(Correct Picture) Star!

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Look in this pocket to find stories from families who made healthy changes!

Look in this pocket to find handouts and recipes on vegetables!

10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

add more vegetables to your day

10 tips to help you eat more vegetables

It's easy to eat more vegetables! Eating vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories. To fit more vegetables in your meals, follow these simple tips. It is easier than you may think.

1 discover fast ways to cook

Cook fresh or frozen vegetables in the microwave for a quick-and-easy dish to add to any meal. Steam green beans, carrots, or broccoli in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave for a quick side dish.

2 be ahead of the game

Cut up a batch of bell peppers, carrots, or broccoli. Pre-package them to use when time is limited. You can enjoy them on a salad, with hummus, or in a veggie wrap.

3 choose vegetables rich in color

Brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange, or dark green. They are full of vitamins and minerals. Try acorn squash, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, or collard greens. They not only taste great but also are good for you, too.

4 check the freezer aisle

Frozen vegetables are quick and easy to use and are just as nutritious as fresh veggies. Try adding frozen corn, peas, green beans, spinach, or sugar snap peas to some of your favorite dishes or eat as a side dish.

5 stock up on veggies

Canned vegetables are a great addition to any meal, so keep on hand canned tomatoes, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, mushrooms, and beets. Select those labeled as "reduced sodium," "low sodium," or "no salt added."

6 make your garden salad glow with color

Brighten your salad by using colorful vegetables such as black beans, sliced red bell peppers, shredded radishes, chopped red cabbage, or watercress. Your salad will not only look good but taste good, too.

7 sip on some vegetable soup

Heat it and eat it. Try tomato, butternut squash, or garden vegetable soup. Look for reduced- or low-sodium soups.

8 while you're out

If dinner is away from home, no need to worry. When ordering, ask for an extra side of vegetables or side salad instead of the typical fried side dish.

9 savor the flavor of seasonal vegetables

Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor at a lower cost. Check your local supermarket specials for the best-in-season buys. Or visit your local farmer's market.

10 try something new

You never know what you may like. Choose a new vegetable—add it to your recipe or look up how to fix it online.

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

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Tasty Toss-up Vegetable Stir-fry

What You'll Need

2 teaspoons vegetable oil

1 medium eggplant, peeled and chopped into small pieces

1 large onion, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 garlic cloves, minced

3 cups small broccoli florets

4 medium carrots, peeled, cut diagonally into thin slices

1 red bell pepper, cut into strips

3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce

cooking spray

Serves 6

Let's Cook!

1. Spray pan with cooking spray and add oil.
2. Over medium heat, cook eggplant, onion and garlic. Sauté 10 minutes, stirring frequently while cooking.
3. Add broccoli, carrots, red pepper and soy sauce. Cook, stirring, about 10 more minutes.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (228g)
Servings Per Container 6

Amount Per Serving

Calories 90	Calories from Fat 15
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 240mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 16g	6%
Dietary Fiber 6g	24%
Sugars 7g	
Protein 4g	

Vitamin A 220% • Vitamin C 130%
Calcium 4% • Iron 4%

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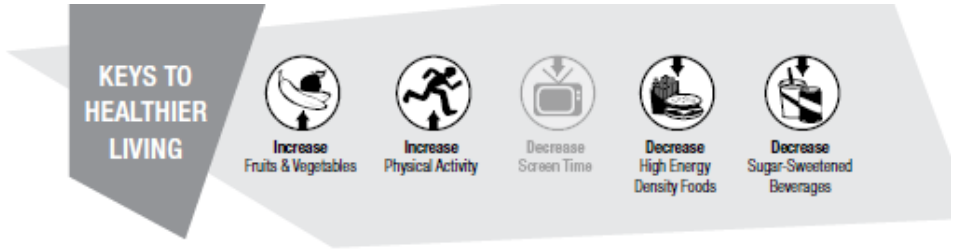
Jamilia – Oakland, CA

A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN

We went to Oakland, California, to find a busy mother of four named Jamilia. Although only 26, she works, attends school, and raises her children, all of them 7-years-old and under. There's Zephariah, 7; Zaniya, 5; Zaire, 4; and Zakari, 3.

What's so great about Jamilia is her major effort to make sure her kids are healthy. It's an issue that's close to her heart. Jamilia burst into tears when we talked about losing her grandmother, Olivia, to diabetes and heart disease. This made Jamilia decide to stop unhealthy habits in her own home.

She also makes sure that her kids get exercise each day in their neighborhood. Jamilia remembers the simple pleasures of running, jumping rope, and riding bikes at top speed, and she has passed them on to her children. It doesn't cost a thing, but the benefits are priceless.



"Be ambitious enough to see your child grow old."

That's Jamilia's motto in life. She says it every single day.

Jamilia is a 26-year-old single mother of four, and her kids love to run. Mom races them on the blacktop at school, plays basketball, and rides bikes. She even jumps rope with her daughters. More importantly, she knows that healthy eating and getting exercise are important for a good life.

Jamilia does not want to repeat some of her family members' unhealthy food habits. When her beloved grandmother passed away from diabetes and heart disease, Jamilia made a vow that her children would live healthy lives.

The first step was cutting out all fast foods. Jamilia admits that she would buy burgers and fries for dinner in the old days. As a working mother who also attends school, it was an easy way to provide a quick meal. Now she knows better.

What she wants mothers to understand is that fast foods are unhealthy and can break down strong young bodies, turning them into weak ones. To educate herself, Jamilia looked up the nutritional facts on burgers, fries, and fried chicken on the Internet. She paid close attention to all the calories in these foods. She was shocked to read how full of fat and salt they are.

"You don't want your kids eating grease and salt," she advises. "It's bad for their hearts."

Eating healthy is hard in inner-city Oakland, which suffers from the problems of many cities where the supply of fruits and vegetables is low. In these cities, children are more likely to see guns and violence than a tomato or stalk of celery. Because supermarkets there don't have much of the healthy, fresh foods needed for a good diet, Jamilia made it a family field trip to take a bus to a farmers market so she could buy the freshest fruits and vegetables sold right from the farm, often at lower prices than in the supermarket.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 3 individuals born in the year 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes.

After seeing a need in her community, Jamilia is working with community leaders to set up a local produce stand at her school. A first step was organizing a few moms at her school into a group of consumers that would buy these fresh vegetables. She has spoken with local farmers and promised them business, so the farmers are now interested in starting a small stand in Oakland.

Jamilia has had the opportunity to utilize resources such as food stamps to ensure she can provide for her family's basic needs. Jamilia advises that food

Quick Tips

- Involve your kids in planning a weekly menu. Take them shopping and read labels to them.
- Have your kids help you cook. The more involved they are, the more they will want to eat the healthy meals they helped to create.
- Make sure that children do not skip meals. Hungry people can make poor food choices.
- Try at least three or four times to get your child to eat a food. If he doesn't like peas, find a way to put them in other foods he likes.
- Stage a soda-free summer, winter, spring, or fall. Vow to get rid of soda for one season of the year.

stamps should first be used to buy fruits, vegetables, and then lean meats. All junk food should be eliminated.

Jamilia says simple food substitutions can be healthy. For example, she makes fried rice in olive oil using healthy brown rice. She uses ground turkey breast in her spaghetti sauce instead of ground beef. She also adds vegetables, including peppers, onions, carrots, and peas to almost every dish.

When her local grocery store does stock fresh fruits and veggies, she is sure to purchase extras. She cuts them up and freezes them in plastic bags. This way there are always fruits and vegetables on hand. She also makes healthy meals in large portions, freezing some of the meals for quick dinners on busy days.

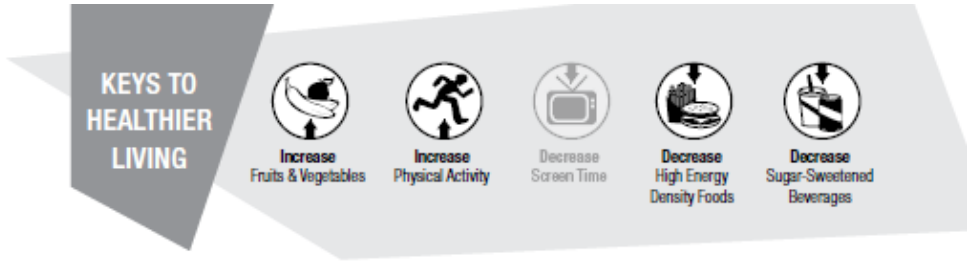
"Always have something to eat at home," she says. "You won't be tempted to buy fast foods."

Add fruits and vegetables to foods that are cooked or baked. Toss vegetables into pasta sauce, lasagna, casseroles, soups, and omelets.

Breaking bad eating habits formed in childhood is key. When Jamilia was a little girl, her mom put sugar in and on everything. There was sugar added even to the greens and potatoes. Meats like beef and chicken were fried. Now she knows those types of food have to be taken out of the home.

"It's not okay, even if your mama made it that way," she says.

She has a trick for getting children to eat vegetables, even if they don't like



them: She covers them with fruit, even putting a splash of orange juice on top.

Sometimes she will make a homemade pizza with wheat dough. She adds low-fat cheese and tops the pizza with a big smiling face made out of bell peppers for eyes, shredded carrots for the nose, and spinach — what her kids call "the good green stuff" — for the mouth.

Food is only part of a healthy living plan in Jamilia's home. Because she cannot afford a gym membership, Jamilia turned her neighborhood into a gym.

She tells her kids to jump rope or do cartwheels. She'll have them compete to see who can jump the highest or do the most jumping jacks. Sometimes it's as simple as running in an open field. At area schools, she plays basketball or has her kids ride bikes in the school playground.

Jamilia even finds small grassy areas to play tag. She loves to play pretend games that include exercise. She will tell her children to pretend that they're at a big baseball park playing in the major leagues and has everyone run the pretend bases.

Then she offers prizes. The winner gets to choose his favorite activity or pick her favorite healthy breakfast the next morning.

"Change doesn't happen overnight," says the Oakland mom. "But the smallest changes you make with your health habits can make a big difference.

"I want to be there to see my children grow old. I want to see their children," she says, smiling. "I want us to live a long, happy life."

Andrea – Tucson, AZ

A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN

Andrea is a mother who touches my heart. She suffered a tragic loss when she lost her beloved baby son to cancer. Many women would crumble from this type of pain, but Andrea is amazing in the way that she healed and then made a special vow. This mother of three other children — Mickey, 20; Desiree, 12; and Alex, 6 — promised that she would do everything she could to make sure they lived the healthiest lives possible.

Andrea knows you can't prevent all diseases, but there are many health issues that are preventable with smart eating and exercise choices. The Tucson native faced a major challenge in her quest, which was her Mexican heritage. Andrea told me that her native foods are delicious, but so full of fat and salt that she needed to make some adjustments — ones that didn't always sit well with the older generation of her family.

I'm thrilled to share the story of this strong, smart, giving mother who never backs away from a challenge.

KEYS TO HEALTHIER LIVING

For Tucson mom Andrea, a life of hope was born of personal tragedy.

A woman whose family has lived for 43 years in the southern Arizona city close to the Mexican border, she comes from a culture that considers food an extension of love.

The family she raises in Tucson includes a now-grown son and two daughters. Roman, her first son, died of cancer as a toddler.

His mother's eyes fill with tears as she remembers her loss.

"Losing a son broke my heart," she says, tears streaming down her face. "Motherhood and raising my other children is the only way I survived. The kids who are still with me need my love. They need my heart and a good common sense approach to health."

Like many Mexican-Americans, in Andrea's family, food is a major part of their culture. The kitchen table is treated as a family gathering place.

While she always wants to honor her elders, Andrea also feels compelled to do what is necessary to achieve the simple goal of making sure her other children live healthy and happy lives. It's a vow she takes seriously every single day by changing their favorite ethnic recipes. Even when her older aunts raise an eyebrow at the changes, she reminds them that health is the most important thing in her world.

"Losing my son made me appreciate how life is fragile," she says. "Roman's passing away was a very sad life lesson. The lesson was to live life in the best way possible, which means you need your health."

Roman was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. Trying to cure him took many surgeries and therapies that did not work. "He carried on for a year and a half," Andrea says. "He was so weak. But he would still smile at his mommy. Then one day without saying a word, he closed his eyes. He said goodbye."

Contributing to the heartache, Andrea's grandmother died a week to the day after she lost her son. Mounting medical expenses, a divorce, and the need to get a job left the grieving mother with little choice. She moved into her late grandmother's house in a neighborhood that is considered one of the worst in Tucson.

To get the nutrients you need, choose foods like vegetables, fruits, whole-grain products, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products most often.

The last thing on her mind was exercise and healthy food. It was hard enough just getting out of bed. Andrea worked two jobs and went to school. She faced a stack of bills at home. They lived on a diet of one pound of ground meat that had to feed both mom and son for an entire week. Eventually, she remarried, graduated, and had two daughters.

When life got better, Mom vowed not to take good health for granted. She got rid of

Quick Tips

- Take favorite ethnic recipes and make them healthier without sacrificing taste. Instead of frying beans in lard, you can steam them in a slow cooker.
- Use low-fat cheeses for recipes and cut the amount of cheese in half.
- If you know in your heart that a food isn't healthy, then avoid feeding it to your child on a regular basis.
- Change the conversation with your teenage children – talk about health instead of weight. Advise them about eating and exercising for good health.
- Limit or ban video games from the house for younger kids. Encourage kids to walk, run, ride a bike, or swim.
- Encourage your kids to sign up for sports — if they don't like it, they can always try something else. In most cases, the kids end up loving it.

any fast food knowing that she wouldn't give her children foods that were unhealthy.

There would be no more taco feasts like the ones she grew up with as a little girl. No more cooking in lard. No more high-fat cheese. It was hard because so many foods in her culture are cooked in lard.

Instead, Andrea bought a slow cooker for $30 and decided to find a way to make healthier Mexican meals. Now she puts whole beans in the slow cooker with a little water to cook slowly all day long until they're soft and ready to eat. Add some green chilies and spices like bay leaves and garlic to the mix and dinner is spiced just right.

Now, when Andrea, her husband, and the kids come home in the late afternoon, dinner is already cooking in three slow cookers. Soft, low-carb taco shells, spinach leaves, and lean meats are now on her menu. Tomatoes or homemade salsa, grated carrots, and radishes add to the flavor. She uses raw vegetables for dipping in guacamole.

The family garden includes tomatoes, onions, jalapeno peppers, peppermint, spearmint, chilies, and cilantro, which her children help plant.

When the kids get thirsty, Andrea serves them homemade iced tea instead of soda. A pitcher costs only 12 cents to make. For treats, there is air-popped popcorn made at home.

KEYS TO HEALTHIER LIVING

Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.

The tradition of cooking with her mother and great-aunts is now carried on with Andrea and her children. At her side, they have learned that burritos and enchiladas can be made in a healthy way by grilling chicken or meat after soaking them in lemons, vegetables, and juices. Even the older aunts agree that the changes are for the best.

Cooking with her kids has also allowed Andrea to carry on family traditions.

"Teaching them to cook means they will continue the traditions of our culture. But I'm also breaking an unhealthy cycle by teaching them how to cook to feel strong," she explains.

Sitting down at the table is also a form of bonding. She says cooking together as a family means the children will eat what they cook. It's also a great way to sit down in a quiet place and share the events of the day.

"My son getting cancer wasn't something I could prevent. But if there are diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity that I can prevent, then I'm the mom. I will make sure we're doing everything possible for good health," she says.

"My hope for our family? It's that Roman is somewhere looking down at us, and he is proud," says his mother.