



how to get kids to eat vegetables

Many parents complain they can't get their kids to eat vegetables, often giving up after the first few tries. But teaching your kids to develop a love for vegetables is one of the best gifts you can give them, since it will be with them for a lifetime.

why veggies are important

A vegetable-rich diet is known to protect against cancer, heart disease, and several other degenerative conditions. While these are commonly considered to be diseases of adulthood, they actually take decades to develop, so getting early protection in childhood is vitally important.

Kids need five or more servings of a variety of fruits and vegetables each day, with a suitable serving being approximately the size of their handful.

five ways to get kids eating

1. Set a good example. The “do as I do” approach is more powerful than “do as I say.” One U.S. study of five-year-old girls found that vegetable intake was higher among those whose parents also ate more vegetables.

2. Don't use dessert as a reward. Trying to bribe children with “something nice” they can eat afterwards is the worst thing you can do, as it will further reinforce their belief that vegetables are horrible things. It's better to use nonfood incentives such

as a story or a trip to the park.

3. Involve your children. As much as is possible and appropriate, let them help you choose, peel, chop, taste, and help you grow vegetables. Familiarity and direct contact with new foods are needed to create interest and acceptance.

4. Offer new foods many times. Research shows that kids may have to be exposed to new flavors and foods as much as eight to ten times before they will accept them. So don't give up after the third or fourth rejection!

5. Sneak in the goodness. While you are training the “die hards,” add finely grated, cubed, or pureed veggies to bolognese or nacho sauce, lasagna, curries, and smooth soups.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.