

## *How to try and get your kids to eat their greens*

*Almost all parents at some point have had to battle with their children to get them to eat their veggies and particularly anything green. New research carried out by the supplement firm [Healthspan](#) has shed some light on how the colour of food can impact on the choices made by kids.*

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### *Top ten colored foods kids are most put off by*

*Black*

*Green*

*Purple*

*Blue*

*Brown*

*Beige*

*Pink*

*Red*

*Yellow*

*Orange*

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*The research poll of 2,000 adults and children found that more than 45% of kids have certain colour foods they're less likely to eat than others. Britain's favourite food colour for adults is green but unsurprisingly, it's the complete opposite for children. Children were more disgusted by the colour green, with almost half of youngsters admitting they have refused to eat something on their plate simply because of its hue. It also appears that children are drawn to brightly coloured foods such as reds and oranges.*

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*Dr Megan Arroll, a psychologist specialising in health, said: "Research has shown that children demonstrate the most positive emotional reactions, such as happiness and excitement, towards bright colours and this survey supports this as children's most popular food colours included red and orange.*

***Are green vegetables any more nutritious?***

*If you compare vegetables such as kale, spinach and broccoli with other coloured vegetables then they do contain a richer source of nutrients such as iron, calcium and vitamin A, which are essential for healthy growth and development. This doesn't mean you should be skimping on reds, yellows, oranges and purples though, all vegetables are highly beneficial to health and contain their own unique blend of nutrients and no single variety should be viewed as superior.*

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***Positive eating environments***

*There's no point pushing kids to eat the foods they don't like. Kids are stubborn and the more you push the more they will likely resist. A better approach is to make veggies such as greens available and served in new inventive ways to try and spark interest. Don't bribe kids or give them a hard*

*time about food and try not to draw unnecessary attention to specific foods as sometimes it can take quite a few tries before young children are ready to eat them. Foods should be served in a positive environment with neutral reactions.*

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*Children are easily influenced by peers, which is why food likes and dislikes can change from day-to-day. Family meals can offer way to lead by example and introduce new foods, but try and get everyone else around the table to keep their opinions on food to themselves unless it's a positive one.*

*There is no single rule to feeding kids and most of it is down to trial and error but these tips below may provide a few ideas to encouraging your children to eat their greens.*

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### ***Top tips to get your kids to eat their greens***

- 1. Many green vegetables, particularly the dark leafy varieties, have a bitter taste that young palates are more sensitive too, which is why they often repel from them so start with sweeter tasting greens such as peas, fine beans, mange tout and sugar snap peas. Whilst you might like your veggies crunchy, kids often prefer theirs to be a little more cooked.*

2. *A handful of peas can be added to most home-cooked dishes such as spaghetti Bolognese, curry or even macaroni cheese. Try crushing them slightly to make them a little less obvious to fussy eaters.*
3. *Re-naming vegetables or cutting into shapes can be a good way to spark interest in vegetables. Broccoli 'trees', stars (thin slices of the stalk resembles this shape) or sprinkles (these are the top bits of the vegetable that can be removed with a knife or scissors) are a few ways to present this vegetable. Spiralized courgette can also be fun for kids.*
4. *Try allowing children to help prepare meals with you. Preparing a stir-fry together is a good way to learn about different vegetables and you can add in sugar snap peas, Tenderstem broccoli or edamame beans for them to try whilst you cook. You can talk about the rainbow colours of foods.*
5. *Whilst you should try and encourage children to eat whole vegetables, fortifying foods with greens is a good way to boost your child's nutritional intake, particularly fussy eaters. A simple tomato sauce is often the mainstay of many family meals so try whizzing canned tomatoes or a shop bought sauce in a food processor with a few greens such as spinach, peas or courgettes. Homemade smoothies and juices are a good way to slip in a few cheeky greens.*
6. *Serve your greens with a dip. Most children love dips such as hummus so amongst the sliced red peppers and carrots, introduce sugar snap peas or lightly blanched Tenderstem broccoli as dippers.*

*There is little point in stressing out about getting children to eat certain foods as over time their tastes generally change and few people enter adulthood malnourished with lists of foods they refuse to eat. Food surveys also show that most children get adequate nutrition from their diet. The government recommends topping up children's diets with vitamins ACD.*