



Strategies for Food Tasting



The chance to taste a food many times helps young children to grow into adventurous eaters. Trying new foods may lead to better health and nutrition. Use the tips below to increase the numbers of great tasters in your school:

- Allow the children to explore the new food item, look, touch, and, smell. Tell them information about the food. The more they know about the food, the more willing they may be to try it.
- Teach the children the guidelines for polite food tasting. Students are more willing to try a food if they know it is okay to remove something from their mouth they do not like rather than swallow. Never force a child to eat a food.
- Be a role model and the food with them.
- Plan to offer the food many different times. Studies show some children need to be offered a food up to five times before they will taste it. In addition, the food many need to be offered more than a dozen times before a child will choose to eat it at a meal.
- Offer new foods first to children willing to try new things. Watching a peer eat a food can help the most reluctant eater bud into a food taster.
- Offer small tastes of a food at first. A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to a food, fearing it must be finished. Be prepared to offer more if a child desires to taste again.
- Ensure the food served is in a prime state to allow the children to have a positive experience with a new food (i.e. do not serve brown bananas or green strawberries).
- Communicate with parents the types of foods that have been tasted in the classroom, particularly the ones that they enjoyed. When families offer similar foods at home as the children receive at home, it reinforces the opportunity of enjoying new foods.

Adapted from USDA's Team Nutrition Grow It, Try It, Like It! nutrition education kit.

