



Healthy Living

GIVE PEAS a chance With Head Start



Parenting Through Pickiness

Strategies for Keeping the “Peas” at the Table

A child’s hesitation with a new food can be a difficult experience for everyone. Watching a child refuse food can be frustrating and scary. Remembering a few strategies can make a big difference, but being patient and allowing a child to experience new foods at their own pace is key.

Helpful hints to encourage new foods with less fuss:

- * **Provide choices.** Allowing your child to be involved in choosing foods for a meal will give them a sense of independence and will get them excited about eating the food.
- * **Talk about it.** Have a conversation about what you are having for dinner to allow your child extra time to accept newer foods on the menu before sitting down at the table.
- * **Try new foods as a family.** Show picky eaters at the table that there is nothing to be afraid of. Try a bite of the new food first; let them know what it tastes like and how glad you are you tried it.
- * **Set family table rules.** Younger family members will mirror behavior at the table. Keep a positive atmosphere during meals by setting clear expectations for everyone at the table (and stick to them).



Veggies: Learning to Love 'em



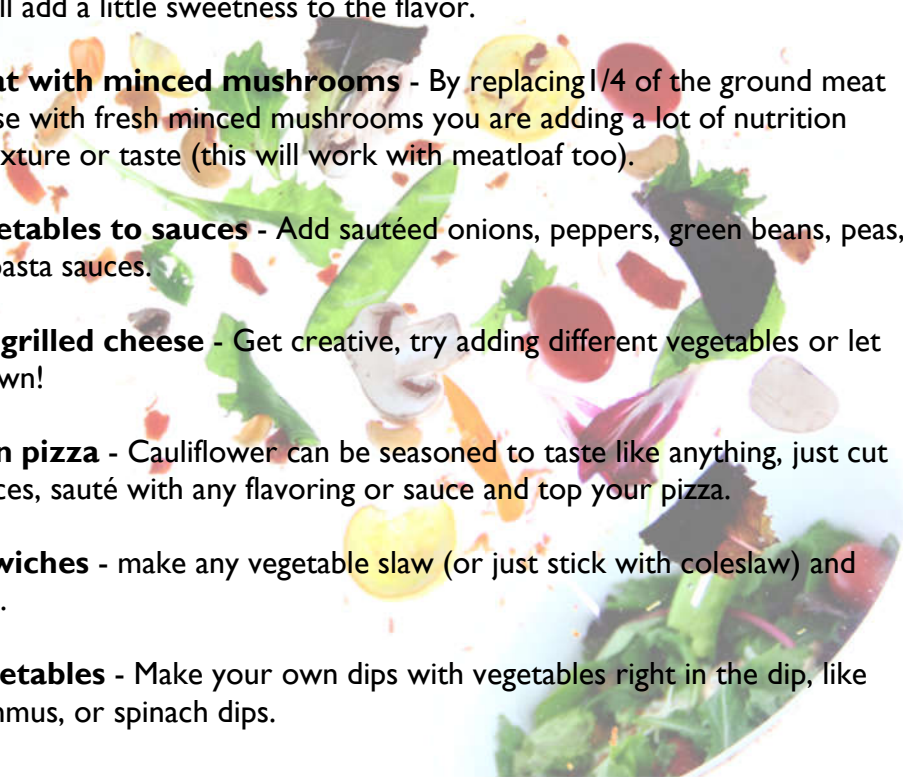
Being a Strategic Chef

Sneaking vegetables into different foods is a time tested way of tricking kids into eating a balanced meal. The problem with this tactic is that kids will never love vegetables if they don't know they are eating them, and it can make the vegetables seem like the enemy at the table.

It is always good to incorporate more vegetables where you can, but don't stop at incorporating more vegetables slyly into your family's favorite meals. Take time to talk about the foods you are eating, remind everyone at the table how much they liked the cauliflower when it was on the pizza when they hesitate to eat it alone. Remember the goal is not just to get everyone to eat their vegetables, but instead to try new foods and enjoy a balanced meal together.

Here are some creative ways to get some more vegetables into those picky tummies:

- * **Mix winter squash into mac and cheese** - This will add to the creaminess of the cheese sauce and will add a little sweetness to the flavor.
- * **Cook ground meat with minced mushrooms** - By replacing 1/4 of the ground meat you would usually use with fresh minced mushrooms you are adding a lot of nutrition with out changing texture or taste (this will work with meatloaf too).
- * **Add chopped vegetables to sauces** - Add sautéed onions, peppers, green beans, peas, or even spinach to pasta sauces.
- * **Add tomatoes to grilled cheese** - Get creative, try adding different vegetables or let the kids pick their own!
- * **Use cauliflower on pizza** - Cauliflower can be seasoned to taste like anything, just cut it into bite sized pieces, sauté with any flavoring or sauce and top your pizza.
- * **Add slaw to sandwiches** - make any vegetable slaw (or just stick with coleslaw) and add to any sandwich.
- * **Don't just dip vegetables** - Make your own dips with vegetables right in the dip, like black bean dips, hummus, or spinach dips.

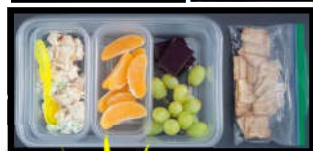


Pack a Picnic

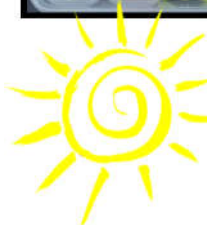
Setting up a fun outside activity and following up with a picnic lunch will make for a full day of summer fun. Letting the whole family be part of the planning and preparation of the trip will help you get everything ready. Give smaller children a chance to have a part in food choices to get them excited about the meal.

Know What to Pack:

Picnic Blanket: Use an old blanket, table cloth, or you could make your own with a canvas drop cloth and some



Dishes: Keeping the menu to finger foods can help reduce the need for dishes. Using paper plates will help keep clean up short, just make sure to have a place to throw garbage away.



Sun Screen/Bug Spray: Keep everyone safe from sunburns and pesky bugs by applying these before you leave and bringing extra to reapply throughout the day.



Water: Bring lots of water and cups to make sure everyone stays well hydrated while they are out playing in the sun.



Food: Keep the menu simple and include lots of variety. Bring foods from each food group to encourage healthy choices. Make sure that you are able to keep cold foods cold (below 40° F) and hot foods hot (above 140° F) with ice packs and insulated coolers.

Making Mealtime Memories

Summer Salad Bars

Salads can be great for mixing new flavors and experimenting with fresh ingredients. Instead of mixing one salad for everyone, prepare a salad bar to teach kids about different ingredients.

Allowing children to be in control of their own plates will give them practice making healthy choices on their own. This is a quick and easy meal to help everyone learn about new and healthy foods.

Ingredients:

* **Tropical Fruit Salad**

- ◇ Mandarin Oranges
- ◇ Strawberries
- ◇ Pineapple
- ◇ Mango
- ◇ Kiwi

* **Classic Greek Salad**

- ◇ Romaine Lettuce
- ◇ Fresh Cucumbers
- ◇ Tomatoes
- ◇ Red Onion
- ◇ Feta Cheese
- ◇ Olives

* **Cucumber Caprese Salad**

- ◇ Tomatoes
- ◇ Mozzarella Cheese
- ◇ Basil Leaves
- ◇ Fresh Cucumber
- ◇ Avocado



Have fun with it!

Create labels for each ingredient. Talk as a family about trying new foods, and how healthy choices will help us grow and develop to be strong, healthy, and smart.

Directions:

- * Clean fresh produce by rinsing in cold water.
- * Prepare salad ingredients in uniform, bite-size pieces.
- * Create a long open area on a table or counter.
- * In small bowls, place each ingredient on its own in a row. Leave a spoon or set of tongs in each bowl.
- * Allow everyone in the family to pass through the line, creating their own unique and delicious meal.

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Please contact Amy Losee, Head Start Dental/Nutrition Specialist, with any questions or comments at (607) 433 - 8060

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