



NETA

**Nutrition Education Training Academy
Newsletter
For Early Childhood Education Providers**

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Vegetables...From Plain to Gourmet



Vegetables are not only part of a healthy diet for children -- providing important nutrients for growth and development -- but they also can help in controlling excessive weight gain. How can we get our children to eat their veggies?

Joan Carter, R.D., an instructor in the Department of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and a cordon-bleu trained chef, says that "to get kids to eat vegetables, they must be available when and where kids tend to eat, be very easy-to eat, and taste good".

Here are some tips that Carter gives to help make plain vegetables more tempting to children:

- Offer a new vegetable at the beginning of the meal when small children are the hungriest. Serve vegetables in new combinations. Mix a child's favorites (such as potatoes, peas, and carrots) with other vegetables that they are less likely to eat (such as broccoli and cauliflower).
- Since children are born liking sweet tastes, it's all right to add a little sugar to help make healthy foods more appealing. Using a little fat or salt can also work. Just be sure to add a little for taste – not too much! Some ideas: Carrots cooked in chicken stock and a little sugar; broccoli topped with low-fat cheese sauce; squash added to homemade muffins.
- Try new ways of preparing vegetables. How about adding fresh veggies to a stir-fry or a favorite dish (such as peas with macaroni and cheese; soft cooked carrots blended into mashed potatoes)? Oven-baked sweet potato 'fries' seasoned with a touch of sugar, cinnamon and cloves can become a child's favorite while being a high fiber, vitamin A rich alternative to white potatoes.

Use your creativity to encourage children to eat more vegetables and be a good role model. Do your children see you eating your veggies? Can they see your excitement when finding and trying new ones? Take children to a local Farmers' Market or start your own gourmet vegetable garden. Include them in the transformation of a 'plain' vegetable into a 'gourmet' vegetable by having them involved in the preparation (such as washing, cutting or shredding) whenever possible.

Carter's best advice: "Don't give up. It may take some time before kids try a vegetable and it might take a lot of tries before they begin to like it". Keep offering vegetables at each meal, encouraging children to try one bite. If they don't like it, that's fine. Trying unfamiliar foods can be less scary for young children if they are allowed to stop at one bite if they choose. Forcing them to eat something they really don't like will only make the situation worse.

Bon Appetit!

Reference:

1. USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine. <http://www.kidsnutrition.org>.

Start Off the New Year with a BANG! Healthier Choices for Meetings, Conferences & Events



Knowing that a poor diet may contribute to the development of many conditions such as heart disease, some cancers, stroke, diabetes, overweight and obesity, many people make New Year’s Resolutions that include renewed commitments toward a healthier and more nutritious lifestyle. Are you in this category? If so, you know that eating healthier involves more than just choosing and eating the right foods. The environment away from home is important too. Sure, selecting foods that promote better health is easy when you’re doing the shopping, preparation and cooking, but what happens when you are not in control of these activities?

Here’s a scenario: You attend an early morning meeting at work. They have a beautiful table spread out with lots of food, which is terrific because you’re starving since you skipped breakfast this morning. Donuts, sweet pastries, giant-size muffins ... rich, creamy foods that make your mouth water but are high in sugar, fat, and calories. What should you do? Oh well, guess you’ll watch what you eat and get back on the healthy eating track **after** this meeting.

Does this situation sound familiar? Although we’re not always in control of the kinds of refreshments served at meetings or conferences hosted by someone other than ourselves, we can still make an effort to set an example of a “model host” for our colleagues.

The Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) Nutrition Division gives the following guidelines that can be used when selecting foods and beverages for any meal or refreshment served during meetings, conferences and other work-related events.

Guideline	Try these foods...
Offer a variety of grains - especially whole-grain foods - and fruits and vegetables	Fresh fruit and salads; fresh and cooked vegetables; whole-grain breads, pasta and cereals; low-fat, whole-grain muffins; fruit breads; or granola bars
Provide fat-free, low-fat or low calorie foods & beverages	Fat-free/low-fat dressings or toppings such as salsa, low-fat yogurt dressing and sweet mustard. Low-fat or low calorie desserts such as angel food cake. Low-fat or skim milk; low-fat yogurt or cheeses. Lean meats, poultry or fish; cooked dried beans, peas and lentils
Offer foods and beverages low in added sugars	Spreads; cereal bars; water; 100% fruit juices; regular and decaffeinated tea or coffee
Serve foods that are low in salt and sodium	Unsalted pretzels, popcorn or baked chips. Grilled or roasted entrees. Entrees cooked with spices and herbs instead of salt
Include smaller portions	Mini-muffins, mini-bagels, 1” low-fat cheese squares
Consider offering only beverages at mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks	

Try these guidelines and ideas for the next meeting, conference or event that you’re involved in hosting. You’ll not only be contributing to a healthier **you** but, also a more nutritious and healthier community!



Reference:
1. Center for Disease Control. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnnpa/nutrition.htm>

Farmers' Market News

Seasonal Ethnic Fruits & Vegetables: Pummelos

Here's an interesting, healthy and nutritious produce – a source of Vitamin C and potassium -- that you may find at your local Farmers' Market this Winter.

Although they look like a large grapefruit, and are in fact related to them, pummelos have a thicker skin. The white to dark pink, firm flesh is less acidic, less juicy but sweeter than a grapefruit. Pummelos can be stored at room temperature for a few days but, refrigerate them for longer storage.

Pummelos are also called the "Chinese grapefruit" and are popular for Chinese New Year. A sign of prosperity and good fortune, the pummelo brings good luck to those who eat them.

Try the tasty pummelo recipe below.



References: <http://www.uga.edu/fruit/citrus.htm>

Nutritious Seasonal Recipes

Fresh Pummelo & Avocado Salsa



Ingredients:

- ½ cup diced fresh pummelo segments
- 1 cup diced avocado
- ½ cup diced red bell pepper
- ¼ cup chopped green onion
- pinch of salt (optional)
- pinch of pepper (optional)

Method:

1. Combine pummelo, avocado, red bell pepper and green onion.
2. Gently toss to blend.
3. Season with pinch of salt and pepper, if desired.
4. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Can be served with baked whole wheat tortilla wedges.

Prep: 5 min; Servings 2
<http://www.sunkist.com>

Chickpea Dip with Vegetables



Ingredients:

- 1 12.5-oz. can chickpeas, drained and rinsed well
- 1 cup plain low fat yogurt
- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 drops hot pepper sauce (optional)
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and diced
- ¼ red onion, diced
- 1 carrot, grated
- 2 Roma tomatoes, finely chopped

Method:

1. Blend chickpeas, yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil and hot sauce (optional) in a blender until smooth.
2. Transfer dip to a shallow serving bowl, and place the colorful vegetables on top, leaving an outer rim of dip to be seen.
3. Serve with pita bread or toasted wheat bread triangles.

Prep: 15-25 min; Servings 6
<http://www.foodreference.com>

Physical Activity Corner



Do you know about the many benefits of being physically active but are having difficulty fitting it into your day or maintaining it as part of your routine? If you've been physically inactive for a while, it's not too late. With a little planning and creativity, you'll be able to fit at least 30 minutes of physical activity into your busy life. Here are some sensible tips to start out slowly:

- Choose moderate-intensity activities that you enjoy – you'll be more likely to stick with them.
- Start out gradually and then build up the time spent being physically active. By adding a few minutes every few days to your physical activity time, you'll comfortably reach at least the 30 minutes recommended and you'll be more apt to maintain it.
- After you've met the goal for the minimum amount (30 minutes every day), keep the momentum -- gradually increase either the length of time performing the physical activity or the intensity of the physical activity or both.
- Keep your physical activity routine interesting and broaden the range of benefits by varying the type of activities.
- Try new physical activities that are of interest to you. Explore the many ways of being physically active.
- Acknowledge your efforts and reward yourself.

A few simple ways to get you started: play with children or pets...garden...take fitness breaks like walking or desk exercises...exercise while watching TV...dance to music...keep a pair of comfortable walking or running shoes in your car or workplace...have a walking buddy or group.

There are 1440 minutes in every day...Schedule 30 of them for physical activity!

Gardening Storybooks



1. *Our Community Garden* by Barbara Pollak, Beyond Words Publishing, Inc., 2004



In this community garden, children plant items that reflect their personality and/or ethnic heritage. The illustrations show the children playing, counting ladybugs and the activities we would do in a garden, such as weeding, digging and making compost mazes. The community garden provides a place for the families to gather and celebrate their harvest with a potluck of dishes.

2. *Two Old Potatoes and Me* by John Coy, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003



This is a story about a father and daughter and their attempt to grow new potatoes from two old potatoes. The story goes through the basic steps for growing potatoes during their growing season of May to September. The father and daughter watch the changes as the new potatoes grow and also the changes in their lives because of the parent's recent divorce.

Nutrition Tidbits

Tips for Parents: Young children are growing rapidly and have increased iron requirements, placing them at risk for iron deficiency. Iron deficiency anemia (which can impair mental and psychomotor development in infants and children) can occur due to lack of iron in the diet. Young children who are iron deficient also have a greater susceptibility to lead toxicity.

Some Practical Ideas: Iron-rich food sources include instant oatmeal; lean beef, chicken and pork; fish/canned tuna; eggs; iron fortified whole grain breads, pasta and breakfast cereals (try to choose those that are unsweetened/low in sugar); tofu (set with calcium sulfate); soy milk; dried beans; dark green leafy vegetables, and dried fruits.

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