

# FitFacts®

## 10 Cooking Tips for Healthy and Delicious Family Meals



- 1. Plan your meals the [MyPlate](#) way.** Incorporate a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables to increase visual appeal.
- 2. Start with simple recipes.** Once you get comfortable, experiment with substitutions and additions.
- 3. Plan ahead for meals and [shopping trips](#).** This will help minimize the prep time and frustration surrounding cooking, and will increase the chances you'll have the ingredients you need to quickly throw together a meal.
- 4. Choose [local](#) and in-season produce whenever possible to maximize taste.** Taste is the number-one predictor of whether or not kids will eat a food, so pick produce that tastes good! Also consider frozen and canned vegetables and fruits - just watch out for sodium and added sugar.
- 5. Incorporate herbs and spices into your recipes.** They enhance the taste of food and add fantastic aromas to your cooking. The sense of smell is 10,000 times more sensitive than taste. So if you make your meals smell good, you greatly increase the chances your kids will want to eat them.
- 6. Use cooking methods that create delicious-tasting food without an excess of calories.** Try boiling, stewing, steaming, braising, poaching, roasting, baking, broiling or grilling. These cooking methods don't add the hundreds of extra calories that sautéing, panfrying and deep-fat frying can.
- 7. Include at least one food your [picky eaters](#) like at each meal.** This will avoid unpleasant mealtime battles. Also try adding a new ingredient to an old favorite to help your children be a little more open-minded about food preferences. Remember that it can take children 15 to 20 tries before accepting a new food.
- 8. Sneak it in.** Involving your kids in meal preparation, service and clean up not only makes your job easier, but they'll also be more likely to eat what they help make.
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- 10. Have fun with it.** Experiment with different ingredients and recipes. You could take a "trip around the world" without leaving home by learning about foods from different cultures and trying to recreate some of the healthier dishes.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

[ACE Nutrition: Healthy Recipes](#)