

Help Your Children to Enjoy Fruits and Vegetables

Why Fruits and Vegetables?

Eating fruits and vegetables every day is vital for good health. Worryingly, most Irish children do not eat nearly enough of these essential foods!

Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals, fibre, and disease-fighting phytochemicals (*fight-o-chemicals*). Eating plenty of fruits and vegeta-

bles everyday can help reduce the risk of:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Type II diabetes
- Certain cancers

Because they're low in calories and high in fibre, fruits and vegetables can help with weight control. By eating more fruits and vegetables and fewer high-calorie foods, your body finds

it easier to balance your weight.

Fruits and vegetables contain beneficial phytochemicals that "fight" to protect your health. Different fruits/veggies have different nutrients...and you can get a good range by choosing a variety of different colour fruits and veggies...Put a rainbow on your plate!



According to the World Health Organisation, Low intake of fruit and vegetables causes about 19% of gastrointestinal cancer, 31% of ischaemic heart disease and 11% of stroke.

It Should Crunch When You Munch!

- Kids often prefer raw vegetables. Try carrots, celery, peppers, courgette or broccoli - carrot or apple sticks make a great snack
- Cover fresh fruit slices with fruit juice and refrigerate to keep them fresh
- Cook vegetables until they are just tender - crunchy vegetables are much more appealing to children...they are also much more healthy...avoid over-cooking vegetables!

Why Children?

Fruits and veggies are really important for children. For example, heart disease has its roots in childhood...by helping your children to develop good habits, you will be protecting them in later life. If your children snack on fruit rather than high-sugar snacks it will help them to concentrate as well as helping them to avoid illness.

Set an Example

Who is your child's most important role-model? You are! Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and you'll be a healthy role model for the whole family. Try to add some fruit to your breakfast, and dip into the fruit bowl whenever you feel like snacking.



Many fruits and vegetables, like the cabbage shown here, can help protect against certain cancers. The phytochemicals (FIGHT-O-CHEMICALS) in fruits and veggies are essential for health. DON'T OVERCOOK!

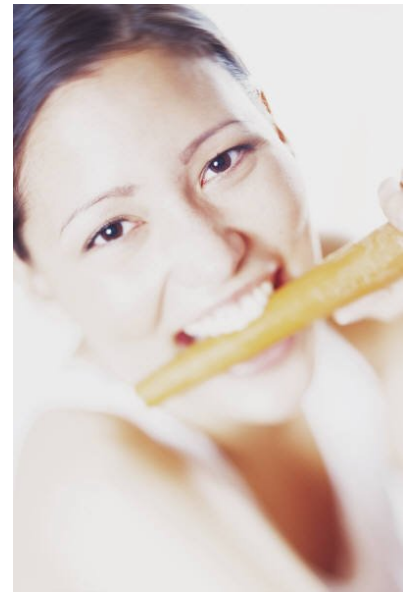


Chop, Chunk, Munch Crunch!

- Kids love to eat fruit salads...chop up a variety of seasonal fruits and cover with some cloudy apple juice or whole orange juice
- Serve with some low-fat yoghurt, or a blob of ice cream for a healthy dessert
- Pack fruit salad into Tupperware for a healthy school snack
- Slice up fruit that is on special offer at the supermarket...simply slicing fruit onto a plate often tempts children

Go on, Try it!

- Let your children decide whether to eat fruits and vegetables - and how much to eat. It's never a good idea to force children to eat!
- Likes and dislikes change - If children don't like something the first time, wait a few weeks and try again!
- Make fruit/veggies *easy*...have a fruit bowl within easy reach and allow children to snack on fruit/veg whenever they like
- Be positive! Never say "if you eat your broccoli, you'll get a treat"...instead, talk about broccoli like it *is* a treat...your children will pick up on this!



Tomatoes are incredibly healthy, being protective against certain cancers. Try adding canned tomatoes and tomato purée to stews and casseroles. This is a cheap way to bulk up a meal, makes the stew richer, and is very healthy!

Involve

- Get children involved with shopping and food preparation – they will be more likely to sample the fruits of their labour
- Let children choose some fruits/veggies for themselves when you are shopping, and let them help wash veggies for dinner

Health by Stealth

If all else fails, you can disguise vegetables easily - pureed vegetables can be added to mashed potato, chopped vegetables like carrot, onion, pepper and courgette can be added to spaghetti Bolognese or stews, and home made vegetable soup can be blended to a smooth consistency

Fruit & Veggies for Health...5-10 pieces a day!

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