



North Dakotans Share Tips for Enjoying Fruits and Veggies

Introducing more fruits and vegetables into your families' day is easier than you think. The North Dakota 5 + 5 Communities Program and the North Dakota Department of Health sponsored the 2008 *Get Smart North Dakota! Fruits & Veggies – More Matters® Tip Contest*, recognizing North Dakota families for sharing their original and creative ideas for serving fruits and vegetables. (** denotes winning tips) The tips show that North Dakota families are including more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks by using canned, frozen, dried or 100 percent juice, in addition to fresh.

These tips work for North Dakotans – Give them a try!

For Kids

** Maria R. of Napoleon begins shopping in the produce section, choosing a variety of colors and products in season and on sale.

** At snack time, Rita L. of McVille serves apples with popcorn. She finds that the refreshing apples replace the sodas that many people drink while eating popcorn.

** For breakfast, Ann F. of Bismarck makes fruit smoothies for her kids. To help make sure that fruit is on hand and ready to use, she buys or picks blueberries and strawberries fresh in the summer and freezes them in convenient one-cup packages.

** To help her young son make smart choices, Lisa D. of Cogswell keeps her refrigerator snack drawer stocked with 100 percent juice boxes, raisins, apples, oranges and peeled carrots. With these foods right at eye level and ready to eat, he helps himself for his morning and afternoon snacks.

** Amy E. of Fargo balances family dinners, even pizza, by serving fruits and vegetables with each meal.

- Keep trying! Getting our children to eat veggies has gotten easier the more we offer them.
- One of the most important jobs at our house is being mom's "special taste-tester." It is the perfect way for me to get them to try new foods, and it works like a charm!
- Make it fun! Say "What's up, Doc?" before taking a bite of carrots. Pretend to be dinosaurs eating the tree tops when munching fresh broccoli.
- I have a 10-year-old "picky eater." But I have found that I can help him eat more fruits and veggies with "cube-sicles": 100 percent juice frozen in ice-cube trays.
- Involve the family in trying one new fruit or vegetable each week or each month. When you get home, research ways to prepare it and try out a new recipe!
- As a parent, lead by example. Make healthy eating fun, educational and exciting.



On the Go

** Denise B. of Parshall sets out a bowl of cut-up apples, peeled oranges, grapes or carrots when her family is home. Denise also packs these foods on ice in an insulated cooler when the family is out boating in the summer.

- When I buy fresh veggies I clean and cut them up right away and put them in small baggies in the refrigerator. When my kids want a snack they can help themselves!
- Cut up fruit and place it in small plastic bags for kids to munch on in the car rather than giving them junk food.
- Dried plums (prunes), raisins or dried apricots are handy and convenient for a quick pick-me-up.
- Make fresh vegetable salads ahead for several days for lunch and store them in airtight containers in the refrigerator. Use fresh spinach and/or lettuce combination as the base.

Family Dinners

** Shana H. of Fargo encourages folks to try shopping at a local farmers market or joining a community-supported agriculture (CSA) venture. By participating in a CSA, people invest with the grower at the beginning of the season, then get weekly shipments of vegetables at harvest time.

- For a quick meal, add vegetables to canned soup or a boxed meal. Be creative!
- Add peppers, celery, onions and/or cabbage to hamburger dishes or any stir fry recipe.
- Chop up celery and zucchini and grate carrots and add them into spaghetti sauce.
- Scrambled eggs can go from boring to Wow! with some fresh peppers, scallions, spinach, chopped tomato, asparagus, or even yesterday's baked potato!
- Double the amount of vegetables and halve the amount of meat called for in recipes.
- Add colorful fruits and veggies to meals. Add a little spinach or another darker leafy veggie to iceberg lettuce or put spinach on your sandwich.
- Enjoy fruit salad; it can be eaten anytime – at breakfast, as dessert or as a snack.
- Puree fresh veggies and add them to meals.
- Steam vegetables in a pressure cooker – it's really fast and helps retain flavor and color!
- Add 1/2 cup of frozen veggies to a frozen dinner.
- Use a commercial juicer and add vegetables to fruit juice.
- Add a seasoning packet labeled for roasted potatoes to a bag of frozen mixed veggies (California blend works well). (Seasoning packets may be found in some grocery store produce sections.) Follow package directions.

