

# Eat More Fruits and Veggies with Smoothies

Ask parents what their biggest struggle is with regard to feeding kids a healthful diet, and they will most likely say that it's getting kids to eat enough fruits and vegetables. It's important that kids eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day in order to get essential nutrients for growth. Adding fruits and vegetables at each meal — berries in breakfast cereal, lettuce and tomato in a sandwich at lunch, etc. — is certainly a good habit to form, but it may be a difficult task when it comes to feeding some kids. One easy way to add fruits and vegetables to your kids' diet is by introducing the smoothie!

Here are four reasons why a smoothie is the answer to the fruit and vegetable consumption challenge:

1. **Smoothies bump up servings.** Smoothies can contain multiple servings of fruits and vegetables in a single drink. A half-cup of berries, a banana, and a cup of spinach blended into a smoothie can make for a delicious breakfast or snack.
2. **Smoothies are full of fiber.** When fruits are juiced, the fiber is removed from the drink, and the juice (plus vitamins and minerals) remains. Smoothies have an added benefit of being blended, so you get all of the nutrients — vitamins, minerals, *and* fiber — from the whole fruit or vegetable. Fiber helps with satiety, and also helps to maintain blood sugar and reduce blood cholesterol.
3. **Smoothies pack a protein punch.** In addition to fruits and vegetables, smoothies contain other ingredients, like milk,

yogurt, and nut butters, which provide protein as well as vitamins and minerals. Kids who consume plant-based diets can benefit from drinking smoothies if parents add vegetarian protein powders in order to help them easily reach their protein intake for the day.

4. **Smoothies taste great.** Even the pickiest of kids cannot resist a delicious smoothie. Creamy and cold, smoothies are an easy way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Create your own recipes by choosing fruits, vegetables, milk, nut butters, and even spices like ginger, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper.

From kids to kids at heart, everyone can enjoy a delicious and nutritious smoothie to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption.

*By Beth Rosen, MS, RD, CDN*



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