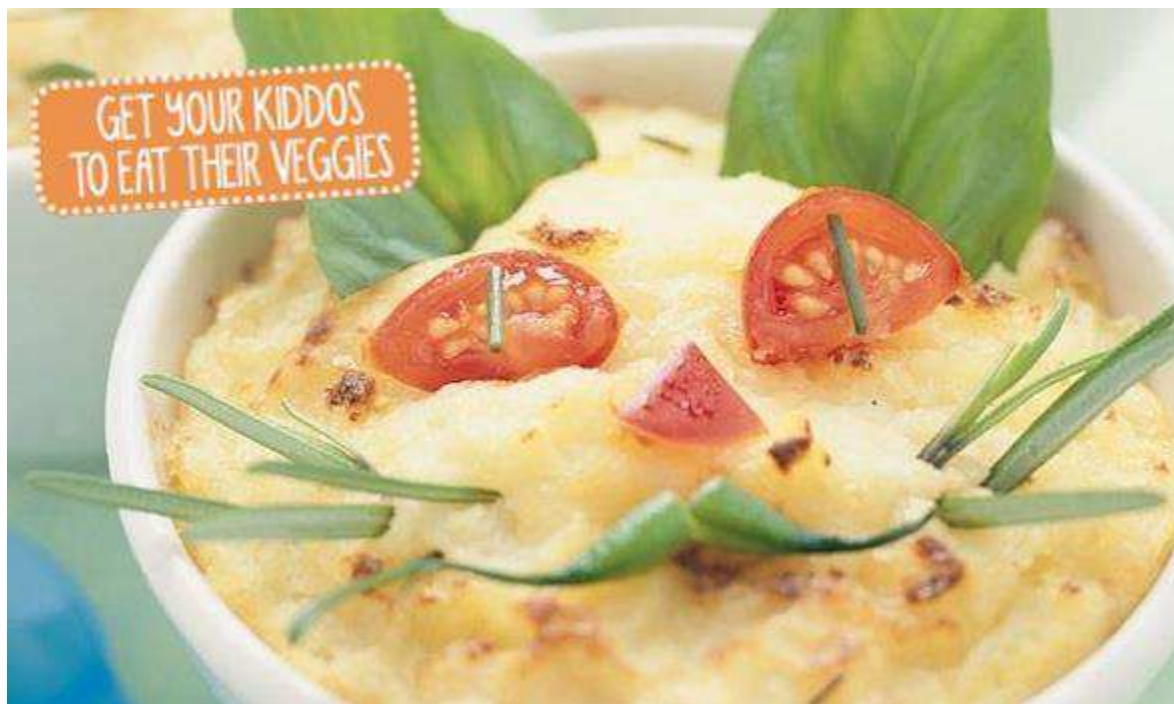


Sassy Mama expert Nealy Fischer helps us answer the eternal question: ‘How in the world do I get my kids to eat vegetables?’

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Last night we all sat around the table eating salad before our main course, when I announced, “Great job eating your salad guys! I should write a blog about how to get your kids to eat their veggies. Anyone want to offer other moms some tips?” So my list below is a collaborative effort between my kids and I. I was surprised by how well they knew my tricks but *hey*, there **were** eating salad and enjoying it so no complaints here!

Be sneaky!

It is interesting that this was top of my kids’ list! The well-known [Sneaky Chef](#) is great at slipping nutrition into favorite kids meals. She has cute ideas like these make-ahead purees that you can add to various recipes. Word of caution: If you only sneak veggies into ‘kid foods’ like mac and cheese with cauliflower, they will still crave *those* foods instead of real whole foods. Read on for tips on how to get them to eat wholesome foods in their real form.

Decorate

Doesn't your food taste better when it looks good? We've been watching Masterchef together and my kids have been asking me to plate up their dinners "Masterchef style". Serve dinner for your kids in any creative fashion or better yet, get the little ones involved in the styling. I made a roasted tofu dish with veggie marinara sauce the other night and my kids loved it!

Make sure your kids are actually hungry at mealtimes

In the book 'Nudge', authors Richard H Thaler and Cass R Sunstein write of an experiment they did in a school cafeteria to try and determine whether the *placement* of a particular food at the buffet line influenced the kids' choices. Sure enough, the choices displayed at eye level and were the most accessible were chosen most often. Make sure your kids are really hungry when they sit down for a meal, and offer the veggies or the healthiest option first. If healthy foods are most easily accessible and their little tummies are famished, they will be more likely to eat what you're offering.

Reward

I'm not a big fan of rewarding healthy food choices with a treat (can you guess who came up with this idea, me or my kids?) but sometimes as parents we resort to desperate measures! I like to think of it less as a bribe, and more of a compromise. Something like: "If you finish your broccoli you can have an ice pop for dessert". Take them all out for a special make-your-own salad and then splurge on something fun afterwards.



Make it taste good

Lets assume they have agreed to try the veggies. Then they'd better taste as good as they look, or it may be the last time they try them for a while! I often see parents who make the chicken and potatoes taste amazing and then boil broccoli until it's tasteless! Get creative and make sure they are delicious. If you are looking for a great healthy food delivery option, check out the newly launched www.anythingbutsalads.com. I'm currently salivating over their raw brownies and can't wait to try out some of their new items on my kids (cauliflower popcorn and apple chunks sound yummy!) If you are adventurous enough to try making your own raw treats here's my recipe for crispy, buttery-tasting crackers:

Nutty Crackers

2 ½ cups walnuts

2 ½ cups cubed zucchini/courgette

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary

½ cup ground flax

¼ cup hemp seeds

2 tsp salt

Water, as needed

- Soak walnuts for two hours. Rinse.
- Grind walnuts in food processor then transfer to bowl
- Process zucchini and rosemary in processor until finely chopped. Add to walnuts
- Add flax, hemp and salt
- Add water to make spreadable
- Place in dehydrator.
- After a couple of hours, remove and slice cracker outline with knife
- Place back in dehydrator at 115 degrees for about 12 hours or until crispy.

Educate and model

At some stage (and before you know it) your kids will be big enough to open the fridge and eat whatever they want. While they are young, educate them about the importance of healthy eating. If you model healthy eating habits, the chances are your kids will eventually follow you. Every night at mealtime *for a whole year* I served salad with dinner. I ate mine and offered some to each kid individually. Every night the answer was the same – No thanks. But I kept up my salad ritual until one ordinary Tuesday night I asked if anyone wanted salad. My oldest boy piped up, “Sure mom, I’ll try some”. Seriously?! He now eats salad. Keep on trying and never give up.



One final note

Don't stress about the things that you cannot control. All that truly matters is that you try your best to give your kids a healthy start in life. Model the type of person you want your kids to become, and enjoy an adventure in the kitchen together!

Nealy



Living in Hong Kong with her husband and four children, Nealy Fischer is a passionate advocate for mindful, healthy living, leading yoga classes, food and yoga workshops and luxury retreats across Asia. With over 15 years in the fitness industry, Nealy developed a pioneering prenatal program, Preparing to Push (PTP) after the birth of her third child. Additionally, she offers an indulgent, yet healthy cooking program in Hong Kong, and is the process of writing her first cookbook. Nealy currently consults with schools to develop healthier alternatives for their daily lunch programmes. You can follow Nealy

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