



# Growing Great Tasters

Encourage children to try just “one bite”.

*Adapted from Team Nutrition*



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Developed by Healthy Children Healthy Weights at Columbus Public Health

For information about these materials visit [www.publichealth.columbus.gov](http://www.publichealth.columbus.gov)



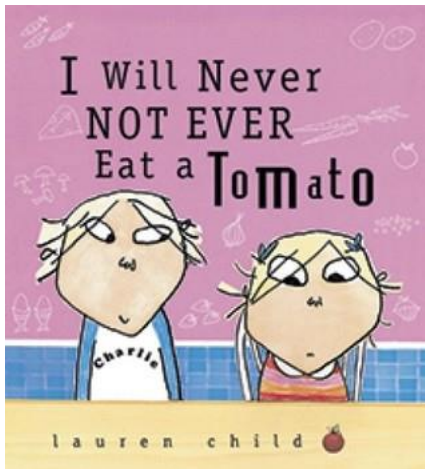
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# HEALTHY FAMILIES: BOOK OF THE MONTH

## Growing Great Tasters ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★



**Title**

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato

**Author**

Lauren Child

**Summary**

Lola is a fussy eater...a very fussy eater. She won't eat her carrots (until her brother Charlie tells her that they are orange twiglets from Jupiter). She won't eat her mashed potatoes (until Charlie tells her that they are cloud fluff from the pointiest peak of Mount Fuji). There are many things Lola won't eat, including—and especially—tomatoes. Or will she?

To borrow a free copy, visit the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County to find a library branch near you at <http://www.cincinnati-library.org/>. This book is also available in stores and online.



## Growing Great Tasters ★★★

### Dig In to Nutrition

Studies show that children can become “great tasters” through activities and learning experiences from gardening and are more willing to try new foods that they themselves have grown. Gardening activities help children increase their knowledge and acceptance of foods by using all five senses—sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste. Allowing children to participate in gardening also leads to an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. It is important to provide opportunities for children to try less preferred foods many times and in many different forms to help children become adventurous eaters.

### Recommendations

Offering learning opportunities around gardening allow children to experience a variety of fruits and vegetables and increase the likelihood that a child will try a new or less preferred food. Always encourage children to try at least “one bite,” and use positive praise words and phrases when children successfully try new foods.

### What You Can Do

Grow great tasters in your own home through the following tips:

1. Start a raised garden bed or plant individual container pots and let the children participate to take part ownership throughout the process (planting seeds, watering etc...).
2. Have a “Taste Test” with your child and try a new food prepared in a variety of ways. Encourage children to try at least “one bite” and offer stickers or praise words as a reward.
3. Be a role model and try new or less preferred foods together as a family. It has been shown that parents who eat similar foods lead to an increase in the acceptability and likelihood of the child liking the new or less preferred food.

### For more information on Growing Great Tasters:

1. Fruits and Veggies: More Matters—  
<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>
2. Garden Forever | A Parent Resource Guide for Gardening with Children—  
<http://www.gardenforever.com/pages/parents-resource-guide-to-gardening-with-children.htm>
3. United States Department of Agriculture | Nibbles Newsletter—  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_33.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Nibbles_Newsletter_33.pdf)

Adapted from: Columbus Public Health—Healthy Children, Healthy Weights Program



*Growing Great Tasters* ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**Grow Your Own Salsa Garden**

Gardening doesn't have to be expensive or require a lot of room—you can use container pots to grow various fruits, vegetables, and herbs, as well. Does your family enjoy salsa? If so, get the family involved in a garden project and plant tomatoes, peppers, garlic, and cilantro. Once it's time for harvest, you will have everything you need to make your very own salsa! Jar up any extra and enjoy the fruits of your labor for months to come!

**Hold a Taste Test**

Pack up the family and head to the grocery store or farmers' market. Let your children choose one new or unfamiliar fruit and vegetable each week to explore new varieties, flavors, and textures. Prepare the fruit and vegetable selected in multiple ways (e.g. slice a raw pear, make applesauce using pears, cook pears in the oven) and hold a family taste test. Keep a list or journal of which foods were favorites, and give stickers to your children for each new food tried.



# pita pizzas

## Ingredients

1 cup Super Quick Chunky Tomato Sauce (See separate recipe card for details.)

1 cup grilled boneless, skinless chicken breast, diced (about 2 small breasts)

1 cup broccoli, rinsed, chopped, and cooked

2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

1 tablespoon fresh basil, rinsed, dried, and chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried)

4 (6½-inch) whole-wheat pitas



1. Preheat oven or toaster oven to 450°F.
2. For each pizza, spread ¼ cup tomato sauce on a pita and top with ¼ cup chicken, ¼ cup broccoli, ½ tablespoon parmesan cheese, and ¼ tablespoon chopped basil.
3. Place pitas on a nonstick baking sheet and bake for about 5–8 minutes until golden brown and chicken is heated through. Serve immediately.

**Yield** 4 servings, **Serving Size** 1 pita pizza, **Calories** 275, **Total Fat** 5 g, **Saturated Fat** 1 g, **Cholesterol** 32 mg, **Sodium** 486 mg, **Total Fiber** 7 g, **Protein** 20 g, **Carbohydrates** 41 g, **Potassium** 362 mg



National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute

# Fresh Salsa



## Ingredients

- 6 medium-size tomatoes, chopped
- ½ white onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons canned, diced mild chilies OR 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- juice of 1 lime

## Preparation

1. In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients.
2. Serve with baked tortilla chips.
3. Refrigerate leftovers in a covered container. Use within two days.

**Makes 6 servings.** One serving equals ½ cup.

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Helpful Hint:** Use your salsa with baked tortilla chips or as a dip for veggies. Try it with Tasty Tostadas and Kick'n Chicken Pitas, too.

# Growing Great Tasters

Encourage children to try just “one bite”.

The chance to taste a food many times helps young children and adults to grow into adventurous eaters. Trying new foods can lead to better health and nutrition.

## TAKE A TRIP TO THE FARMER’S MARKET OR COMMUNITY GARDEN.

- Talk to farmers about the food.
- Choose a new fruit and/or vegetable to try at home.
- Wash and prepare new foods together.
- Together try at least “one bite”.



## FAMILY ACTIVITY

Children learn through role modeling. As a family try one new fruit or vegetable everyday for a week. Use the chart below to record each new food you try. Add a star to show everyone tried it. Add more stars if everyone liked it.

| I TRIED IT! |            |
|-------------|------------|
| MY NEW FOOD | TASTING ★★ |
|             |            |
|             |            |
|             |            |
|             |            |
|             |            |
|             |            |
|             |            |

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