

TIPS FOR GETTING KIDS TO TRY NEW FOODS

■ MAINTAIN A CLEAN FOOD ENVIRONMENT

- If the only option is healthy foods that they ought to eat, you eliminate any arguments about food choices
- Keep forbidden foods out of the home

■ GIVE KIDS AGE-APPROPRIATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR FOOD CHOICES

- Use the “Traffic Light Foods” charts to guide good food choices

■ ENCOURAGE GOOD TABLE MANNERS

- Everyone sits nicely at the table for dinner, and remains there until everyone else has finished, whether they want to eat or not
- The “No Thank You” bite: ban words like “ew” and “yuck” from the dinner table. Implement a rule that each item on the dinner plate must be tasted, and if the child doesn’t like it, they may say “no, thank you”. Explain that you worked hard to make a healthy dinner for them, and you would feel sad if they didn’t show their appreciation.

■ BEYOND KETCHUP: Allow kids to use condiments freely, like:

- Spices: salt, pepper, dulse, gomasio, nutritional yeast, sesame seeds, cinnamon, nutmeg, cayenne pepper
- Sauces: mustard, vinegar, lemon or lime juice,
- Fresh Herbs: basil, chives, rosemary, oregano, cilantro, parsley, sorrel, lovage, tarragon, thyme, sage

■ SOUS CHEFS:

- Have the kids participate in food prep. If they choose which vegetables go on their salad, and make the dressing, they are more likely to eat it.

■ DON'T RUN A SHORT-ORDER KITCHEN

- Do provide a variety of foods – something for everyone – at every meal. This might be as simple as adding things like bowls of pickles and olives to a dinner table

■ USE DIPS

- If you want them to eat soup, give them something to dip into the soup, like tortilla chips with black bean soup
- If you want them to eat vegetables, give them things to dip it in, like: hummus, baba ganouj, white bean dip, black bean dip, olive tapenade, guacamole, salsa, plain yogurt or spiced yogurt, cream cheese; or be creative - any pureed vegetables can make a good dip.

■ EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE

- Talk about how pumpkin seeds provide zinc so they don’t get sick., or how good fats like avocado or nuts help the brain work better
- Avoid using bribery or punishment when it comes to food

■ BE A ROLE MODEL

- Encourage other adults in your child’s life to be a good role model as well. This means eating the same healthy foods as those offered to your child

■ BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT

- It can take 10 or more exposures to a new food before a child will accept it. Keep putting the new food in front of the child – repeatedly.
- Build on a positive response: if a child says they like something (and even if they still will only take one bite), celebrate that! Serve the food again within a week or so, and remind your child how much they liked it the last time.