

Smart Summer \$pend With Fruit and Veg!

December – February

Fact Sheet 4: Fruit & Veg for **KIDz**

It's important that kids develop healthy eating habits early in life. Children who have a diet rich in fruit and vegetables are likely to continue this habit into adulthood. Parents and teachers are important role models. They can show kids how easy and enjoyable eating fruit and vegetables can be.

Did you know research suggests that "eating more fruit and vegetables may be the single most important dietary change needed to improve health and reduce risk of disease"?

It really is that simple!

Consider this...

- Australian children live in a society which encourages them to eat processed foods of poor nutritional value (like chips, lollies and fast foods high in kilojoules, fat and salt).
- Most life-long food preferences are established within the first few years of life.
- Australian children are taught that fruit and vegetables are good for them but may not understand why.
- People think that heart disease and diabetes are 'adult' diseases. It is worrying that some children and young people are showing early signs of these diseases.

Help kids *want* to eat more fruit and vegetables!

Educate

Encourage

Support

Lead

Involve

Educate children about fruit & vegetables. Ask your children to tell you the names of the different types of fruit & veg when you are shopping– make it a game!

Children may also enjoy learning about the health benefits of fruit & veg. Different colours reflect different nutrients which have different roles in the body. Encourage children to 'eat a rainbow of fruit and veg every day' so they benefit from a variety of nutrients to help them grow in a healthy way!

Encourage kids to taste new and exotic fruit & veg. The more children try, the more likely they will be to experiment.

Support children by making the healthy choice the easy choice. Provide foods based on vegetables, fruit, bread and cereals at every meal. Limit the availability of snacks like potato chips, biscuits, soft drinks, pies and fruit bars – foods which tend to be full of sugar and fat.

Check out the Go for 2&5® website www.gofor2and5.com.au for great snack and meal ideas like frozen fruit, vegie sticks and salads.

Lead by example

Do as I say... and do! It's great to encourage kids to eat more fruit & veg, and it's vital that adults lead by example. Practise what you preach and show kids that eating fruit & veg is easy and enjoyable!

Write up a contract. Pledge to eat an extra serve of fruit & an extra serve of veg every day and encourage every member of the family to sign it. Kids love the responsibility of being accountable for their own actions – they feel grown-up. Display it on the fridge for all to see. You might be surprised!

Involve kids in the garden and the kitchen

Cooking is an important life skill and children are more likely to eat food they have helped to grow or prepare. Get kids actively involved in growing food and cooking. It's a great way to spend time together too.

Start with simple recipes containing fruit and vegetables and build up to more adventurous dishes. Don't be afraid to modify your old favourites to be healthier (e.g. reduce the amount of fat, sugar and salt).

Keep it safe – that is the children *and* the food.

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap before handling food.
- Do not allow children to come into contact with sharp knives, hot equipment, or hot foods or liquids.
- Teach children about safe handling of equipment according to their age.

Remember, changing eating habits can take time. Set small, achievable goals each week – little changes over time will add up! Aim to increase your family's intake of fruit and vegetables by a serve each day this week!