

Green energy for little bodies

There are many clever, sneaky and downright ingenious ways to make fresh food fun for children. Greens are one of the trickiest foods to make exciting - or even palatable - for our little ones. Power packed with a vast array of nutrients, they are an important part of a daily diet for growing bodies.

I have found that 'green smoothies' provide a wonderful answer to this problem by blending greens with sweet fruits to offer their valuable nutrients in a tasty 'drinkable' form. Children have more tastebuds than adults and are sensitive to strong flavours.

The green smoothie recipe below has been specially developed to be 'kid friendly'. Banana and avocado create creaminess, while the citrus tang of oranges masks the 'green' taste. This smoothie gets a fantastic reception at demonstrations I conduct for children, many of whom are unfamiliar with raw food and the concept of 'drinking their greens'.

Here are some handy hints to encourage reluctant 'treasures' to take their first taste of a delightful green smoothie:

- When first introducing green smoothies, go light on the greens and add extra fruit. Extra greens can be

gradually introduced after the initial phase has been successful.

- Get your child to name the smoothie. Some 'cracker' names I've had suggested to me include: - 'The Snot Shake', 'Green Goddess', 'Shrek's Bathwater' and 'Green Fairy Drink'.
- Place a fruit garnish on the side of the glass (a slice of orange or strawberry) or one of those little paper umbrellas. Call it a cocktail and pretend you're in a tropical paradise.
- Get your child to make their own green smoothie concoction. Offer a choice of sweet fruits and mild greens and get them involved in blending, tasting and 'judging' the smoothie.
- Don't use too spicy or 'green' tasting greens at the start. Remember, children have more tastebuds than adults and are sensitive to strong flavours.

Groovy Kids' Smoothie!

Ingredients:

- Three handfuls of greens (baby spinach, kale, nettle etc. or other dark leafy green that is not too 'bitter' or 'hot'). Add less greens and more fruit if you're just starting out
- Fresh mint to taste

- Two ripe bananas
- Half an avocado (optional, a great source of healthy monounsaturated fats)
- Juice of two fresh squeezed oranges
- Water as needed

Method:

Place the greens and mint into a blender and add enough water so that they can be blended thoroughly (sometimes up to half the volume of the greens depending on the capacity of the blender).

Blend thoroughly. Then add the banana, avocado and orange juice and continue blending.

Serve fresh! You can also keep this in a jug in the fridge for a day or so. It's great as a breakfast smoothie.

By Meghan Street.

Meghan conducts fresh food workshops for children and adults throughout Melbourne and is also developing raw food workshops for parents and adults. She has first-hand experience with the eating habits of a fussy child and knows a trick or two.

Meghan can be contacted by email to meg@veganrevolution.com.au




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