



# For the Love of Veggies

By Dr. Shannon Austin

I am on a roasted veggie kick these days. Beets, sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, broccoli. You name it, it can probably be roasted. All you need is olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic, and lemon or spices depending on the vegetable. Throw it on a baking sheet in the oven at 400 degrees for 20-30 minutes and you're good to go. This is a great cooking method for working parents or families on the go with little time on their hands to prepare dinner. I love the ease of preparation and the flavors that develop in the food. Even my picky 5 and 2 year old sons have enjoyed eating their roasted veggies. I would have never thought my son would be cheering for roasted beets!

As a pediatrician and health conscious mother, I am continually trying to discover ways for kids to eat their veggies and hopefully enjoy them. It is important to consider not only the variety of vegetables offered but also the various ways of serving them. Some like certain veggies cooked others raw. If you want to cook them, you have several options – Steam, boil, roast, grill, sauté. Each cooking method gives the food a different flavor and texture. Try to experiment with what other flavors you can bring to the vegetables through seasoning. Options include lemon, cinnamon, nutmeg, garlic, paprika, salt, pepper, and various herbs. Check out [Epicurious](#) or other on-line recipe databases for lots of options.

There are other ways to make veggies more palatable. To boost flavor, consider cutting your vegetables into smaller pieces. This allows for a better seasoning to veggie ratio plus it looks less daunting to the apprehensive veggie eater. Kids get more excited about food when they actively participate in choosing, growing, and preparing it. Consider taking your family to a farmers market, my family loves the one at the Pearl, or [growing your own vegetables](#) in a home garden.

Finally, approach vegetables as a positive part of the meal instead of singling them out as an adversary to be conquered. Have fun in the kitchen experimenting with different flavors and cooking methods and you are bound to find at least one veggie your child may actually enjoy!