kids eat anything except fruits and vegetables in the TV/game room.**

Make a rule that all other foods must be eaten in the kitchen, sitting at the table. You'll be surprised to see how excited your kids and their friends will be when you bring them a plate of vegetables while watching television.

- **Provide new foods often.**

Research has shown that children prefer foods that are familiar over those that are not regardless of appearance or texture. We should therefore make healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, familiar to our children at an early age as possible. Insist that your child eat at least a bite or two, and keep trying even if it doesn't work right away. Some kids need to be exposed ten times or more before getting comfortable with a new food.

- **Avoid buying high calorie, low nutrient snack foods but offer fruits and vegetables instead.**

Kids will eat healthier snacks when there isn't tough competition from junk food. Encourage them by pulling out the fruits and vegetables, cutting them up and making them readily available.

- **Praise your child for making healthy choices.**

Make eating fruits and vegetables positive, while avoiding negative comments when your child falls short. The negative comments make food a control issue and can sabotage efforts to get kids to eat healthier.

- **Remind your child to update his Meal & Motion Markers™ chart during the day.**

When your child is hungry and wants a snack, take the opportunity to ask him/her the number of fruits and vegetables he has eaten that day, and remind him to update his Healthy Kids Meal & Motion Markers™ chart. Kids love to fill their chart with photo clings!