



Pleasing Picky Eaters Taste Buds

Making healthful foods appeal to picky eaters can be a real challenge. Child development experts suggest the secret may lie in taking into consideration children's special needs and preferences. One of the keys is making vegetables, grains, and other complex carbohydrates fun to eat.



Mom, don't worry

Picky eaters' food choices often cause parents to worry that their child isn't getting enough to eat or is not getting the proper nutrients. Recent studies indicate such worries are misplaced. When provided with a variety of healthful food choices and left on their own, children not only ate enough but ate well.

And the good news from dieticians is that adding a little bit of sugar to fruits, vegetables, grains, and other nutritious foods can make their taste, texture, and appearance more appealing to children. Please your picky eater with some of these nutritious, tasty choices.

Making healthful food fun food

- Be creative. Cut sandwiches or pancakes with a cookie cutter. Top a green salad with nuts and carrots to make a face. Let kids create their own.
- Let kids help with the grocery shopping. Children take pride in helping and if they choose the shape of pasta, or pick the finest fish or broccoli, they will be more willing to try it.
- Youngsters like bright colors. Add cherry red apple chunks and bright green peas to a child's plate or salad. Serve on colorful plates and place mats.
- Sauce on the side. Children often prefer foods plain, so serve them without sauce, and try serving foods separately rather than mixed up in a casserole or salad.
- Appeal to their taste buds. Youngsters may find vegetables sprinkled with a small amount of sugar before they're cooked more enjoyable to eat.



Carrot Coins

- 1 cup carrots, sliced
- 3 Tbs water
- 1 tsp butter
- 1 tsp sugar



In microwave pan mix carrots, water, and butter. Microwave on high 5-6 minutes until tender-crisp. Sprinkle with sugar and stir.

(Kids can wash the carrots before cooking.)

Makes 2 servings, 60 calories per serving.

Nutrition information per serving

Total Fat: 2.1g
Total Carbohydrates: 26.5g
Protein: 1g
Sodium: 68mg

Fruit and Green Salad

- 2 Tbs plain yogurt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 orange, peeled and cubed
- 1 apple, cubed
- 1 ½ cups lettuce, torn
- 1 tsp walnuts



In a small bowl, mix yogurt, lemon juice, and sugar. In salad bowl, toss lettuce, orange, and apple. Pour dressing over and top with nuts.

(Kids can help peel the oranges and spin the lettuce spinner or tear the lettuce.)

Makes 2 servings, 106 calories per serving.

Nutrition Information per serving

Total Fat: 1.5g
Total Carbohydrates: 24g
Protein: 2g
Sodium: 15mg

Sesame Snow Peas

- 1 cup snow peas
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp soy sauce



In small frying pan heat oil. Add 1 tsp soy sauce and snow peas. Saute for 1-2 minutes until tender-crisp. Remove from burner and mix in sugar and remaining soy sauce. Serve immediately.

(Children can help snap ends of snow peas.)

Makes 2 servings, 65 calories per serving.

Nutrition information per serving

Total Fat: 2.5g
Total Carbohydrates: 8g
Protein: 2.9g
Sodium: 350mg

Microwave Sweet Potato Chips

- 2 cups sweet potatoes, sliced
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 Tbs brown sugar



In food processor thinly slice sweet potatoes. In microwave dish spread out sweet potatoes. Sprinkle with water. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Mix in butter and brown sugar. Microwave another 2-3 minutes. Let sit.

(Children can sprinkle potatoes with water.)

Makes 4 servings. 59 calories per serving.

Nutrition Information per serving

Total Fat: 2g
Total Carbohydrates: 10.2g
Protein: .5g
Sodium: 21mg

Banana Nut Bread



- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 Tbs brown sugar
- 5 Tbs margarine or butter
- 1 egg + 2 egg whites
- 1 1/3 cups mashed ripe bananas (about 3)
- 2 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/3 cup walnuts

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In large bowl cream sugars and margarine or butter. Add eggs and bananas. In separate bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, and salt. Add to banana mixture, along with walnuts. Pour into large loaf pan sprayed with non-stick cooking spray (or use non-stick loaf pan) and bake 1 hour. Cool and slice thinly.

(Kids can mash the bananas.)

Makes 16 servings, 168 calories per serving.

Nutrition information per serving

Total Fat: 5.7g
Total Carbohydrates; 26.5g
Protein: 3.3g
Sodium: 172mg

Creamy Carrot Soup

- 3 cups water
- 4 cups carrots, sliced in circles
- ½ cup onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- ½ bouillon cube
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1/8 tsp ground ginger
- dash cinnamon
- ½ cup fat-free milk



In large saucepan bring water to a boil. Add all remaining ingredients except milk. Reduce heat and simmer for 40 minutes or until carrot and onion are very tender. Remove from heat and pour mixture in batches into food processor or blender. Puree until smooth and return to saucepan. Reduce to low heat and stir in milk, heating until warm but not boiling. Serve warm.

(Kid can push the buttons on the food processor.)

Makes 6 servings, 60 calories per serving.

Nutrition Information per Serving

Total Fat: 0g
Total Carbohydrates: 14g
Sugars: 9g
Dietary Fiber: 3g
Protein: 2g
Sodium: 135mg

Spinach Ziti Casserole

- 1 pound ziti or other pasta
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 16-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 tsp white granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp oregano
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp chili powder
- 10-ounce package frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 16 ounces non-fat cottage cheese
- 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed



Cook pasta according to directions in a large saucepan. When done, drain and return to saucepan. Meanwhile, sauté onion in oil in a medium saucepan over low heat for five minutes. Add tomato sauce, sugar, oregano, pepper, and chili powder and spinach. Cook over low heat for 15 minutes. Add sauce, cottage cheese, and kidney beans to pasta and mix together. Pour into a two-quart baking dish, cover and bake in a 350-degree oven for 20 minutes. If desired, you can skip baking the casserole and just heat thoroughly in pot and serve.

(Kids can squeeze dry the thawed spinach in a paper towel.)

Makes 6 servings, 470 calories per serving.

Nutrition Information per Serving

Total Fat: 4g
Total Carbohydrates: 80g
Sugars: 11g
Dietary Fiber: 7g
Protein: 29g
Sodium: 810mg

Tips

- Children eat small portions. Cut food into small child-size pieces and serve on a small plate. Children are also less likely to choke on small pieces.



- Make sure foods are not too hot or too cold. Foods that are warm or just at room temperature are preferred.
- Encourage children to exercise and stay active. Inactive youngsters may not feel hungry.
- Offer new foods at the beginning of the meal when the child is most hungry. If the youngster rejects the food, take the food away and offer it again on another day. As children become more familiar with a new food they are more likely to try it.

Getting Kids to Eat Their Fruits and Vegetables

- Offer raw vegetables to children over three. Many children don't like cooked, soft vegetables, but do like crunchy vegetables—especially those they can eat as finger foods. Offer raw broccoli, cauliflower, or spinach.
- Try some variations on the traditional peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Add shredded carrots, sliced apple, banana, pear, peach, kiwi, nectarine, berries, or celery sticks. Sprinkling lightly with white sugar or brown sugar can add taste satisfaction and help prevent browning of some fruits.



- In a food processor add fruit or vegetables to cream cheese or ricotta cheese and blend until thoroughly whipped. The mixture makes a great spread for bagels, English muffins, toast, celery or apple slice.

Pear Dip

16-ounce can pears, packed in light syrup or fruit juice, drained

½ cup part skim ricotta cheese

3 Tbsp powdered sugar

1/8 tsp cinnamon

In a blender or food processor, blend all ingredients thoroughly. Serve with fruit slices or graham crackers, if desired.

Makes one cup (eight servings), 45 calories per serving.

Nutrient Information per two tablespoons

Total Fat: 1g

Total Carbohydrates: 8g

Sugars: 6g

Dietary Fiber: 1g

Protein: 2g

Sodium: 20mg

- Just as fruits and vegetables can be fun, desserts can be healthy, too. Serve youngsters fruit yogurts and sorbets, fruit and grain cookies and muffins, or angel food cake topped with fresh fruit.



- Kids pick up good habits from their parents. Set an example by eating healthy foods yourself, including plenty of vegetables. If you eat and enjoy your vegetables, children will learn they taste good.