

## 10 Ways to Sneak Some Extra Fruits and Vegetables in Your Family's Diet

We all know by now that we should be **eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day**. But knowing and doing are two different things, aren't they? Sometimes it is just not easy to get them all in there. We are constantly tempted to fill up on convenience and junk food. **If your family is anything like mine, they'd much rather fill up on a bag of chips or a bowl of rice or pasta instead of trying an apple or a plate of steamed broccoli.** So we'll have to *get creative*. Here are a few ideas to "sneak" some extra vegetables and fruits in your family's diet.

1. **Start the day with a breakfast smoothie.** All you have to do is throw some fruits, low-fat yogurt and ice in a blender. You may also want to add a scoop of protein powder in there for good measure. Just blend for a few seconds and you have the perfect breakfast ready to go. I like to sip mine in a thermal cup on the way to work. To make it even more appealing for your kids, use some frozen yogurt or a scoop of ice cream in the smoothie. They won't believe that you are letting them have ice cream for breakfast.
2. **Dried fruit makes an excellent snack any time of the day.** Add some small cartons of raisins to your child's lunch box pack some yogurt-covered raisins in your husband's briefcase and keep some trail mix sitting around for snacking. You can also add dried fruit to oatmeal and cereal in the morning. My family loves banana chips in their breakfast cereal.
3. **Add some fruits and vegetables to your family's sandwiches.** You can add some banana, sliced apples or strawberry slices to a peanut butter sandwich. Top a turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, cucumber and anything else they will eat. You can even make a sub shop style vegetable sandwich by combining several different vegetables with some mayonnaise and cheese on bread.
4. **Have a salad bar at dinner.** Set out a variety of chopped vegetables, some cheese and croutons as well as several choices of salad dressing along with the lettuce and let everybody create their own perfect salad.
5. **Let them drink their fruits and vegetables.** Keep an assortment of fruit and vegetable juices in the fridge and encourage everyone to drink them as a snack. Get creative. You could start "family cocktail hour" by pouring everybody a glass of his or her favorite juice over ice. Add some straws, cocktail umbrellas and sit together to talk about how everybody's day went.

6. **Try this for dessert.** Put a small scoop of ice cream or frozen yogurt in a bowl and top it with lots of fresh or frozen fruit.
7. **Offer fruits and vegetables as snacks.** You can cut apples into slices and top them with peanut butter or cheese. Cube cheese and serve with grapes. Cut up some fresh veggies and serve them with ranch dip. And of course there are ants on a log. Spread some cream cheese or peanut butter on the inside of a stick of celery and sprinkle raisins on it (wow, fruit and vegetable in one snack).
8. **Try some new fruits and vegetables.** Pick something exotic to get your family's curiosity. With a little luck their curiosity will outweigh their initial apprehension to trying something new. You could try artichokes, plantains, papaya, mango, star fruit, or anything else you can find in the produce department of your local store.
9. **Make a pot of vegetable soup or a stew that's heavy on veggies and easy on the meat.** Both of these make some great comfort food when the weather gets cold.
10. **Start "My Veggie Day".** Each family member gets to pick a vegetable one day of the week. They qualify to pick a vegetable as long as they tried each vegetable the week before, otherwise they lose a turn and Mom gets to pick.

Incorporate a few of these ideas and you will have everyone in your family eating more fruits and vegetables in no time.

Here is another tip:

Now that everyone in the family has gotten a taste for it, make sure you always have plenty of fresh fruits and veggies available and ready to snack on.

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