

Rockstar Nutritionist Jill Jayne's Tips for Getting Your Kids to Eat Their Greens



Once I discovered how the right foods could have a HUGE impact on my success in sports, performing, and even creative thinking, I became hooked on eating right! I combined my musical talents with my credentials as a Registered Dietitian, and now I rock out around the country to spread the word about healthy eating and its many benefits in my musical show *Jump with Jill*. I'm known as the Rockstar Nutritionist, and if you're having trouble getting your kids to get in a groove with nutritious and delicious veggies, I can help!

Here are my top 5 tips for helping kids to get their greens:

Wise Up on Whys. Kids are naturally curious! They ask "why" about so many things, why not give them the facts about good-for-you-food?! If a child knows why a green pepper is green, and what it can do to help them run faster or enjoy that next birthday party, they will be more interested in eating it. Especially if you call them "superpower vegetables," like I do! Check out my taste testing series [Rock Your Taste Buds](#) for why and how to eat peppers, then let your kids try some!

Adopt a One-Bite Policy. Keep meals stress-free by avoiding table wars. Adopt a "One-Bite" policy rather than a "Clean Your Plate" mentality. Get your child to try a new veggie by asking them to take just one bite. A bite of green bean is better than no green bean at all! If that's all they want of that veggie this time, that's ok! Move on to a healthy veggie or fruit they already like. (But be ready to go back to green beans another day; it takes kids up to 10 tries to accept a new food!)

Become Food Critics. It's built into our DNA to be skeptical about what we put in our body, and kids have more taste buds than adults, so they're more sensitive to flavors. Allow your kids to act like scientists or food critics as they explore a new vegetable, using their vocabulary to describe taste, texture, flavor, and smell. They become more familiar with each food this way, and over time the increased exposure and experience can lead to preference.

Get Creative with Veggies. When you plan a meal, start with the star of your plate - vegetables - and plan everything else around them. Seriously, your meal should be half vegetables! Consider creative ways to use them, like steamed broccoli or cauliflower covered in tomato sauce instead of pasta. You can use portabella mushrooms on the grill instead of steak, or use two slices as an alternative to burger buns. Be open to pureeing them into a sauce, dipping them in a sweet dressing, or sautéing with a small amount of oil and salt to make them tastier for the kids. Involve kids in thinking of new ways to include veggies in every meal, and you can reward them for contributing "winners" to the family recipe book.

Trash Junk Food. I understand what it's like for parents and kids today. You're always on the move! Yes, when you're hungry, those high-sugar and high-sodium snacks are easy to grab. But they're not helping your health, and they're hurting your kids! Set aside some time each weekend to wash, seed, and slice healthy veggies like carrot sticks, celery, peppers, broccoli florets, green beans, and fruits like grapes or bananas. Package them in snack containers and keep them easily accessible in the fridge. You can put a bit of hummus, low-fat dressing, or nut butter in small containers as well so you can mix and match flavors on the fly. You'll have healthy grab 'n go snacks that the whole family can enjoy. Check out my music video for [Nature's Candy](#) with the kids so they understand that naturally sweet fruits and veggies are a much better choice than sugary treats!