

NEWS RELEASE

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Encourage Young Children to Eat Vegetables

For many young children, vegetables come under particular scrutiny. But don't despair — with time and patience, even the most finicky eaters can find several veggies they like (and a few they even love!).

Here are some strategies that might help:

- **Don't give in to picky eating.** Offer a variety of foods, including vegetables, and allow children to choose what and how much to eat.
- **If at first you don't succeed, try and try again.** Studies have shown it may take 10 or more tries before a child accepts a new food. Try serving a small portion, so it's less overwhelming and offer new foods with familiar foods.
- **Avoid nagging, forcing, bargaining, or bribing.** All of these tactics will create power struggles and are doomed to fail in the long run. Keep mealtime moods upbeat.
- **Set a good example.** Have family meals together and let your child see you eating a variety of nutritious foods yourself. Also, young children are more likely to eat what their peers are eating, so look for healthy eating opportunities with friends.
- **Involve children in choosing and preparing the vegetables.** For example, let them decide whether you'll have green beans or broccoli tonight, or whether you'll bake zucchini or carrot muffins. Very young children can help with simple tasks like wash lettuce and snapping green beans.
- **Make it fun.** Try making a veggie face (like cucumber eyes, tomato nose, green bean mouth, and shredded carrot hair). Try growing a garden with young children. It can be a raised bed in the back yard or a small container on a sunny porch. Children love to eat vegetables they helped grow and pick.
- **Eat What's In Season.** Vegetables grown close to where you live and eaten in season always taste better. A trip to a local farmers market can also be a great learning experience for young children.



For more information visit our website, http://ucanr.edu/sites/Nutrition_BEST/ or call our office 530-889-7350.

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