



## Start this Summer with Refreshing Fruits and Crisp Vegetables

By: Hayley Riach, Sodexho Mid-Atlantic Dietetic Intern

Article submitted by Susan Hippchen, RD, MCPS Food and Nutrition Services  
([Susan\\_Hippchen@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Susan_Hippchen@mcpsmd.org)) and Tracy Fox, MPH, RD, Health Committee Chair, MCCPTA  
([tracyfox@comcast.net](mailto:tracyfox@comcast.net))

Did you know that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating more fruits and vegetables than any other food group? Fruits and vegetables are necessary to help kids grow and develop. By starting a habit of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables early in life, children will have a healthy start on reducing their future risk of many diseases and becoming overweight. Keep in mind that more colorful the plate, the more health benefits for your family. Children should get 5 to 7 servings a DAY of fruits and veggies – fresh, frozen, canned or dried – all forms can fit. So start this summer right by providing your kids with more fruits and vegetables. Here are some tips:

- Involve kids in shopping, cooking and gardening. When shopping, have your children pick out fruits and vegetables that they have never tried before and bring those items home for a taste test. This makes it fun for you children, somewhat like a fieldtrip.
- For a sweet snack, offer pieces of fresh, whole fruit rather than candy and baked goods.
- In place of chips, provide crunchy vegetables as a lunchtime side-dish.
- Make fruit smoothies instead of a milkshake. Mix your favorite fresh or frozen fruits with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of 100% fruit juice, fruited yogurt and a few ice cubes, and blend in a blender.
- For a quick and easy snack make pre-packaged fruits available. Be sure to choose fruits packed in water or 100% fruit juice and NOT syrup.
- Always have pre-cut, ready-to-eat fresh fruits and vegetables stored in the fridge at your child's eye level. Also, move any "un-healthy" snacks to higher shelves, out of your child's reach.
- Provide 100% fruit juice (or milk) instead of soda. (One serving fruit juice = 4 ounces)
- When making gelatin, add fruits like berries, grapes, peaches, pears, or mandarin oranges.
- Top breakfast cereal with fresh fruit.
- Add mashed bananas to pancakes and waffles.

