Habit #1

Vary your veggies

Eating a variety of vegetables will help your family get the nutrition they need. I serve my family different vegetables like:

Dark green – broccoli, spinach, and greens (turnip, mustard, collard).

Orange – carrots and sweet potatoes.

Starchy – corn, white potatoes, green peas.

Legumes – dry beans and peas.

Others – tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, cabbage, celery, cauliflower, zucchini, summer squash, and lettuce.

Vegetables of different colors provide different vitamins and minerals. When I serve many colors of vegetables, I know my family is eating healthier. I needed to serve more dark green and orange vegetables.

Here is how my family does it:

Each member of my family needs about 2½ cups of vegetables a day. This was hard for me to understand. So, I got out my measuring cups and started measuring my vegetables to see what that amount looked like.

For one day, each one of us might eat:

- One half cup of cooked green beans (counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables).

- One cup of raw leafy vegetables, like lettuce or spinach (counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables).

- One half cup of raw tomatoes (counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables).

- One large baked sweet potato (counts as 1 cup of vegetables).

Tips on buying vegetables:

- Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables are all smart choices.
- Fresh vegetables can be a great buy and taste great. Check prices and look for sales.
- Frozen and canned vegetables may cost less than fresh vegetables. Check the prices.
- Frozen and canned vegetables last longer than fresh vegetables. They can also save time – no washing and chopping.

Tips on serving vegetables:

- I can mix vegetables with other foods that my kids like. My family loves macaroni and cheese. So, I mix it with chopped broccoli for a dark green vegetable. My family never leaves a bite on their plates.
- We stir-fry vegetables like slices of zucchini, yellow squash, carrots, and onions in a nonstick pan or with a little oil. Then season to taste. Try your favorite vegetables this way.
- I serve dark green and orange vegetables often. My family likes baked sweet potatoes with cinnamon sprinkled on top.
- We keep vegetables in the refrigerator for snacks. My family likes cucumbers, carrots, and broccoli. The kids love to dip their veggies in low-fat ranch dressing or put peanut butter on their celery. They really like this recipe.

Snack
Menu

Bugs on a Log
Low-fat milk or water

Bugs on a Log

Ingredients and Instructions:

1. Make "logs" from any of these foods:
   - Celery stalks, cut about 3 inches long
   - Apples, cut in halves or quarters with cores removed
   - Carrot sticks, cut to about 3 inches long

2. Top the logs with a spread such as:
   - Low-fat cream cheese and pineapple
   - Low-fat cheese and pimento
   - Peanut butter
   - Egg salad

3. Sprinkle "bugs" on the spread:
   - Raisins
   - Unsweetened whole-grain cereal
   - Sunflower seeds
   - Chopped peanuts

Warning: Young children less than 3 years old can easily choke on nuts, seeds, popcorn, raw vegetables, grapes, peanut butter, meat sticks, and hot dogs. Do not give these foods to infants. Cut foods into small, easily chewed finger foods for toddlers and preschoolers who are still learning to bite and chew. Watch children of all ages closely when they are eating. Also, some children and adults may be allergic to peanut butter.

I add vegetables to soups and stews like this recipe:

Brunswick Stew

Serving Size: 1 cup | Makes: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium sliced onion
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups cooked diced chicken or turkey
- 2 cups canned or cooked tomatoes
- 2 cups canned or cooked lima beans
- 2 cups canned or cooked whole-kernel corn

Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large pan. Add onion and cook in oil until tender.
2. Add all remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer for 30 minutes at medium-low.

Lunch or Dinner

Menu

Brunswick Stew
Whole-wheat bread slice
Fresh orange wedges
Low-fat milk or water

Delicious Greens

Serving Size: 1/4 of recipe | Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound mustard or collard greens
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon vinegar

Instructions:

1. Rinse greens, remove stems, and tear in small pieces.
2. In a large saucepan, boil 3 quarts of water.
3. Add mustard greens, return to a boil, and cook 3 minutes. Add cabbage and cook 1 more minute. Drain in colander.
4. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add oil and sauté garlic and onion until light brown, about 3 minutes.
5. Add greens and vinegar and cook briefly, about 3 minutes. Serve hot.

Lunch or Dinner

Menu

Sliced ham
Delicious Greens
Baked sweet potatoes
Small piece cornbread
Pineapple slices
Low-fat milk or water

Colorful Quesadillas

Serving Size: 4 wedges or one quesadilla | Makes: 8 servings

Ingredients:

8 ounces fat-free cream cheese

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

8 small flour tortillas

1 cup chopped sweet red or green bell pepper

1 cup shredded low-fat cheese

2 cups fresh spinach leaves or 9 oz. frozen, thawed, and squeezed dry

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, mix the cream cheese and garlic powder.
2. Spread about 2 tablespoons of the cheese mixture on each tortilla.
3. Sprinkle about 2 tablespoons bell pepper and 2 tablespoons shredded cheese on one half of each tortilla.
4. Add spinach: 1/4 cup if using fresh leaves or 2 tablespoons if using frozen. Fold tortillas in half.
5. Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot. Put 2 folded tortillas in skillet and heat for 1-2 minutes on each side or until golden brown.
6. Remove quesadillas from skillet, place on platter, and cover with foil to keep warm while cooking the remainder.
7. Cut each quesadilla into 4 wedges. Serve warm.

Lunch or Dinner

Menu

Colorful Quesadillas
Fruit salad
Low-fat or fat-free milk