



NEWS RELEASE

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Kids Who Won't Eat Vegetables?

Maybe you are fortunate enough to have a child or even children who love vegetables. But it is probably safe to say that for many people, getting children to eat vegetables is a perennial problem. In her book, *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much*, Ellyn Satter, R.D., A.C.S.W., makes the following observations and suggestions.

Parents' attitudes regarding a food can be passed on to the child. Are you a parent who is not particularly fond of vegetables and is it showing? Children will generally learn to enjoy foods, even vegetables that they see others enjoy in a pleasant mealtime atmosphere. Offer vegetables again and again. If the child sees them often enough he will try them. However, refrain from pushing and prodding the child to try them. Just offer them at a later time.

Parents can be overanxious. Take a look at your approach. Satter suggests the tactic of "simply matter-of-factly presenting vegetables (and all other foods) to children, eating the food yourself, and letting children approach them on their own. In that way, eventually they learn to like them. If you try to force vegetables on your child, about the best you can hope for is that eventually he will grow up and eat his vegetables because he should, just like you do."

Three R's for cooking vegetables for best nutrition:

- Reduce the amount of water used;
- Reduce the cooking time;
- Reduce the amount of exposed surface by limiting cutting, paring and shredding.

Overcooking will destroy color, crispness (texture) and some nutrients of the vegetable. Do not add baking soda to retain color because this will destroy nutrients.

Keep in mind that serving sizes for a child are smaller than those for adults. A general guideline for a toddler and preschooler to be well nourished is a serving size of about one tablespoon of vegetable per year of age. For example, two tablespoons of peas would be considered a serving for a two-year old child. More specifically, for children a serving are 1/3 to 2/3 cup of juice, 2 to 4 tablespoons cooked vegetables, or 1/2 to 1 whole carrot or tomato.

Remember that children approach all new foods pretty much the same, including vegetables.

Referenced from: Martha Lopez, UCCE Ventura County; Source: <http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/yf/foods/he482-1.htm>