

# MAKE HEALTHY EATING EASIER

## 1) Don't send children out of the kitchen.

Children are much more likely to eat what they have helped prepare, also it is a great place to have discussions on what is healthy food so children are more able to make healthy choices. Making a game of learning the names of different fruits and vegetables may help increase consumption too

## 2) Don't pressure children to eat.

Often the evening meal is the first time in the day where all the family sit down and eat together so making it a positive experience is important. Remember that a child may be full and a serving is the size of their palm. Offer a bite sized piece of food for tasting as larger pieces can be off-putting to children and they may refuse to taste it.

## 3) Don't keep junk food out of reach.

Making food off limits can make it more desirable to children and research shows that children are more likely to binge on these foods when they have access to it. It is best to have healthy every day options on offer and if you don't want your children eating certain foods it's best not to have them around.

## 4) Role modelling.

People undervalue the effects of role modelling but actions speak louder than words. If you want to encourage healthy eating habits in your children you need to practice what you preach. Children watching their parents normalises that behaviour also children are more likely to try different foods if they see parents/ adults eating them.

## 5) Making vegetables more interesting.

Dress vegetables up with a sauce for example cheese sauce with cauliflower, or use herbs, fresh orange juice and sesame seeds or arrange them in a smiley face on the plate. You may even look at cutting up your vegetables differently for example if you usually dice your carrots you may consider cutting them into sticks. Remember vegetables don't have to be cooked – children often enjoy raw vegetable sticks

## 6) Perseverance.

It can take between 10 and 12 exposures to a new food for someone to like it so perseverance is required. Try using a food bridge, if a child likes potatoes but won't try kumara, mash the two together and this will slowly expand the child's flavour horizons. If children play around with food the first time it is an introduction to the food, wait a couple of days and try again. Stay positive, the way we act around food is powerful, encourage children to be adventurous and try new things.

*Some information has been sourced from Amanda Brien's article in the Timaru Herald*

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## Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and Physical Activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

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Te Pōari Hauora o Waitaha