

A Vegetable A Day

DISCOVERY ZONE, HUMAN ECOLOGY, NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES, RESEARCH, HEALTH

For children struggling with obesity, eating vegetables may be as important as weight loss for a healthy future. In fact, even just a helping or two of the right vegetables each day has been found to have powerful effects.

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School cafeterias, families, policymakers and doctors have been looking for ways to address the growing epidemic of childhood obesity, which has roughly tripled in just the last generation. Now a study with research from UT Austin’s Jaimie Davis has found one solution may be serving more nutrient-rich vegetables. Those are the leafy greens like spinach or broccoli and orangish vegetables like carrots. Making these vegetables even a small part of the daily diet of children at risk for obesity reduced bad fats, improved insulin levels and decreased the children’s risk for liver problems, Type 2 diabetes and other complications of obesity.

Many children in the study continued to eat fewer nutritious vegetables than what’s recommended by the USDA and did not lose any weight, yet they still experienced health gains.

“We found that eating even one full serving of these vegetables daily can really have a pronounced effect on children’s health,” says Davis, an assistant professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Katherine Ross Richards Centennial Teaching Fellow. “A large leafy green salad as a regular part of lunch is enough to make a difference.”

[Read more about the study](#) and [see a video on Davis’ work to teach kids to garden.](#)



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