

Fruit and vegetables



Fresh fruit and vegetables taste great, add variety to any meal and are nutritious. They are an important part of good health, growth and development for children.

By introducing fruit and vegetables early you are setting up healthy eating patterns for life. They are often the first solid food your baby will eat, however, after the first year some children may get fussier as they become more independent eaters. Fruit and vegetables can be expensive, so to keep costs down choose those that are in season and try frozen, canned and dried varieties too.

It is important to offer a variety of colours and textures, which also adds fun and enjoyment.

Colours - different groups provide different vitamins and minerals

Orange – carrots, pumpkins, nectarines, rockmelons, peaches, mangoes

Red – cherries, raspberries, tomatoes, watermelons, apples, strawberries

Blue and purple – blueberries, eggplant, plums

Green – spinach, broccoli, brussel sprouts, peas, beans, kiwi fruit, avocados, zucchinis, pears

White – cauliflower, potatoes, turnips

Yellow – corn, bananas, squash



Textures - help make food more interesting for children

- **Raw**
- **Micro waved**
- **Mashed**
- **Baked**
- **Grated into lasagne, meatballs or spaghetti bolognese**
- **Blended up as a pasta sauce or as a soup**
- **Toppings or garnishes**

Hard raw fruit and vegetables can be a choking hazard for young children – lightly cook or grate these varieties.

Other things to remember:

- **Eat fruit and vegetables in season** - this is nature's way of making sure our bodies get a healthy mix of nutrients
- **Try something new** - a new recipe or a new fruit or vegetable. Never assume that your child dislikes a fruit or vegetable as the next time you offer it they may decide to try it. Children eat what is familiar to them and your child's taste will change with age
- **Be a role model** - if you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child is more likely to do the same. It may take time, but this is how your child will learn, so keep trying
- **Eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables each day** - remember children's serving sizes may be smaller and will depend on age, appetite and activity level. Breastfeeding women should aim to eat four to five serves of fruit and six to seven serves of vegetables to meet the extra demands on their body.

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

www.chdf.org.au

Victorian Health Foundation. Better Health Channel - Fact sheet, Children's diet - fruit and vegetables
Available at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au [-Accessed February 5, 2007]