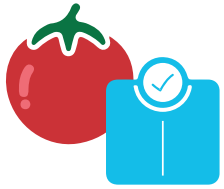




VEGGIES EARLY & OFTEN

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers



Veggies Early & Often are critical to a healthy, happy life. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables can help **prevent chronic diseases** and **support weight management**.



Only **10% of children** consume the recommended amount of vegetables. 30% of toddlers and preschoolers eat less than one serving of vegetables per day.

We now know through exposure Early & Often, **kids can grow to LOVE vegetables.**



Early childhood is a critical period for developing taste preferences. Promoting veggie acceptance among infants is key to establish lifelong healthy eating habits.

IT'S TRUE, BUT HOW?

DO's

- 🍴 Train your baby to like the flavors of veggies early (4-7 months) with one to two spoonfuls of soft or puréed veggies.
- 🍴 Offer many different veggies, as a variety of colors provides many nutrients.
- 🍴 Repeat exposures over and over to develop a love of the veggie tastes.
- 🍴 Role model for kids! Cook and eat veggies together as much as possible.

DON'Ts

- ❌ Don't fret! It is important to focus on the infant's willingness to continue eating, rather than stop at funny faces of surprise or even disgust.
- ❌ Don't give up! It can take up to 10 or more tries for a child to accept a new veggie.
- ❌ Don't hide veggies or mask their flavor. For children to learn to like veggies, their flavors must be tasted.
- ❌ Don't forget to share! Familiarizing baby with the family's diet can help maintain veggie consumption as the child transitions to table food by age two.



Formed in conjunction with Former First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Effort, PHA's mission is to leverage the power of the private sector to transform the food landscape in pursuit of health equity. In January 2021, PHA and a cross-sector group of a dozen inaugural partners launched the *Veggies Early and Often* campaign to educate industry leaders, health professionals, early childhood educators, parents and caregivers about the importance of the early introduction of vegetables.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND VEGGIES EARLY & OFTEN



Veggies early and often are critical to a happy, healthy life!

- Encourage a love of vegetables by feeding a variety of veggies as first foods. Repeat exposure often.
- Veggie flavors must be perceptible. Serve balanced, veggie-forward meals. Avoid added sugar and salt.



Through exposure early and often, kids can grow to love veggies.

- It can take 10 or more tries to accept a new vegetable, texture, or other bitter, umami, or sour tastes.
- Feed your child veggies each day to encourage healthy taste preferences and dietary patterns.



Early veggie variety is key to raising an adventurous, healthy eater.

- Offer a rainbow of colors as the nutrients vary by color and kids learn to love a wider variety of vegetables.
- Do not wait 4-5 days to try the next vegetable. Vegetables are not high allergen foods and waiting is a lost opportunity for acceptance.



Role model for kids - cook and eat a balanced, plant-forward diet.

- Eat healthy foods with your kids.
- Create vegetables into fun shapes and use spices to enhance their flavor.
- Use healthy dipping sauces alongside veggies.

OUR INAUGURAL PARTNERS

COOKING MATTERS
WE SHARE OUR STRENGTH



WASH STATE TRAINING
FRESH BELTIES

Good Feeding

KinderCare
EDUCATION



lil'gourmets
ORGANIC VEGGIE MEALS



nurture life SQUARE BABY TINY ORGANICS

For more information, including our "Yes, Kids CAN Learn to Love Veggies" white paper, visit: www.ahealthieramerica.org

