

# Health Connection

January 2019

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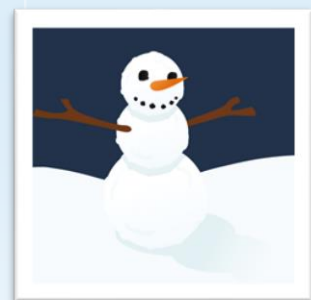
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## Strategies to Help Kids Eat More Fruits and Veggies

A recent study examined whether looking at photo books prior to giving kids foods to taste improved the outcomes of a home-delivered taste exposure program. Parents of 127 toddlers (aged 21-24 months) chose two "target" foods (1 vegetable, 1 fruit) that they were interested in their children eating. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three groups. There were two experimental groups of parents and children that reviewed books about either the target fruit or vegetable every day for two weeks and a control group that did not get a book. In each of the three groups, liking of both targeted foods increased after taste exposure and stayed above baseline at follow up (all  $ps < .001$ ).



Compared to the control group who only had taste exposure, looking at vegetable books increased children's liking of their target vegetables after the trial and at follow up and increased intake of the vegetable afterwards. Seeing vegetable books was also linked to smaller increases in neophobia and food pickiness over the study period. This data suggests that picture books may have long-term, positive impacts on children's perceptions about new foods.

*By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD*

# Chicken Lentil Salad

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup of red lentils*
- 2 cups of water*
- 8 cups of assorted greens: bibb, arugula, basil, parsley*
- 1 small cucumber, sliced*
- 1 cup of tomatoes, sliced*
- 1 tablespoon pistachios*
- 1 tablespoon vinaigrette*
- 1 tablespoon croutons*
- black pepper to taste*
- hot sauce to taste*



## Directions:

Arrange the lettuce on a large shallow dinner plate or platter.  
 Cook the lentils together in the water until soft, about 5 to 10 minutes or follow the package instructions.  
 Mold the lentils in a small bowl and place on top of the salad. Top with chicken, veggies, dressing, nuts, and croutons.  
 Serve immediately.

## Chef's Tips:

You can use other types of protein, veggies, and nuts.

The dressing we used was a balsamic vinaigrette but you can use any dressing or oil and vinegar. Use sparingly.

## Nutrition Information:

*Serves 2. Each 2-cup serving: 428 calories, 7g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 229 mg sodium, 713g carbohydrate, 13g fiber, 50g sugars, 28g protein*



## Apple S'Mores

This amazing dessert is made on a large plate and then shared by everyone at the table.



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup of large marshmallows
- 1 tablespoon of almond or peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon hot fudge sauce
- 1 tablespoon pistachios
- 2 apples
- 1 cup raspberries

### Directions:

Microwave the hot fudge sauce, almond butter and marshmallows on a plate for 30-60 seconds. Move the sauces around with a brush or spoon to create a fun smeared effect.

Top with nuts and fruit and serve.

Chef's Tips:

You can use any combination of fruits and nuts.

Serve hot immediately. Feel free to substitute pears, cranberries, raspberries or any other kinds of fruit.



### Nutrition Information

Serves 6. Each 1/2 cup serving: 148 calories, 3g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 37 mg sodium, 30g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 21g sugars, 2g protein

## Green Tea: Loaded with Antioxidants

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDE, CPT, CHWC



Free radicals are unstable molecules that can cause oxidative stress that damages our cells and which is thought to play a role in a variety of diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, cataracts, Parkinson's, and macular degeneration.

Antioxidants have been shown to decrease oxidative stress from free radicals in laboratory experiments as well as in animals, and there is ongoing research and debate about the potential beneficial role of antioxidants for humans.

Drinking green tea is associated with a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease and cancer where oxidative stress plays an important role.

The strongest antioxidants identified in green tea are the flavonols epicatechin epicatechin gallate epigallocatechin (EGC), and epigallocatechin gallate. Some epidemiological studies of the association between tea consumption and cancer risk show reduced risk of cancer of the colon, breast, ovaries, prostate, and lungs. Limited scientific research suggests the possibility of green tea reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels, although more research is needed. How the green tea is prepared makes a difference in antioxidant content. For the highest number of antioxidants, brew green tea in boiling water for 5 minutes. Instant tea, iced tea, and ready-to-drink teas contain far fewer antioxidants.

## Words of Caution About Green Tea

*Green tea is generally recognized as safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. While drinking green tea as a beverage is considered safe, green tea extracts may lead to liver problems in some people.*

*Tea naturally contains caffeine, and negative effects associated with caffeine include erratic heart rate, insomnia, restlessness, nervousness, headache, and nausea. Both black and green tea inhibit the absorption of iron from foods consumed at the same time as the tea. Drinking tea between meals or including a source of vitamin C such as oranges or grapefruit improves iron absorption.*

*Green tea has also been shown to reduce the effectiveness of nadolol, a beta-blocker used in people with high blood pressure and heart problems. Green tea may also interact with other medications.*

# Plants: So Many Great Parts to Try

By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD

## Stems and Leaves

The stems of vegetables are often tossed, but give them a taste before they go to waste! Stems from kale, spinach, and other greens provide fiber, phytochemicals and vitamin C. Given their rough texture, try them sautéed in olive oil with garlic or onions. The leaves of celery, beets, and other green veggies should not be ignored. They contain vitamin C, beta-carotene, fiber, and potassium and they are virtually calorie-free.



## Roots and Tubers

Beets, parsnips, and carrots are all root crops, which are good sources of fiber, vitamin C, and other nutrients. Tuber vegetables like sweet potatoes are great sources of beta-carotene, vitamin C, and potassium. When cooked, they are a source of resistant starch, which has been found to improve insulin sensitivity, lower appetite, and aid digestion.

## Flowers

The flower of a plant is not just pretty, it can often be edible! The following flowers can be used in salads, desserts, or smoothies: roses, chrysanthemum, violets, or daisies. These provide vitamin C, potassium, and phytonutrients.



## Legumes and Seeds

"Legume" is a fancy word for beans like black beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, etc. The beauty of beans is their fiber and protein content as well as their versatility. Seeds provide protein, fiber, magnesium, and vitamin E. Sunflower or pumpkin seeds may be used in salads, trail mixes, or for snacks while smaller seeds like chia or sesame seeds can be used in oatmeal, yogurt, or as a garnish.

## Don't Be a Food Bully!

A recent study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* discovered that worry over picky eating may prompt moms and dads to use non-responsive feeding practices like pressuring or rewarding for eating.

Lead author, Dr. Holly Harris of the Centre for Children's Health Research, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane Australia states, "These practices can reinforce fussy eating, increase preferences for unhealthy foods and lead to excessive weight gain." Finding out why parents use unproductive behaviors to deal with picky eaters is important in order to learn to teach healthy feeding practices. The research in this particular study included over 200 mothers and fathers with children aged 2-5 years from socio-economically disadvantaged communities in Queensland, Australia.

In the study, parents were asked about themselves as well as their perceived role in feeding as well as their child's mood. In addition, parents recorded the frequency of picky eating behavior and feeding habits. Parents also responded about how often they were concerned about their child's picky eating, their child not consuming a varied or balanced diet, and how much their child ate.

Researchers noted that mothers reported higher levels of concern, though both moms and dads accounts of picky eating were consistent. According to research, gender assumptions put more responsibility for feeding and a child's diet on mothers. Moms are more sensitive to children's verbal and nonverbal cues and are typically more distressed by crying, tantrums, and gagging when a child refuses food. Dads more often used persuasive feeding behaviors, though their practices were not necessarily born out of parental concern, said Dr. Harris.

Dr. Harris advises that when healthcare professionals educate parents about feeding picky eaters, they should provide reassurance, instruction, and different behavioral methods to improve children's exposure to a wide array of nutritious foods.