

Kids Eat Right Month

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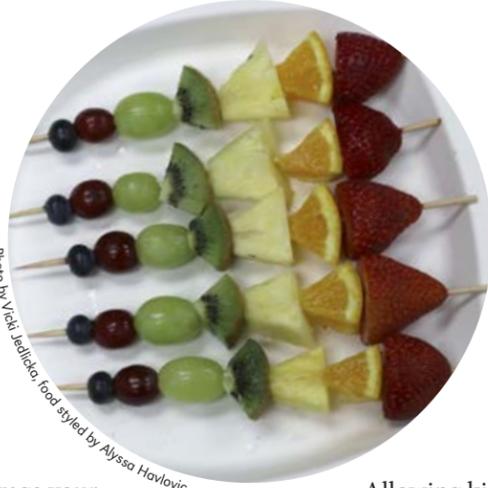


Photo by Yvett Jedjoko, food styled by Alyssa Havlovic



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Many families focus on starting a new school year in August by finding backpacks and filling them with school supplies. It is also important for families to focus on healthful eating and active lifestyles. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates Kids Eat Right Month every August to help families adopt nutritious eating habits.

Everything we eat and drink matters to promote health. Find a healthy eating style that works for you and your family. Start by eating a variety of healthy foods from the five MyPlate food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, protein and dairy. Choose foods that contain more vitamins and minerals, and less saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. In order to build healthier eating styles over time, start with small changes.

Children ages 2–11 years old who have appropriate eating habits and regular physical activity achieve optimal physical and cognitive development, maintain a healthy weight, enjoy food and reduce the risk of chronic disease, according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Check out the following tips to help kids learn and practice healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.

Be a Healthy Role Model

In order to help kids develop healthy eating habits, parents/guardians need to set a good example by being a healthy role model.

- Show your child how to eat healthy by choosing vegetables, fruits and whole grains for meals or snacks.
- When grocery shopping, teach your child about food and nutrition while discussing where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy and protein foods come from. Encourage your child to select healthy choices.
- Serve a variety of healthful foods at each meal and offer the same

foods for everyone. It will be easier to plan for family meals if you don't make different dishes to please your child.

- Involve your child in meal planning to help select foods for meals and snacks. Offer choices by asking, "Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?" instead of "Do you want broccoli for dinner?"
- To get your child to try something new, offer one new food at the beginning of the meal along with something your child likes. Remember to try new foods yourself and describe its taste, texture and smell. Discourage all family members from saying negative comments or making faces when trying new foods.
- Make it a priority to sit down together to enjoy meals as a family. Focus on each other by learning about everybody's day. Remember to talk about happy things, turn off the television and not allow phones during the meal.

Make Fruits and Veggies More Appealing

Help your kids eat right by keeping fruits and vegetables readily available and easy to access. Spend a few extra minutes when you return from the grocery store to cut up fresh vegetables and store them in clear containers in the refrigerator. Display fresh fruits, such as bananas, apples and oranges in a bowl on the kitchen counter. These simple tasks will encourage EVERYONE in your household to choose fruits and vegetables more often.

Encourage your children to eat more fruits and vegetables by creating fun ways to eat them.

- Try "Bugs on a Log" by spreading peanut butter on celery, cucumber or a carrot stick. Top it with raisins, dried cranberries or blueberries as the "bugs."
- Blend a smoothie with fresh, frozen or canned fruit and low-fat milk or yogurt. Add a large handful of spinach and blend well for an added nutrition punch you and your child can hardly taste!
- Make a healthy yogurt dip for fruits and vegetables — kids love to dip their food! Add herbs or garlic to plain yogurt for dipping vegetables or use low-fat vanilla yogurt for a fruit dip.
- Create a fruit kabob using chunks of seasonal fresh produce. Try melons, grapes, apples, pears, or oranges.
- Make fruit "popsicles" by freezing strips of washed and cut melons for a refreshing snack.
- Try inserting a stick into a peeled banana, roll it in low-fat yogurt, then shredded coconut and freeze for a healthy dessert option.
- Mix up your own trail mix using almonds, peanuts, cashews or sunflower seeds combined with your favorite dried fruits such as dried cherries, apples, apricots or pineapple.

Involve Kids in the Kitchen

Kids may be more willing to try new foods if they are involved in making them.

Allowing kids to help in the kitchen teaches them important life skills related to healthy food and good nutrition. Involving kids in the kitchen is also a great way to develop fine motor skills in young children and practice math, science and reading skills for school-aged kids!

Here is a list of age-appropriate tasks for your young kitchen helper:

- At 2 years, they can: Pick produce from the garden, rinse fruits and vegetables.
- At 3–5 years, they can: Use cookie cutters, mix ingredients, name and count foods.

- At 6–7 years, they can: Crack an egg, deseed peppers, prepare lettuce for salad, measure and mix ingredients.
- At 8–9 years, they can: Use a can opener, beat eggs, light chopping of fruits and vegetables.
- At 10–12 years, they can: Follow a recipe, boil pasta or vegetables, use small appliances like a blender or food processor.

Sources:

- Kids Eat Right Month Media Materials. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, <https://bit.ly/2PWAbQT>
- Choose MyPlate. USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, www.choosemyplate.gov

PIZZA BOATS

(4 Servings)

- 2 6-inch French rolls
- 3/4 cup pizza sauce
- 1/4 cup Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup green pepper, chopped*
- 1/4 cup onion, chopped*

1. Preheat oven to 475°F.
2. Cut French rolls in half as you would to make a sandwich. Place each half on a baking sheet. Spread pizza sauce over each half.
3. Top each half with Mozzarella cheese, green pepper and onion.
4. Bake for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

*Add variety to your pizzas with other vegetables and toppings, such as black olive, pineapple, tomato and mushroom

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories 120, Total Fat 3g (4% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (7% DV), Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 380mg (16% DV), Total Carbohydrate 19g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (7% DV), Sugars 2g, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 25%, Calcium 10%, Iron 8%.



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