

# Nutrition for

## Kids' LIFE

# “More Broccoli, Please!”

Vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. They are filled with many nutrients, and will help children grow up strong and healthy. Getting your child to eat vegetables can be tricky at times and requires you to be patient. Here are some tips and ideas of how you can encourage your children to eat more vegetables.

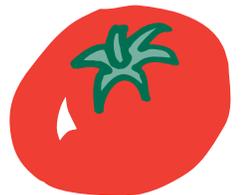
### REMEMBER THAT:

#### ➤ PARENTS are responsible for:

- Providing nutritious meals and snacks.
- Offering a variety of foods. (Include foods from at least three of the food groups at each meal and two at each snack, from USDA's MyPlate, see bottom of page 2.)
- Helping children wash their hands before eating.
- Providing a comfortable place to eat with utensils that fit their child's skills.
- Recognizing that children grow and develop at their own rates and that appetites vary from day to day or meal to meal.
- Setting a good example by eating vegetables they would like their children to include in their diet.

#### ➤ CHILDREN are responsible for:

- Deciding how much to eat.
- Choosing which foods to eat.
- Deciding to eat or not to eat. (Forcing a child to eat results in power struggles that nobody wins!)



### PARENTS CAN PROVIDE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT!

“Good job! You ate your vegetables!”

“Eating your vegetables is going to make you grow big and strong!”

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## WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD

- Let your child help choose and prepare vegetables.
- Serve vegetables often. Try various ways to prepare them.
- Pay attention to the texture and color of cooked vegetables. Many children like them cooked crisp-tender, not mushy. Overcooked vegetables lose their bright attractive colors.
- Serve vegetables, whenever possible, as “finger foods”- small pieces a child can handle.
- Serve salad ingredients as a vegetable tray. Try different dips.
- Serve vegetables as snacks.
- Find out what your child eats at childcare, a neighbor’s or Grandma’s house. A vegetable you never consider serving might be one of your child’s favorites.
- Respect your child’s tastes. Some children are more cautious about trying new foods. Everyone has their own likes and dislikes.



## ➤ GETTING YOUR CHILD INVOLVED

### • **At the grocery store, ask your child:**

Which broccoli is greenest? Let's buy that one, then! Help me count out four potatoes. Do you see something that looks juicy (or crunchy, or shiny)? What kind of vegetable do you want for your meal?"

### • **At home in the kitchen**

#### • **Your toddler can:**

Pick peas out of pods. Help rinse vegetables. Put prepared ingredients into a salad bowl.

#### • **Your preschooler can:**

Stuff celery. Mix and stir. Snap green beans. Tear lettuce leaves. Break off florets of cauliflower.

### • **Suggestions for making sure vegetables are safe to eat:**

Children should sit during all meals and snacks. Turn off the TV and limit other distractions. Eat with your children. Encourage children to take small bites and chew well. Cook hard vegetables, peel and remove seeds, and slice thinly or chop.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center**

<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/>

Go to: Lifecycle Nutrition under “Subject,” then go to: Child Nutrition and Health

### **Kids Health – Nemours Foundation**

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/general/kids\\_cook.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/general/kids_cook.html)

Cooking with Kids

### **My Plate**

[www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html)

