PUBLISHED : 10-17-18

CREATIVE WAYS TO GET MORE VITAMINS IN YOUR KID'S DIET

Today, with hundreds of food choices to choose from, it is undoubtedly easier to feed your child. But even with the myriad of ingredients, recipes, and ready-to-eat meals and snacks available, you still can't help but wonder if your children are getting the right amount of vitamins and other nutrients they need daily.

Kids and Vitamins

Vitamins, mineral, and other nutrients are healthy substances found in the foods you eat. Your body needs these nutrients to work properly. In the case of kids, vitamins are crucial for their healthy growth and development. From infancy to adolescence, children need to get the right amount of vitamins daily. Most infants get these important nutrients from breast milk which is essential for a healthy baby development process.

According to dietary experts, the essential vitamins that kids between ages 1 and 13 need and the recommended amount they should get on a daily basis are:

- Vitamin A (300 to 600 micrograms)
- Vitamin C (15 to 45 milligrams)
- Vitamin D (15 micrograms)
- Vitamin E (6 to 11 milligrams)
- B vitamins including thiamin (0.5 to 0.9 milligrams), riboflavin (0.5 to 0.9 milligrams), niacin (6 to 12 milligrams), pantothenic acid, biotin (adequate intake of 8 to 20 micrograms), and folate (150 to 300 micrograms)
- Vitamin K (30 to 60 micrograms suggested sufficient intake)
- Choline (200 to 375 milligrams suggested adequate intake)

Ensuring Kids Get the Right Amount of Daily Vitamins

Many pediatricians may recommend vitamin supplements so that kids will meet their daily vitamin needs. However, you can **ensure that your kids get all the vitamins they need by giving them well-balanced meals**.

It can be challenging to get children, especially picky eaters, to eat vegetables, fruits, and other foods that can give them the different kinds and amount of vitamins they need. But with some creativity and hard work, you will be able to give your child vitamin-rich meals and snacks that they will have a hard time saying no to.

- **Breakfast**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, especially for school-aged kids. They need all the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients they can get to feel energized and ready to take on all the activities taking place in their school.

Omelets are breakfast staples and kids naturally love them. **Eggs are already rich in vitamins A, B5, B2, and B12 and have decent amounts of vitamins D, K, B6, and other minerals and nutrients**. When you serve them scrambled, sunny side up, poached, or hard boiled eggs, you give your child a vitamin-rich breakfast. But you can ensure your little one gets more nutrients by adding vegetables, milk, and cheese to make an omelet. **Kale and other dark green leafy veggies are rich in vitamin** C and they'll also add more flavor and texture to the omelet.

Pancakes are also complete breakfast meals that are easy to whip up. With the right ingredients, they can be vitamin-packed, too. **Add strawberries or blueberries to the mix to ensure your child gets some**

vitamin C. When you add milk instead of water to the batter, you give them an additional dose of **vitamin D and calcium** as well.

- **Snacks**

Oatmeal cookies and muffins, banana breads, whole-grain waffle sticks, and cheese sandwiches (using wheat bread) are healthy snacks by themselves, but if you add fresh fruits to these treats, you'll be boosting their nutrient content. By adding **berries, some mangoes and peaches, you'll help your kid get more vitamin C and fiber**. You'll improve their taste, too. If you add some slices of **tomatoes, lettuce, avocado, and other great leafy vegetables in the sandwich, your child gets more vitamin A and C** as well.

If your child wants something crunchy and tasty for snacks, you can give them some homemade sweet potato chips or banana chips. **Sweet potatoes and bananas are rich in vitamins A, C, B6, and folate** and because they're crispy and really flavorful, your child will love them. They're healthy snacks for pregnancy, too.

Smoothies, fresh fruit plates, and veggie and fruit slices with dips are simple snacks you can make. **Add kale to fruit smoothies for a higher dosage of vitamin C**. If your child isn't a fan of fresh fruits and vegetables, cut them into fun shapes and give them options for healthy and yummy dips. Examples of **healthy dips are yogurt which is rich in vitamin D and calcium and hummus which contains folate, vitamin B6, and iron**.

- **Lunch and Dinner**

Soup is something that you can serve for both lunch and dinner. You can make all kinds of soups using vegetables and herbs only or with some meat. A **pumpkin or squash soup, for instance, ensures that your child gets more vitamins A and C**.

Make sure you serve some vegetables during lunch and dinner as well. You can serve them as salads but if your child is not particularly fond of eating fresh veggies, find ways to incorporate them into the main dish. You can make a **beef stew with carrots and other vegetables to come up with a vitamin B and C-rich dish**. When making spaghetti, don't forget to add carrots and other vitamin-rich herbs as well.

Chicken and fish are also rich in vitamin B so make sure they figure prominently in your weekly menu. As much as possible, avoid deep-frying them to come up with healthier fare. To add more vitamins and other nutrients to a meat or fish dish, you can **puree cauliflowers or carrots or put a side dish of vitamin K-rich vegetables such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, or spinach.**

Making appetizing and interesting vitamin-packed meals and snacks will give you the assurance that your child gets the right amount of nutrients every day. However, educating your child about the important role of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients in their health and development is also something that you should constantly do to ensure that they will continue making correct good food options even if you're not around.