

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Fruits & Veggies AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

by Susan Figaro Grace, MEd, RD, CWC

Good nutrition begins at home – and continues at school. The new USDA school-meal regulations promote meals rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits and foods lower in fat, sugar and salt.

“Research shows that eating behaviors are established early in life, so we’re really setting ourselves up for a healthier generation of Americans,” says registered Dietitian and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Spokesperson, Wesley Delbridge.

“Healthier meals help ensure kids are getting the nutrients they need to perform well in school and have energy to be active and participate in sports, and to also grow into healthy adults,” says Delbridge. “These changes can result in a lifetime of health benefits, including reduced risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.”

Many schools have started **Farm to School** programs to support their efforts to serve more fruits and vegetables.

LEARN MORE

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
<http://www.eatright.org/>



What can Parents do?

Parents can offer fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks. Speak with your children about adding color to their plates with a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. The goal is to make half the meal consist of fruits and vegetables. Consider growing a garden with your child or visit a local farmers market on the weekends. Fruits and vegetables will be at their peak in quality, nutrients and taste.

Here are some tips on how to add more fruits and vegetables to meals and snacks:

- 1 Pizza is often a favorite food for children. Pizza toppings can include a wide variety of vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, green peppers, tomatoes, mushrooms and zucchini.
- 2 Mix up a breakfast smoothie made with low-fat milk or yogurt, frozen strawberries and a banana. You can also add kale or spinach for added nutrients.
- 3 Make a veggie wrap with roasted vegetables and low-fat cheese rolled in a whole-wheat tortilla.
- 4 Try crunchy vegetables instead of chips with your favorite low-fat salad dressing or hummus for dipping.
- 5 Grill colorful vegetable kabobs packed with tomatoes, green and red peppers, mushrooms and onions.
- 6 Add color to salads with baby carrots, grape tomatoes, spinach leaves or mandarin oranges.

For more information, including nutrition articles, recipes, videos and tips, about healthful eating for families, visit www.KidsEatRight.org.