



NutritionWise

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M NUTRITIONWISE MONTHLY

SEPTEMBER 2008

NATIONAL FRUITS AND VEGGIES... MORE MATTERS MONTH™

September is National Fruits and Veggies... More Matters Month™! It is the perfect time to try to increase our consumption of fruits and vegetables. For most of us, increasing fruit consumption is easier than increasing vegetable consumption, especially in children. We know that vegetables are good for us... but why do our kids refuse them and how can we help our kids eat more?

Few foods elicit such anxiety in parents and fear in children. Why are these vitamin, mineral and anti-oxidant packed foods so often refused? Vegetables are a complex food with a strong sometimes bitter flavor. Children's taste buds are far more sensitive than adults, especially for bitter tastes. A mouthful of cabbage or broccoli will have a far stronger taste for a child. There are some children though who naturally love vegetables, while others prefer the sweeter taste of fruit. Some studies have shown that preference for fruits or vegetables is genetic, but these same studies have indicated that all children can learn to like vegetables, it is usually a matter of time and presentation.

What works for encouraging children to eat vegetables?

- » Eat vegetables. What a mother eats when pregnant and especially when breastfeeding her baby influences an infant's food preference. Watching parents enjoy eating vegetables will encourage children to do so as well. So, if you want your child to eat vegetables, you need to eat them as well.
- » Familiarity. Offer vegetables frequently. Frozen vegetables are great to use as you can take out 2-3 pieces and offer the rest throughout

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Rainbow Citrus Slaw Salad Serves 6

Adapted from "Fast, Fun & Fit . . . Food for Your Family Vegetable Recipes" by the California Department of Health Services.

Read the book *Cabbage Moon* by Tim Chadwick and Piers Harper then have your child help you make the salad.

Ingredients:

Dressing

¼ cup rice vinegar

¼ cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed

Salad

1 cup of shredded Nappa cabbage

1 cup of shredded purple cabbage

2 cups of shredded dark green leafy lettuce

2 cans mandarin oranges drained or 2 oranges peeled and segmented

1 red apple, halved, cored and diced

½ cup shredded carrots

optional: ¼ cup sliced green onions or sprinkle of toasted almonds

Directions:

In a large bowl mix rice vinegar and the orange juice. Add remaining ingredients. Toss thoroughly.

the week. Don't expect a child to eat the vegetable the first time you serve it. Let the first encounter be a "getting to know you" meal. For many foods, it takes 10-20 "introductions" before a food becomes part of the child's food repertoire. Some new cookbooks suggest sneaking vegetables into food. This may be helpful for introducing the flavor BUT not helpful for encouraging a long-term acceptance of

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vegetables. Instead of “hiding” carrots in the cake, make carrot cake with your child and let your child know that this is just another way to eat carrots. Sneaking veggies into sweets can also teach the wrong message. By encouraging consumption of broccoli infused brownies, you might also be encouraging consumption of regular high fat and sugar rich brownies as well. Eating is a relationship built on trust and sneaking undermines that trust.

- » Don't demonize vegetables. Bribery, forcing, demanding, rewarding -- All of these techniques make vegetables very unattractive. If your child has to eat the cauliflower before they can have the ice cream, your child may begin to dislike the cauliflower even if s/he liked it before because the cauliflower becomes a barrier to the dessert.
- » Presentation. Children are also very sensitive to the texture of foods. Do you think your child would like a crunchy cucumber or a soft sweet potato? Think about how you are serving the vegetable. Over- cooked vegetables can be mushy and bitter.

Fruit-loving children often prefer milder or sweeter vegetables such as cucumbers, carrots, corn, sweet potato or cauliflower. Sometimes raw carrots, broccoli or cauliflower are just too hard to chew for younger children. Lightly steam them first and then keep in the refrigerator for easy access. Make a rainbow salad with your child, together you can slice, toss and mix. Try new vegetables, have a different color vegetable each night. Try shredded purple cabbage with poppy-seed dressing or open up some fresh pea pods and count the peas inside.. Look at the books *Play with Your Food* or *Food Play* by Joost Elffers or *Entertaining Edibles* by Sidney Escowitz, (then try to make them at home).. Be positive about the color, flavor, texture and smell as you explore new and different colorful vegetables.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NutritionWise is a group of Registered Dietitians including Nicole Meadow, MPN, RD (pediatric dietitian), Patricia Novak, MPH, RD, CLE (pediatric dietitian) and Christi Salem, MS, RD (adult dietitian). Please visit www.nicolemeadow.com for more information or call (818) 304-1876 to schedule an appointment.

Upcoming NutritionWise Events

September 20 | 10 am - 5 pm
 Stop by the NutritionWise booth at the Cradle to College Expo Encino Park
 16953 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91316

September 22 | 6 - 7 pm
 Teen Sports Nutrition Class
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

October 4 | 10 - 11 am
 Introduction to the Gluten Free Diet Class
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

October 16 and 18 | 10 - 11 am
 ABC's of Preschool Nutrition Class
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

October 20 | 6 - 7:30 pm
 Food Allergy Support Group
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

October 21 and 25 | 10 - 11 am
 Prenatal Nutrition Class
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

October 27 | 7 - 8 pm
 Breastfeeding Class
 16055 Ventura Blvd, Encino
 Register online www.nicolemeadow.com

The information contained in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. See your physician and/or Registered Dietitian for individual health and/or dietary concerns.