

[IMAGE]

The Right Plate Could Make All the Difference

By Editorial Staff

Struggling with a child (of any age) who won't touch a single fruit or vegetable you put on their plate? Perhaps it's time for a change of scenery – and by that we mean your choice of dinner plate. Children served on plates containing compartments with pictures of fruits and veggies are more likely to eat these foods – and eat more of them – than if the same foods are placed on plain, white plates.

The experiment involved more than 300 preschoolers who were given the plates and then served themselves - a "family-style" meal environment common in many preschools. This format also allowed researchers to evaluate preschoolers' food choices based on each type of plate. When using the plate with pictures, children loaded the plates with 44 grams of vegetables and 64 grams of fruits a day, compared to only 30 grams of veggies and 60 grams of fruits when using the white plates. Consumption also increased with the experimental plates: 28 grams of veggies a day (compared to 21 grams with the white plates) and 44 grams of fruit (compared to 51 grams).

Writing about their findings in *JAMA Pediatrics*, the researchers suggest this tactic could be repeated at home to help parents increase their children's fruit and vegetable intake. Your doctor can give you more information on how to ensure balanced nutrition for the entire family and the health benefits of doing so.

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