

Want your kids to eat more veggies? Give them a choice

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by Aimee Keenan-Greene

Kids who get to fill their plate themselves, eat more [vegetables](#).

So says a report from the [University of Granada](#) published in the international journal *Brain Research Bulletin*.

Scientists say children ate up to 80 percent more vegetables when they got to pick which ones were part of their meal.

Researchers studied 150 children under age 6 who ingested 20 grams more of vegetables per meal - or an average of 40 grams per day between lunch and dinner.

Scientists add, the bitterness caused by both the glucosinolate and the calcium content of spinach, collard greens, cabbage, onions and broccoli, negatively influenced children's desire to consume those types of vegetables.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services' [Healthy](#) People 2010 objectives, adequate fruit and vegetable consumption is a national public health priority for disease prevention and maintenance of good health.

Fruits and vegetables furnish valuable dietary nutrients and contribute vital elements to chronic disease prevention for heart disease, hypertension, certain cancers, vision problems of aging, and possibly type 2 diabetes.

A study in the new July/August 2011 supplement to the [Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior](#) says in the

last decade, California adults' fruit and vegetable consumption rose from 3.8 servings to 5.2 servings.

The number of California adults who reported eating greater or equal to 5 servings of fruit and vegetable on their 24-hour diet recall increased 57 percent over the past decade.

The increase in fruit and vegetable consumption was the greatest for the lowest and the highest income groups, nearly doubling the percentage that consumes more than 5 fruit and vegetable per day, 1997-2007 in each group.

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