



# Qvhd-TIPS

## A FAMILY HEALTH LETTER



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# IT's Fruit and Veggie Time!

The winter has finally passed. Warm weather has arrived. We turn from "winter comfort foods" to the anticipated abundance of new crops of fruits and vegetables. But can we get our families (especially the kids) to increase their fruit and vegetable intake? This issue will offer ideas on how to get your family involved and eating more fruits and vegetables.

### WHY EAT MORE?

Why the big push for people to increase fruits and vegetables in their diet? The Centers for Disease Control offers these reasons based on current research:

- Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.
- Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health.
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are filling.



### Trending good on fruits, not so good on vegetables!



Trend data collected by the CDC shows that there has been progress from 2003 to 2010 with children age 2-18 eating more fruit, but not more vegetables. The amount of whole fruit (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) increased by 67% from 2003 to 2010 and replaced juice as the main contribution of fruit in children's diets. However, consumption of vegetables did not change from 2003 to 2010. In fact, from 2007-2010, children did not meet any of the recommendations for the amount of fruits and vegetables that they should eat daily.

(Source: CDC Vital Signs, August 2014)

### SHHHH! DON'T TELL MY KIDS. I LIKE FRUIT, BUT DON'T LIKE VEGETABLES!

Perhaps you think you don't like them. But maybe you have never tasted a fresh or frozen version of a canned item. For example, canned spinach is quite intense, but fresh, steamed spinach tastes much different. Maybe some spices will make them more appealing or perhaps combined with other foods. Preparation may be the key to liking them.



### CHILDREN ARE GREAT IMITATORS!

If you don't care for vegetables, you might be passing this idea along to your children. If you don't serve vegetables, your kids don't get to try them. Experts in the field of child nutrition point out that it can take 8-10 times of offering a vegetable or fruit before it is accepted. Go slow and don't give up! If they see you eat it, they may be more inclined to try a bite.

# HOW DO YOU GET KIDS TO EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?



There is no magic formula for getting kids to eat more fruits and vegetable. Offered below are a compilation of ideas from resources on the web:

- Take kids to the farmer's market or grocery store and let them pick out a new fruit or vegetable for the family to try.
- Let children be the "head chef" for a meal. Let children find fruit or vegetable recipes that they can help to prepare.
- Get kids involved in the kitchen! Let them wash, peel, and slice (under supervision of course!)
- Freeze it! Kids like frozen treats. There are recipes for frozen vegetable "pops" as well as fruit pops.
- Smoothie it! You can put a lot into a smoothie along with low-fat yogurt.
- Make it fun! Kids love buffets where they can choose what they want to eat. Put out a selection of vegetables and let them add them to a favorite food like pizza or tacos. Add a vegetable (or two) to a favorite food like pizza or tacos. See who can make the most creative concoction.
- Plant a small garden. You don't need a lot of land. You can grow many vegetables in patio pots. (See below.)
- Have fruits and vegetables accessible. Keep cut up produce handy for snacks.
- Serve with a dip! Kids love to dip. Choose low-fat and/or yogurt-based dips.
- You can sneak them into other foods (although some people do not like this idea.) Bake muffins or cakes with vegetables and fruit. Some recipes call for substituting oil with applesauce.

Don't get discouraged. Children's tastes can change as they grow. The child who would never try asparagus may love it when they get older! Many experts agree that you should not force a child to eat a food they do not want. Some feel the "one bite" rule is reasonable. This may or may not work with your child. Whatever your strategies are, don't make eating fruits and vegetables into a "war zone." This will surely only serve to create stress for everyone.



Sources: WebMD, kidshealth.org and The Summer Tomato.

## HOW MUCH VEGETABLES AND FRUIT DO CHILDREN NEED DAILY?

### GIRLS

AGE	FRUIT	VEGETABLES
2-3	1 CUP	1 CUP
4-8	1-1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS	1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS
9-13	1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS	2 CUPS
14-18	1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS	2 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS

### BOYS

AGE	FRUIT	VEGETABLES
2-3	1 CUP	1 CUP
4-8	1-1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS	1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS
9-13	1 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS	2 <sup>1/2</sup> CUPS
14-18	2 CUPS	3 CUPS

These amounts are for children who get less than 30 min/day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. More active children may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

SOURCE: USDA, www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

## WHAT COUNTS AS A CUP?

The CDC website for nutrition states that one cup refers to a common measuring cup (the kind used in recipes). In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 100% vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the vegetable group. One cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or 1/2 cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the fruit group. They give the following examples:

### 1 CUP

Small apple wedge  
Large banana  
Large bell pepper  
Large orange  
Medium pear  
2-3 medium plums  
8 large strawberries  
Medium potato  
2 large stalks of celery  
Large bell pepper  
1 cup cooked greens  
2 cups raw greens  
Small wedge watermelon  
12 baby carrots  
Large sweet potato

### 1/2 CUP

Medium cantaloupe slice  
16 grapes  
1/2 medium grapefruit  
4 large strawberries  
6 baby carrots  
Large plum  
5 broccoli florets  
Snack container of applesauce (4 oz.)  
Small box of raisins



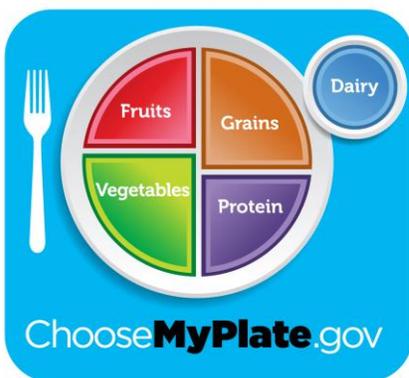
(Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/cup.html#cup>)

# BRING OUT THE FARMER IN YOUR FAMILY!

**Kids love to plant and watch things grow. This may encourage them to eat their own homegrown vegetables with pride. You don't have to have a huge space to grow vegetables. Even if you have the space, you might feel overwhelmed by the idea of a garden and its maintenance. So start small!**

**You can grow many vegetables in patio pots. All you need are pots (make sure you give them drainage holes), water, sunshine and some vegetable plants or seeds. Many varieties can be grown. Start small with a couple of pots. If it goes well, expand to more varieties next year. If your sun space is limited, put your pots in a wheelbarrow and move them to follow the sun.**

**You can grow tomatoes, beans, peas, cucumbers, peppers, salad greens, herbs, carrots and more. The pictures below can give you some ideas on how to get started.**



The ChooseMyPlate.gov website has lots of ideas on nutritional eating, grocery shopping, meal planning, weight management, gardening and so much more! There are lots of interactive tools and games. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov> soon to learn more.

# Understanding Organic



## ORGANIC SEAL OF APPROVAL

If a product is completely organic such as fruits, vegetables, eggs or other single-ingredient foods, they can be identified as 100% organic. Other foods can be called organic if they are at least 95% organic. The term "made with organic ingredients" can be used on products that contain at least 70% organic ingredients. There is a special seal that the USDA created that can be used by the first two groups. It is voluntary and does not have to appear on the package. The organic seal cannot be used on the "made with organic ingredients" products. Foods containing less than 70% organic ingredients can't ever use the term "organic" on their packaging.

## WHAT DOES ORGANIC MEAN?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a program, started in 2002, that addresses the term "organic." Organic food is governed by the way the food is produced following guidelines that address factors such as the soil that is used, animal raising practices, pest and weed control, and the use of additives. Farming methods must focus on renewable resources, conservation of soil and water and biodiversity. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is another branch of government that is responsible for protecting public health. With regards to food, it oversees food safety, sanitation and labeling. The FDA does NOT have a legal definition of "organic." It is responsible for nutritional information on packaged foods, ingredients, nutrient content, health claims and allergy information.

## "NATURAL" DOES NOT ORGANIC

Don't confuse the term "natural" with organic. "Natural" is not regulated except for meat and poultry. Natural foods are not subject to government controls beyond the standard regulations and health codes that affect all foods. For meat and poultry, natural generally means free of artificial colors, flavors, preservatives and ingredients.

## What is Right for You?

This is something you have to decide for yourself. Some people believe that organic foods taste better. Others are drawn to them because they don't use harmful chemicals or are drawn to the environmentally-friendly farming methods. Some people won't want to spend the extra money (organic foods are generally more expensive.) Regardless of your decision, you do not have to eat "organically" to choose a healthy diet.

## Are organic foods healthier? Safer?

A large part of the consumer appeal of organic foods is related to how the food is grown and its relationship to the environment. Organic farmers typically do not use chemical fertilizers or herbicides, do not spray insecticides to reduce pests and disease, and do not give antibiotics, growth hormones or medications to animals. However, there is no data to show, and the USDA makes no claim, that organically grown foods are healthier, safer or more nutritious. They can contain as much fat and calories as their counterparts. There may be health benefits for those who have allergies or sensitivities to certain additives or preservatives. Some research also shows that organic foods may have significantly higher levels of antioxidants. There is mixed feeling on safety, with some officials believing organic foods may be less safe because there are no preservatives used, but with the Organic Farmers Association believing the strict production oversight makes the food safer.

The information for this page was taken from the USDA and FDA website. For more information on this topic, visit the webpages and search "organic."

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