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For Better Living
More Fruits and Veggies for Children

As the old saying goes, “You are what you eat.” In America, a love for unhealthy foods, combined with a tendency to be sedentary, has led to an alarming rate of obesity not just in adults but also in children.

It’s commonly recommended that all Americans eat “5 A Day”.? That is, a healthy diet should include at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables daily.

But a nationwide food consumption survey indicates that only 33 percent of children between the ages of 2 and 19 actually eat two servings of fruit per day. And when it comes to vegetables, the success rate is even lower with only 29 percent eating three servings per day.

How can parents make “5 A Day” a reality for their kids?

According to Carolyn Dunn, Ph.D., Nutrition Specialist with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the key is to start early and to be persistent. “Parents often say that children will not eat what they don’t like”, Dunn says. “But a truer statement might be that children can’t eat what they are not offered.”

The truth is, children often require several tastes before they deem a new fruit or vegetable acceptable, so it’s especially important for parents to continue offering new foods.

Here are some additional tips for increasing the number of fruits and vegetables in your child’s daily diet:

- * Be a good role model. Let your child see you choosing a box of raisins or a handful of baby carrots instead of a cookie. And make sure you comment about how good your healthy snack is!

- * Make healthy options easy to choose. Plan ahead and keep foods like bags of carrots or sliced up apples ready and waiting so that they’re just as easy to grab on the way out the door as that cookie that’s sitting on the shelf.

- * Involve kids in food preparation. Even young children can discover the joy of cooking, and unknowingly become a fruit and veggie advocate if they’re allowed to help out in the kitchen. It’s as easy as letting them toss the blueberries into a fruit salad or create a face on a plate using all raw veggies.

- * Offer choices. Taking kids along to the market lets them see the amazing variety of fruits and vegetables available. Allowing them to choose something new to try encourages them to expand their food horizons.

Childhood is the right time to establish sound eating habits and a healthy weight because the habits developed during childhood definitely carry over into adulthood. By improving children’s diets, parents have the power to make a positive difference that will last a lifetime.

Source: North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Country Corn Bread

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup cornmeal
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 egg
1 cup reduced-fat plain yogurt
1/4 cup canola oil

In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking soda and salt. Whisk together the egg, yogurt, and oil. Stir into the dry ingredients just until combined. Transfer to an 8 inch square baking dish coated with nonstick spray. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 - 25 minutes or until top is lightly browned and a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Serve warm.