

## Eating Your Fruits & Vegetables Just Got Easier

Written by Marcia Humphrey  
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Last week while seeking inspiration for my upcoming article, I asked my ten-year-old daughter, Arianna, for help. “What should I write about, Ari?” Arianna, who takes great pride in her overflowing arsenal of knowledge, gave her usual quick response, “I know mommy! You should write about the delicious smoothies you make us!”

For a split second, I was really impressed with my girl; a few weeks earlier, I had been thinking of writing about smoothies, but apparently the thought had wiggled its way out of my mind. I responded, “That’s a great idea, baby, but do you really think the smoothies are delicious?”

“Well, yes...sometimes,” she responded. Leave it to my girl Arianna to tell it exactly how she sees it! Now I’m going to tell you how I see it; it doesn’t have to be a battle --or expensive-- to get healthy foods into your children’s body (or your body). You just have to learn a few simple strategies involving a blender, and you are on your way to serving up tasty drinks made from fresh fruits and veggies.

### Pull out the blender

You probably have one in the back of your cupboard that you haven’t used for years. If you don’t have one, around \$15 to \$30 dollars can get you the popular compact blenders. What I like about these newer, smaller ones is that the blending jar doubles as a drinking glass, which means fewer dishes to clean!

### Fresh fruits

To keep your costs low, buy fruits that are in season and on sale. Most stores will match competitors’ pricing. When that is not an option, head to the grocer’s freezer section and pick up bagged fruit --no added sugar. If you are new to juicing, start off with combinations you enjoy eating in your fruit salad: apples, pineapples, grapes, strawberries, oranges and bananas all taste great together. Dump the fruit and crushed ice into the blender (and a few tablespoons of low fat yogurt if desired) and you have a refreshing treat in minutes. Instead of bacon and eggs for breakfast, try having a tall smoothie and see how energized you feel. If you want to sweeten your creation, simply add more ripe bananas or pears. Finally, if you see that you bought more fruit than you can eat right away, just cut it up and freeze it. That way you can use it as needed.

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### Fresh veggies

Some of my friends call me crazy when they see me drink carrot and spinach juice on the regular, but I believe I am taking good care of my body. For my children, I usually make a fresh carrot-apple juice. I even combine a few carrots in their fruit smoothies, and they usually don't know the difference. Lately, I have been using my blender to juice the spinach and then add it to recipes. Even Ari doesn't realize that she's been eating spinach meatloaf and spinach spaghetti and tomato sauce. I even recently sampled some homemade sorbet with spinach in it-I'll make that one for the kids soon. If your diet consists mainly of processed foods, consider trying slowly adding fresh, whole foods to your diet. Challenge yourself to have a fruit smoothie once daily for a week and let your body decide if it's a good idea.

Whenever I set a smoothie in front of my children, they never know what to expect. Often it is a cold, yummy treat which they gulp down and then request a refill. At other times, they would describe it as a necessary evil, that they are forced to consume before the three-minute timer buzzes!

It's funny, Arianna's approach to smoothie drinking is pretty consistent; the less she likes it, the faster she drinks it! Either way, I always remind my three children that our lifestyle goal is to consume mostly nutritious and delicious foods to keep our bodies strong and healthy. After all, the Bible says that our bodies are the temples of God. Let's all become more intentional about honoring our temple, by keeping it in good working order (you know you only get one; at least in this life). That way, instead of leaving behind the curse of high blood pressure and diabetes brought on by poor eating habits, our children will benefit from a legacy of healthful habits that begin with whole fruits and vegetables.

Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.