



## Offer a Variety of Foods

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Does it seem like your child only likes a few different foods? You play a vital role in helping your child learn about food. You are responsible for providing a variety of healthy foods for your child to eat.

Offering different types of food helps young children get the nutrients they need from each of the five food groups. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it is much easier to plan family meals.

Often children are hesitant to try new foods. It is completely normal for young kids to reject foods they have never tried before.

### Tips for Offering a Variety of Foods:

1. **Mix it up.** Try something new with your family. Here are ideas: fresh pineapple, red bell peppers, Greek yogurt, canned salmon, or a whole wheat pita with hummus.
2. **Let your child chose a new vegetable.** Serve it raw with ranch dressing or other dip, add it to a soup, salad or casserole or serve it as a side with a meal.
3. **Add different ingredients to salads or sandwiches.** Try adding mango, snap peas, or tuna to your green salad. Add thinly sliced cucumber, avocado or apples to a sandwich.
4. **Go with the grains.** Vary the grain foods you buy week to week – from several types of bread, cereals and pasta to tortillas, quinoa, or rice.
5. **Fruit it up.** Add fruit such as blueberries, peaches, or bananas to your child's breakfast by using it to top cold or hot cereal. Buy different types of fresh, canned, dried, or frozen fruit.
6. **Keep them visible.** Place rinsed and cut fruits and vegetables, in a bag or bowl, in your refrigerator along with string cheese or cheese cubes – right where your child can see them.

**Source:** MyPlate, United States Department of Agriculture: <https://www.myplate.gov>

### Strawberry Chocolate Bites

- ¼ cup diced fresh strawberries
  - 2 Tablespoons low-fat vanilla yogurt
  - 2 squares chocolate graham crackers
1. Wash hands with soap and water. Spread yogurt on graham crackers.
  2. Top with strawberries. Enjoy!

*Makes 1 serving. Each serving contains 99 calories, 2g fat, 18g carbohydrate, 1g fiber and 92mg sodium.*

**Cook's notes:** Feel free to use any type of fresh or canned fruit in place of the strawberries. Greek yogurt works well because of its added thickness.

For more information check out Food Fun for Young Children:

<https://go.unl.edu/foodfunchildren>

