

[IMAGE]

The Best Way to Increase Kids' Fruit and Veggie Consumption

By Editorial Staff

How do I get my kids to eat more fruit and vegetables? That's the age-old question parents ask themselves and anyone else who will listen, over and over again. Researchers may finally have given them – and all of us – an answer, and it's much simpler than many of us may have thought. Let's see what findings from new research tell us.

Let's start with the *wrong* way: It isn't piling more fruits and veggies onto your child's plate. In this case, more isn't necessarily more effective when it comes to getting them to eat more of the "good stuff." That's the first scenario researchers played with; the second scenario involved substituting more fruits and vegetables for an equivalent weight of other foods. As they added more fruits and veggies, the researchers took away some of the other items on the plate – in the study, this meant less mac-and-cheese.

fruits and vegetables - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, findings revealed that while both scenarios proved effective, scenario #2 was the most effective. Simply adding more fruit and vegetables to kids' meals as side dishes increased veggie consumption by 24 percent and fruit consumption by 33 percent; but substituting fruits and veggies in place of other foods on the plate increased veggie consumption by 41 percent and fruit consumption by 38 percent. We can probably all agree that getting our kids to eat 40 percent more fruits and veggies than they currently do would be a significant victory!

The study involved children ages 3-5 subjected to the meal changes over five days. Since this age group can be among the most picky when it comes to what they eat, these study results are definitely encouraging. But if you have a child, younger, older or anywhere in between, give it a try and see how they react!

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