

## 5 + a Day

5 + a Day Week is coming up. It is a good time to focus on the variety and goodness available in fruits and vegetables. There is often concern with parents that their children don't like fruit and vegetables. Don't feel alone! This is a very common problem but with the right messages and positive experiences children nearly always grow up to like their greens!

### Most children consume some vegetables and fruit

- Parents often overlook the fact that a child may be consuming some vegetables. E.g. potatoes in chip form, sliced tomato in a sandwich, onion in meat balls etc.
- Vegetables and fruit are part of the same food group and contain similar vitamins and minerals. If child has a good intake of fruit (about 2 serves a day) she/he should not miss out on any of these essential nutrients.

**Remember, some intake is better than none. *The important thing is to keep trying to introduce variety and not give up on foods a child rejects once or twice.***

### Be careful about your messages

- Children often pick up messages that fruit and vegetables aren't enjoyable but must be eaten because they are "good for you". Bribes may reinforce this message E.g. "you won't get any dessert until you have eaten your vegetables".
- Force-feeding should also be avoided. **This sets up a battle of wills and pre-schoolers have very strong wills!** It is usually a no win situation.

### Set a good example

Children learn by example and by being involved. This may be by:

- Observing adults or other children eating - children cannot be expected to eat vegetables and fruit if they never see other people eating them
- Involvement with the growing of vegetables - e.g. home vegetable garden
- Helping choose vegetables and fruit at the shop or from the garden
- Selecting fruits and vegetables for the meals or lunchboxes
- Seeing the vegetables being prepared or helping with preparation
- Serving a variety of vegetables and letting everyone help themselves
- Offering vegetables in a variety of ways
  - Roasted – potatoes, kumara, carrots, onions
  - Raw - carrots cauliflower, celery, tomatoes, broccoli etc
  - Cooked - stir fried or even in muffins, loaves and scones
  - Processed form - soup, rissoles, meat loaf, dips, mashed together

***Remember: Don't restrict your child's food to just the fruits and vegetables they like. Keep serving a variety***

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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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