

# Fruit & Veggie Cancer Fighters



-Jessie



## Pledge #6:

This month, I WILL:

- ✓ Complete the activities in this month's toolkit, **Taste a Rainbow of Colors** and **Know My Fruits and Veggies Inside and Out**, with my child.
- ✓ Help my child prepare this month's recipe, **Carrot Slaw with Pineapple, Apples and Almonds**.
- ✓ Try one new fruit and one new vegetable each week.
- ✓ Enjoy fruits as a dessert at least three nights a week.
- ✓ Tell each other what our favorite fruits and favorite vegetables, and why.

Your sixth *Healthy Kids Today – Prevent Cancer Tomorrow* toolkit focuses on fruits and vegetables. These plant foods keep us healthy by helping us eat fewer sugary foods while also giving us fiber, vitamins, minerals and a wide range of fight-o-chemicals that help prevent cancer!

Spring and summer are the easiest seasons to buy the largest variety of fresh fruits and vegetables – but there are still many kinds to enjoy all year round, whether they're fresh, frozen or canned. Fill your plate with these plant foods first at every meal, then you can add a few ounces of animal protein.

We need to eat lots of different kinds of vegetables and fruits each day – at least 5 servings!

## How Do Fruits and Vegetables Benefit Our Health?

**Phytochemicals** in fruits and vegetables protect our bodies' cells from damage that can lead to diseases later in life, including cancer. All fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals – or what the Super Crew calls “fight-o-chemicals” because they fight off disease.

These invisible substances give healthy plant foods their colors and scents while also protecting the plants from diseases. By eating food that comes from plants, we turn on our shield against cancer and protect ourselves from diseases too.

**Vitamins**, including A, C and many others, are abundant in fruits and veggies whether they're fresh, frozen or canned.

**Fiber** from vegetables and fruits, as well as other plant foods like whole grains and beans, has been shown in convincing evidence to protect against colon cancer and to keep our digestive system functioning well.



**Minerals** – like potassium in bananas and potatoes and calcium in leafy greens like spinach – are essential for bone health and growth.

**Water** in fruits and vegetables keeps us feeling full with very few calories. This makes them a great substitute for highly processed foods that are low in water and high in added calories, fat, sugar and salt, which can cause weight gain.

### The Science

AICR's expert report shows that vegetables and fruits protect against a number of cancers, including:

- mouth
- larynx
- stomach
- pharynx
- esophagus

### What about Juice?

A **small** glass (6 ounces) of 100 percent fruit juice can count as a serving of fruit – but it's higher in calories than whole fruits. Limit juice to one serving a day to keep weight under control for both adults and kids. For kids 1-6 years of age limit juice to 4-6 ounces (1/2 cup-2/3 cup) per day, advises the American Academy of Pediatrics. For kids 7 and older (including adults), limit juice to 6 ounces (2/3 cup) a day, says AICR. **Most often, choose the whole fruit over juice because it provides fiber and additional nutrients.**



Aim to eat the recommended daily minimum amount listed below for **veggies!**

<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	1 cup
	4-8 years old	1½ cups
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	2 cups
	14-18 years old	2½ cups
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	2½ cups
	14-18 years old	3 cups

Aim to eat the recommended daily amount listed below for **fruits!**

<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	1 cup
	4-8 years old	1 to 1 ½ cups
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	1½ cups
	14-18 years old	1½ cups
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	1½ cups
	14-18 years old	2 cups

\*For more details on what counts as a cup visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

For more information on age-based portion recommendations for kids see:  
[http://www.superkidsnutrition.com/nutrition-articles/nutrition\\_answers/portion-sizes-for-kids/](http://www.superkidsnutrition.com/nutrition-articles/nutrition_answers/portion-sizes-for-kids/)

## Tips from the Super Crew® kids to boost your family's fruit and vegetable intake:

- 1 Offer veggies when kids are hungry, for example after school or playing outdoors. Thinly sliced cucumbers in their favorite dressing, edamame with soy sauce or crunchy veggies like carrots with hummus or bean dip taste great.
- 2 Before dinner, offer a veggie appetizer like garlic string beans with soy sauce. Let little kids eat the string beans with their fingers, because it's more fun and they'll eat more.
- 3 Offer veggie slaws weekly – like jicama, carrot or cabbage slaws mixed with colorful fruits and veggies like red and yellow bell peppers, apples, mandarin oranges or pineapple.
- 4 Make sure your breakfast always includes a serving of fruit! Grab a banana with nuts while heading out the door, add chopped fruit to cereal or enjoy orange slices as a side to scrambled eggs and whole-grain toast.
- 5 Keep frozen fruit in stock. When the weather is hot, serve frozen fruit in place of popsicles. Mango and pineapple chunks, raspberries and grapes all taste great frozen. Host a blue tooth contest to see whose teeth are the most blue after eating frozen blueberries. Kids like frozen veggies too – like peas and corn, ice cold right out of the bag.
- 6 Make fruit and veggie kabobs – they're fun and easy! Have your kids choose which veggies to insert in between cubes of low-fat cheese. It gets them involved in fun food preparation and will help boost taste acceptance.
- 7 Keep jarred veggies in stock for when fresh and frozen supplies run low. Artichoke hearts, olives and roasted peppers make a great snack, appetizer or meal accompaniment.
- 8 Make it fun! Bake those finger-size potatoes that come in purple, yellow and red. After baking, put potatoes in foil then place a towel over them and have your child smash them with their fist. Call it mashed-baked potatoes. Open the foil and top the potatoes with some herbs, salt and pepper. Older kids may like low-fat Greek yogurt on top instead of sour cream; if not, buy low-fat sour cream and just use a little.
- 9 Plant veggies and herbs. Kids are so much more willing to eat what they helped to grow and harvest. You don't have to have a lot of land. Grow something easy like an herb garden or some Swiss chard in a single pot on a sunny windowsill.

**“Two medium kiwifruits give you almost double the amount of vitamin C you need in one day! That's as much C as in two oranges.”**

*- Jessie*



- 10** Consider taking a healthy cooking class together that offer new ways to prepare vegetable dishes. You'll add flavor and variety to your family's diet!
- 11** Just one more serving?  
It's not hard to add 5 a day. Here are some examples of how:

## Just one more serving:

	Take a...		And add...	
<b>Breakfast</b>	Bowl of breakfast cereal 	+	½ large banana + 6 oz. of 100% fruit juice 	= 2 of your 5 servings a day
<b>Lunch</b>	Tuna sandwich 	+	Tomato + lettuce 	= 1 of your 5 servings a day
<b>Snack</b>	Low-fat yogurt 	+	½ cup fresh fruit 	= 1 of your 5 servings a day
<b>Dinner</b>	Bowl of chili 	+	½ cup carrots + ½ cup green pepper 	= 2 of your 5 servings a day

## Kid Power Foods — So Many Fruits and Vegetables!

Every day, try to eat one of each color from the rainbow of super-hero foods. They are bursting with health protectors that make you super-strong so you can jump higher and run faster!

The Super Crew Kids can guide you through the rainbow:



### Green:

spinach, lettuce, kale, collards, watercress, broccoli, green cabbage, celery, Brussels sprouts, peas, kiwi fruit, green grapes and avocados

- Jessie



### Purple:

eggplant, raisins, purple grapes, elderberries, plums and purple cabbage

- Penny



### Yellow:

yellow squash, yellow bell peppers, pineapple, lemon, bananas and corn

- Marcus



### Red:

watermelons, red apples, tomatoes, red bell peppers and strawberries

- Baby Tom-Tom



### Orange:

carrots, sweet potatoes, mango, pumpkin, oranges, cantaloupe, apricots and peaches

- Andy



### Blue:

blueberries and every color

- Super Baby Abigail



### White:

mushrooms, onions, garlic, white potatoes\*, parsnips, apples and pears

- Carlos



### Brown:

brown pears, figs and jicama

- Kira



**“It’s a good idea to eat the same amount of other vegetables as the white potatoes you eat, especially when they come as French fries, Tater Tots, chips or home fries. All of these versions have too much fat and salt.”**

- Jessie

### Watch out for heavily processed fruits and veggies

These foods are called “heavily processed” because restaurants and food companies change them from their original form into less healthy forms by adding extra fat and salt or by frying or saucing. It can happen to any vegetable, fruit or other healthy food, so check the ingredients list and Nutrition Facts Label on food packages.

## Ways to Use More Fruits and Veggies:

**Serve a healthy dip** like hummus with raw veggies or a low-fat yogurt with fruit slices. Kids can skewer their own veggie and fruit kabobs on toothpicks with a few cubes of low-fat cheese.

**Steam and purée** vegetables and fruits in the blender, then add them to soups, sauces, stews, meatloaf and casseroles.

**Offer kids ready-to-eat fruits and veggies first** when they get home from school. Buy a box of clementines or tangerines for an easy-to-peel treat. Keep chilled grapes in the refrigerator.

**Wake up with fruit for breakfast.** Melon, oranges, bananas, berries and other fruits go naturally with healthy breakfast foods like whole-wheat or whole-grain cold cereals and oatmeal or low-fat yogurt. Top French toast or pancakes with unsweetened fresh fruits that are chopped or puréed, like peaches or apples.

**Pack fresh or canned unsweetened fruit for lunch and snacks.** Small pull-top cans of fruit salad, peaches and other fruits (canned in juice, not syrup) are easy to take for dessert at lunches or for snacks.

**Incorporate fruits into dishes you already love.** Top pizza with fruit chunks. Toss cherries and berries into whole-grain side dishes. Add chopped pears, apples and stone fruits and berries to green salads. If you cook a vegetable like broccoli or Brussels sprouts, add 1/4 cup of dried cranberries or sliced dried apricots. Serve chicken with unsweetened applesauce; cook poultry with chopped fresh apples, orange segments or apricots.

**Eat fruits for dessert at most meals.** Make fruit the standard dessert at your house and reserve highly processed desserts that have added sugar and fat for once a week or special occasions. Microwave a cored whole or chopped apple with cinnamon, add a spoonful of raisins, and then serve it with some low-fat vanilla yogurt. Or try it with a pear, peach, nectarine, plum or peeled banana. For your backyard barbecues, put thickly sliced fruits on the grill and serve with a dollop of low-fat frozen yogurt.

Visit [www.superkidsnutrition.com](http://www.superkidsnutrition.com) for more fun activities with the Super Crew.

Check out this Toolkit's recipe for **Carrot Slaw with Pineapple, Apples and Almonds** and activities: **Taste a Rainbow of Colors** and **Know Your Fruits and Vegetables Inside and Out!**

### Proven Tips for Getting Kids to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables:

- Offer unfamiliar vegetables and fruits 8-15 times. It often takes this much repetition before children accept new foods, although adults often give up after a child rejects food a few times.
- Show them how much YOU love eating the vegetables and fruits you're offering to them.
- Let your child decide which vegetables to eat and how much to eat from a variety offered.
- Cut vegetables and fruits into very small pieces for kids so they are not overwhelmed by large pieces. Three-year-olds would start with three tablespoons of each fruit and vegetable. Let them ask for more if they want it.
- Don't scold kids if they don't finish their veggies or fruit. Just serve them less instead of forcing them to overeat.
- Include them in preparing fruits and veggies. Try a build-your-own salad bar, a whole-wheat pasta bar or taco bar. Kids love to personalize.
- Take kids to the farmer's market so they explore new foods in new colors.
- Let kids show off what they know about the health powers of fruits and vegetables.