

WEEK 1: FRUITS

Note to parents:

This is the week to ease into our three weeks of trying new foods activity, especially if you have anyone in your family who is reluctant to try new foods. Most everyone has a few fruits they are willing to eat and it's not a huge leap to try new ones.

When you go to the grocery store, choose at least one fruit that is a favorite amongst your kids. If you have any sensitive / picky eaters, you want to make sure there is at least one fruit they will eat. Then choose some new fruits (or varieties) that you're pretty sure they will eat and some that are completely new to everyone. Don't forget to try both fresh and dried fruits!

When you try a food that is completely new to you, be honest with your kids about how you like it. Kids think it's hysterical when parents find something tart or make a face when they don't like it. Kids also value and develop trust when parents are honest about food. They are more likely to try something new if they see you take one bite (or more), especially when it's something you're not thrilled to try. You are setting the tone for this activity with your attitude. If you push too hard, your kids are likely to refuse to try anything. If you are patient and make this a fun activity, they are more likely to try something they have never eaten before.

For super reluctant eaters, notice if the foods they avoid have a commonality - texture, strong smell, etc. Encourage them to touch and smell the food even if they don't want to take a bite. Let them watch everyone and they might just want to join in on the fun, especially if everyone agrees that a new food is super yummy. Be gentle and patient. These things take time and a small step forward is a huge victory!

You will also tend to have better participation amongst everyone in your family if everyone can be a part of picking out the food at the grocery store. You can choose whether everyone works together to choose fruit or if everyone gets to choose a specified number fruits to put in the cart. (Don't buy a ton of fruit - just a small sample for everyone to try some.)

WEEK 2: VEGETABLES

Note to parents:

If your kids have a selection of vegetables they enjoy eating, bring them to the store with you and let them look through all of the vegetables. I highly encourage you to let them pick out at least one each and place it in the cart. They are much more likely to try the new vegetable if they chose it versus if you chose it. Additionally, you should pick a vegetable you have never tried as well!

Does your family typically like vegetables raw, roasted, grilled, sautéed or steamed? With this activity, whenever possible, prepare the vegetables in your family's preferred way. You want to set this activity up for success! Remember - if you are doing this activity during the Triodion, you can add sauces and cheese to the vegetables as well. You want your kids to at least try the vegetables if you have any chance of expanding your fasting options this Lent. Let them dip it in ranch if that will entice them to try it.

If your kids will not eat vegetables, be extremely gentle with this activity. Even if you come out of this with only one new vegetable they will eat, that's a huge victory for you! It is also a good idea for your picky eaters to choose a vegetable at the store as well, even if they refuse to try it when you serve it later. That's ok. Encourage them to smell it and describe what it tastes like when you take a bite. This is part of the patient journey to expand the foods they will eat.

Mild tasting vegetables that most kids are willing to eat:

- Iceberg or romaine lettuce
- Carrots (usually raw)
- Corn
- Broccoli (try it steamed with butter)
- Potatoes (usually without the skin)
- Sweet potato



For those trying new vegetables, try:

- Chopped kale in soup (add to the soup at the very end, moments before serving)
- Cucumbers (try peeling them) & tomatoes (try cherry tomatoes) - many times kids will like one, but not the other
- Adding peas to soups and rice
- Some fermented veggies too - sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles

WEEK 3: LEGUMES & GRAINS

Note to parents:

A good portion of your protein, but not all of it, will come from eating legumes and grains while fasting.

All beans are legumes, but not all legumes are beans. A legume is any plant that bears fruit that grows in a pod. For example: pinto beans, chickpeas, peas, lentils

There are two main types of grains: cereal and legume (these are the non-beans, called pulses). For example, *cereal grains*: millet, barley, wheat, rice, oats; *legumes (pulses)* are: chickpeas, lentils, peas, lima beans, peanuts

Mild tasting legumes kids tend to like:

- Pinto beans / vegetarian refried beans
- Black beans

Mild tasting cereal grains kids tend to like:

- Rice
- Millet & Quinoa (Use like rice)
- Oats



When expanding your legumes and grains:

- Chickpeas and lentils - kids tend to love them or hate them, but try and find out!
- Try chickpeas roasted, in curries, or part of a salad
- Try lentils in soups, dals, with rice, or part of a salad
- Try pinto, black, and kidney beans in tacos, tostadas, and burritos

When you are trying new beans and grains, you can place several small bowls on the table for everyone to sample, but also provide additional items that would naturally pair well with the new foods.

For example:

- If you're trying wild rice, quinoa, and millet - prepare a chickpea curry and / or black beans with cumin and garlic to go with it. Include vegetable options as well! You're looking to find what new foods your family enjoys.
- If you're trying oats - provide a selection of fresh and dried fruits, nuts / seeds, and provide the option for cinnamon and nutmeg to go with it.