

Never Too Young to Enjoy California Avocados

(NAPSA)—Just like adults, most children can benefit from getting at least five servings of colorful fruits and vegetables every day; many children, however, fall short. A study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* reported that 23 to 33 percent of



Pivonka

infants and toddlers studied did not even get a single serving of fruit in a day.

Most children need to more than double their daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Keeping your kitchen stocked with a wide variety of produce, including fresh California avocados, is one way to get children to increase their daily consumption of fruit.

Incorporating California avocados into your children's diet is a great way to give them a healthy start. This delicious fruit is not only great tasting, but easy to prepare. A single serving of California avocado (about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a medium avocado or about two tablespoons mashed) is 55 calories and contributes essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that solid foods may be introduced to infants between four and six months of age; and that for the first year foods be mashed or pureed. For a quick snack, just mash a California avocado with a spoon and feed directly to baby.

When you are introducing avocados to older children you can offer it with other foods or alone as a great-tasting snack. Just remember, children often refuse to eat new foods, but persistence with fruits and vegetables will pay off with a healthy diet for your child.

For older children, you can try



this easy and delicious recipe, featuring California avocados:

Pick Up Sticks

Recipe provided by the California Avocado Commission. For more healthy recipes online, visit www.5aday.org or www.avocado.org.

Ingredients:

12 long, thin pretzel sticks

$\frac{1}{2}$ ripe California avocado, seeded, peeled and cubed

6 oz 75% light Cheddar cheese, cut into twelve $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes

$\frac{1}{2}$ large red apple, cored and cubed

12 red grapes

Instructions:

Cube avocado and apple.

Use a wooden skewer to poke holes in avocado, apple and grape.

Using a pretzel stick as a skewer, thread on one grape, one cheese square, one apple cube and one avocado cube.

Repeat process making 12 "Pick Up Sticks."

Serves 3

Nutrition information per serving: calories: 212, total fat: 7.7g, saturated fat: 3.3g, % of calories from fat: 32%, % of calories from saturated fat: 14%, protein: 19g, carbohydrates: 17g, cholesterol: 20mg, dietary fiber: 2g, sodium: 402mg

Note to Editors: Eighty-fifth in a series of columns by Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., president and CEO of Produce for Better Health Foundation. More stories at www.napsnet.com. Search: "Pivonka."