



WAYS TO EXPOSE CHILDREN TO Vegetables and Fruit



- Involve your children in shopping, choosing, and preparing vegetables and fruit. Children are more likely to eat the foods they helped prepare.
- Use fun, easy-to-open containers for packed lunches. Let children fill them with the veggies or fruit of their choice.
- Keep vegetables and fruit visible. Have a bowl on the counter with fresh fruit such as apples, oranges, or bananas. Refrigerate cut-up vegetables and fruit in reusable containers for ready-to-go snacks.
- Serve a new vegetable or fruit along with a familiar one that your child likes. Consider adding a tasty, nutritious dip such as hummus, guacamole, or plain yogurt.
- Change it up. Toss some blueberries in with the usual apple slices or serve mixed frozen vegetables instead of a single veggie (e.g., green peas). Exposing children to a variety of vegetables and fruit helps them become familiar with different flavours and textures.
- Practise patience! Children may need to see a new food 10–15 times before tasting it. Keep offering new vegetables or fruit at meal and snack times without any pressure, coaxing, or rewarding.
- Set regular meal and snack times so children are hungry and ready to eat. Offer only water between meals and snacks.
- Be a positive role model. Children will follow your example. They are more likely to eat a variety of vegetables and fruit if they see you enjoying them on a regular basis.

SAVVY SOLUTIONS TO SPECIAL CHALLENGES:

- Save on prep time. Use pre-packaged fresh, frozen, or canned veggies and fruit, or buy salad-in-a-bag.
- Be smart about storage. To extend the shelf life of your produce, use storage tips from the Canadian Produce Marketing Association at cpma.ca
- Make it a priority. Once a week take an hour to wash, peel, or chop vegetables for quick access as needed.
- Avoid waste. Make a weekly menu and buy the amount of vegetables and fruit you need for each meal and snack. Rework any leftovers into the next meal or snack (e.g., toss leftover veggies into an omelette, salad, or pasta). Stock up on frozen or canned vegetables and fruit as a backup if you run out of fresh produce.
- Save money by reading the weekly flyers for sales or coupons for vegetables and fruit. Buy local or in-season produce. Include frozen and canned vegetables and fruit; they can be cheaper, especially in the winter, and last longer than fresh produce.
- Enjoy fresh, local vegetables and fruit that are available all year long. To see when vegetables and fruits are in season, visit Foodland Ontario at ontario.ca/foodland
- Remove the competition. Make sure your kids aren't filling up on chips, cookies, and sugary drinks between meals and snacks. Keep healthy choices on hand for fast and easy snacking, such fruit or veggie sticks and hummus.