Dear Parents:

Vegetables are the topic of this month’s lesson. Your child will learn about all the color vegetables add to our meals. Some children don’t like vegetables, so learning about different vegetables and how they grow helps increase their exposure to new foods. And, experts say it may take 10 to 15 experiences with a food before a young child may be willing to try it.

Learning about vegetables and how they help us grow healthy is fun! Hope you find the information and recipe in this newsletter helpful.

Sincerely,

Beth Brinson
Extension Program Assistant
Family Nutrition Program

Diann Douglas
Extension Agent IV
Family and Consumer Sciences

HELP YOUR CHILD TRY NEW FOODS

Since young children are more comfortable with the same old routine and what’s familiar; getting them to try new foods and expand their acceptance of a variety may be a challenge for parents. If your child is a good eater, consider yourself lucky, this is the exception to the rule. So, the question is; how do you get a child to eat their vegetables and other food that make up a balanced diet? New foods take time, they don’t always like different foods right away. Here are a few tips that may help:

◊ Offer a small amount of a new food at the beginning of a meal when your child is hungry.
◊ Always serve a variety of food at each meal, so if your child doesn’t like the vegetable that is served, there are still other foods to eat.
◊ Be a good role model, let your child see you eating new foods. Describe its smell and taste.
◊ Keep foods separate on a plate, mixed up foods are not appealing to young children.
◊ If your child is a picky eater, don’t make comments, just be consistent with serving foods and mealtime routines. Eventually, he/she will expand acceptance of different foods.
◊ Blanch (quick cooking for 2 minutes in boiling water) vegetables to make them easier to chew, chill and serve with a low-fat dressing or dip.
◊ Serve child size portions of food.

WAYS TO SAVE FOOD DOLLARS ON VEGETABLES

♦ Read the sale ads in the local paper and purchase vegetables on sale.
♦ Avoid buying single servings of vegetables, the cost is usually higher.
♦ Buy vegetables in season. In our area, there are u-picks and road side stands.
♦ Stock your pantry with canned vegetables when the grocery stores have a sale. Look for buy one, get one free or 10 for $1.
♦ Grow your own vegetable garden. It doesn’t have to be big. Start small and make it a family project. Young children will enjoy picking vegetables from your yard.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1-866-762-2237. TTY/TTD/FRS dial 711. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The USDA and the University of Florida IFAS Extension are equal opportunity providers and employers.
VEGETABLES HAVE GREAT HEALTH BENEFITS

Vegetables are high in nutrients, like potassium, vitamin A, C and E. They also provide fiber and are low in calories. Eating vegetables on a daily basis helps reduce your risk for diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

We all should eat at least three different vegetables each day. Children, ages 4-8 years should eat a total of 1½ cups of vegetables each day, adults should eat 2½ - 3 cups a day. Serve child size portions throughout the day to your child. For a young child, ¼ cup of vegetables is equal to one serving. All forms of vegetables count, serve them for lunch, snack and dinner. Here are a few tips:

1. Serve raw vegetables with a ranch dressing dip. Sliced carrots, cucumbers, zucchini, squash, and cherry tomatoes are fun finger foods for a snack or as part of a meal.
2. Puree vegetables and add to spaghetti sauce, soups or sloppy joe mix, they will never know.
3. Add frozen corn or green beans to a can of soup for extra nutrition.
4. Set a good example by eating vegetables yourself.
5. Young children often don’t like the texture of cooked vegetables, try steaming broccoli or green beans so they will have a slight crunch.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Pasta Bolognese
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 carrot (chopped into ¼ inch pieces)
1 celery stalk (chopped into ¼ inch pieces)
1 yellow onion (chopped into ¼ inch pieces)
¾ pound lean ground beef
1 cup water
1 can (28-oz) low-sodium crushed or diced tomatoes
¼ cup low-sodium tomato paste
1 cup 2% milk
8 ounces whole wheat pasta
¼ cup finely grated parmesan cheese

Instructions:

1. To cook the Bolognese sauce: Put skillet on the stove over medium heat and when it is hot, add oil. Add carrot, celery, and onion and cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to brown. Raise the heat to high. Pinch off tablespoon-size pieces of the beef and add a few at a time, stirring well between additions. Cook, breaking the meat apart until it is no longer raw, starts to give off liquid, and no longer clumps together, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the water, tomatoes, and tomato paste, stirring well. Cook about 10 minutes until the sauce begins to thicken.
3. Slowly stir in the milk, a little bit at a time. Turn the heat down to low and cook 45 minutes until all the liquid has been absorbed.
4. To cook the pasta: fill a large pot halfway with water. Bring it to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and about 12 minutes cook until just tender. Drain the past and divide into 4 bowls. Top each bowl with about 3/4 cup Bolognese and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese. Serve right away.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup
Amount Per Serving

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Vitamin A 55mcg • Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 12% • Iron 17%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

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Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Source: USDA (www.usda.gov/whatscooking)