Research Rundown

Article:

Taste Exposure Increases Intake and Nutrition Education Increases Willingness to Try an Unfamiliar Vegetable in Preschool Children: A Cluster Randomized Trial

What did this study examine?

The aim of this cluster randomized trial was to test the relative efficacy of repeated taste exposure (TE), nutrition education (NE), and a combined TE + NE intervention on intake of an unfamiliar vegetable in preschool-aged children. This study tested the hypothesis that TE + NE would enhance intake of the unfamiliar vegetable.

How was the data collected?
Intake of mooli (white radish) was assessed at Weeks 1, 12, 24, and 36. Mooli was offered to children at their usual snack time assuming that children would be moderately hungry. Each vegetable portion was weighed before and after each snack period by the research team.

What participants were assessed?
The study assessed 219 children aged two to five from 55 different preschools in West Yorkshire, UK.

What unfamiliar vegetable was introduced?
Researchers decided on mooli against cluster beans, beetroot, and marrow as it was determined to be most suitable for preschool-aged children.

Key findings:

Taste Exposure

Three out of **five** preschools noticed an **increase in intake** of the test vegetable over the intervention period. **Four** out of **five** preschools reported that the intervention was easy to deliver and those four preschools also reported that children were engaged during the TE sessions.

Nutrition Education

Five out of **six** preschools reported that they believed that the implementation of the NE program had an **influence on healthy lifestyle awareness and knowledge** of the children. However, **four** out of **six** preschools reported that the program did not have any influence on improving children's healthy eating behaviors.

Put it into practice!

1

Keep the taste exposure results in mind! Serving an unfamiliar vegetable repeatedly increases their willingness to try new foods and will eventually lead to students being more open to new foods in the future!

2

Take note of students who are willing to try the new foods! Children who continue eating the new foods will continue to grow their confidence in consuming unknown and unfamiliar foods in the future.

3

Set the scene for the kiddos! Include nutrition education when serving a new food in order to further increase their exposure to the target food. It's a step-by-step process so take it slow.

Reference:
Nekitsing C, Blundell-Birtill P, Cockroft JE, Hetherington MM. Taste Exposure Increases Intake and Nutrition Education Increases Willingness to Try an Unfamiliar Vegetable in Preschool Children: A Cluster Randomized Trial. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2019 Dec;119(12):2004-2013. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2019.05.012. Epub 2019 Aug 1. PMID: 31378647.

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