Overcoming Barriers to Eating Vegetables & Fruit

Colour Your World with Vegetables and Fruit

Barrier: Vegetables and fruit take too much time to prepare

- Try frozen, they are clean, cut up and ready to use in a soup or stew or to boil or microwave as a side dish.
- Keep carrots, celery and pepper sticks cut up in the refrigerator with a low fat dip so they are ready to eat any time.
- Keep snack sized canned fruit or dried fruit on hand – at home, in your desk, locker…it's easy and ready to eat!
- When you are making salad, make extra keeping the extra un-dressed portion in an air-tight container or bag so that it's ready to go. Add "juicier" items (tomatoes, cucumber etc) just before serving.
- Stock up on (or try growing your own) fresh vegetables and fruit that don't need a lot of preparation – baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes, apples, bananas, oranges, these are all great to snack on and why vegetables and fruit are called "Nature's Original Fast Food".
- Try trimmed and cleaned spinach, cabbage and broccoli mixes – they are great for stir fries, soups or an easy salad.

Barrier: Vegetables and fruit are not readily available at home/school/work

- Plan ahead, stock your bag, purse or knapsack with fresh fruits and vegetables to snack on during the day.
- Slip a few extra fruits and vegetables into your lunch bag.
- Speak up! Talk to your employer or principal about what the options are for having more vegetables and fruit choices at the office or school cafeteria or vending machine.
- Pack a few juice boxes (or your own bottle/thermos of juice) in your desk or locker.
- At the beginning of the week bring a few longer lasting fruits (apples, oranges) to your desk or locker.
- Make a homemade trail mix that contains dried fruit. It makes a tasty (and portable) snack that you can eat almost anywhere.
- If you have access to a refrigerator – keep a supply of ready to eat vegetables (carrots, celery sticks, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, red/green/yellow peppers).

Barrier: Don't like the taste of many vegetables

- That one is easy! Eat more of the ones you do like!
- There are MANY types so try something new. Challenge yourself on the next trip to the grocery store or farmers' market to buy one new vegetable or fruit that you have never tried before.
- Maybe it is the texture instead of the taste? If so try preparing your fruits and veggies differently. (e.g. stir-fry or mash instead or boil; bake instead of puree; chop finely in a food processor and add to casseroles or pasta sauces etc.)
- Keep trying! Believe it or not tastes do change, and you may have acquired a taste for something that you haven't liked before.
- If you are eating more traditional Canadian vegetables and fruit, you might want to explore an ethnic or produce market to discover the taste of a new vegetable or fruit. Try muching on a mango or biting into a crisp, juicy Asian pear. Liven up your fruit platter with lychee, persimmon and starfruit. Bok choy is great in a stir-fry etc.
- Try different herb and spic mixtures such as lemon/pepper or onion/chive or use a low fat salad dressing or dip.

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Barrier: Vegetables and fruit spoil too quickly

- ❑ Use more perishable items (grapes, berries, asparagus, lettuce, mushrooms) in the days immediately after shopping, leaving the longer lasting items (carrots, broccoli) until later in the week.
- ❑ Try buying frozen, canned or dried vegetables and fruit.
- ❑ Buy your produce at various stages of ripeness. By the end of the week the less ripe ones will be ready to eat.
- ❑ Buy just what you need to last until the next shopping trip. Big bags are only a cheaper buy if you can use it all up before it wilts, rots or sprouts and becomes garbage.
- ❑ If buying in larger quantity, try splitting it with a friend, neighbour or family member.
- ❑ Freeze over-ripe bananas. They look funny (they turn black) but they are great to use in shakes or smoothies or for homemade banana bread or muffins.

Barrier: My family won't eat vegetables and fruit

- ❑ There are MANY types of vegetables and fruit. Try something new. On your next trip to the grocery store or farmers' market, try choosing a fruit or vegetable that your family hasn't tried recently (or ever).
- ❑ If you are eating more traditional Canadian vegetables and fruit, you might want to explore an ethnic or produce market to discover the taste of a new vegetable or fruit. Try munching on a mango or biting into a crisp, juicy Asian pear. Liven up your fruit platter with lychee, persimmon and star fruit. Bok choy is great in a stir-fry etc.
- ❑ Try preparing them differently – raw, cooked, baked, dried etc.
- ❑ Experiment with stews, soups, curries or pasta dishes.
- ❑ "Hide" them in soup, sauce or casseroles.

Barrier: Vegetables and fruit cost too much

- ❑ Buy fresh fruit and vegetables when they are in season.
- ❑ Freeze your bulk "in season" purchases.
- ❑ Buy locally grown vegetables and fruit in the summer. Sometimes a farmers' market is a good place to save money on these foods.
- ❑ Try picking your own produce at a local farm to save even more money – and it's a fun family outing too!
- ❑ Look for "No Name" and store brands (for canned and frozen) They usually cost less than brand names and are of the same quality.
- ❑ Check flyers.
- ❑ Grow your own vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers and beans are great choices).
- ❑ Buy a bag of apples or potatoes (less expensive than buying individual pieces) and share with a neighbour, friend or family member if you can't use them all.
- ❑ Buy juice in a large bottle or container and bring to work/school in a thermos. Individual portion sizes cost more (and create more waste).
- ❑ Watch the prices you are charged at the register. Sometimes mistakes are made.
- ❑ Add leftover vegetables to soups, salads or casseroles instead of throwing them away.

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