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Family Matters

Improving Health Together

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Newsletter

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Spice It Up with Beans!

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You may be thinking, *but wait, aren't beans boring...*? We hope to break stereotypes you may have about beans being unexciting and show your family why these versatile nutritional powerhouses should always be in your pantry.

Benefits of Eating More Beans

Beans are associated with a long list of environmental and human health benefits. For example, they help promote healthy weight and gut health, and they may reduce the risk of various diseases, like type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. They are also rich in protein and dietary fiber to help keep you full. Plus, they are affordable and can be used in many ways!

Tips to Enjoy Beans

- **Dips-** Beans are a great base for a satisfying and creamy dip. Hummus is always an option, but you can also blend a can of beans with some green olives or artichoke hearts for a quick and easy dip.
- **Salads-** Adding beans makes salads more filling and boosts their nutrition.
- **Smoothies-** This may sound strange at first, but beans can make smoothies creamier and add extra protein and fiber to keep you and your family going strong all day.
- **Bean products-** These days, products made with bean flours are becoming more popular, like chickpea, lentil, and black bean pastas. Try substituting a bean pasta for regular wheat pasta in your favorite recipes.

What about their reputation as 'the musical fruit'?

Studies have shown that this is often overexaggerated. Many people do not experience gas, or it quickly goes away when their bodies get used to eating beans. Also, we can all respond differently to different types of beans – so if one type of bean does not agree with you, try another!

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Let's Talk

Encouraging children to eat beans from a young age can help them reap the benefits for the rest of their lives. Get kids excited about beans by appealing to their interests.

- **Take a trip to the grocery store** to explore all the different shapes, sizes, and colors of beans together.
- **Start a conversation about how beans are good for people and the planet.** Beans are packed with good things like protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals to help us grow healthy and strong. Also, they help make the soil healthy and do not require very much water to grow. This may tie into topics your child is learning at school, like water conservation.
- **Show off creative side with dry bean art.**
- **Have kids help you in the kitchen.** Many bean recipes are kid-friendly to prepare, like the one below.



Recipe for Health

Bean Salad

This bean salad is a quick and healthy option you can make with kids, with flavors that will not disappoint!



Ingredients - Salad:

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 can (15-oz.) black beans | 2 bell peppers, yellow, green or red color |
| 1 can (15-oz.) red kidney beans | 1 medium red onion, chopped, or 1 bunch (5-7) |
| 1 can (15-oz.) pinto beans | green onions, sliced |
| 1 can (15-oz.) corn | Cilantro, chopped, to taste (optional) |
| 1 jalapeno, diced (optional) | |

Ingredients - Dressing:

- | | |
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| ¼ cup olive or vegetable oil | 1 Tbs honey (optional) |
| ¼ cup vinegar (white, red wine, or apple
cider vinegar) | 1-2 cloves garlic, minced (optional) |
| ½ tsp salt | Lime juice, to taste (optional) |
| | 1 tsp ground cumin |

Directions:

1. Wash hands and food contact surfaces with soap and water.
2. If using canned beans, drain and rinse beans. Drain the corn. Add beans and corn to a large bowl.
3. Clean and chop vegetables and cilantro. Add to bowl of beans and stir.
4. In separate bowl, add all salad dressing ingredients and mix well. Pour dressing over bean salad.
5. If time allows, place the salad in the refrigerator for 2-4 hours before serving, to allow the flavors to blend. Taste for seasoning before serving and adjust as necessary.

Tips:

- Feel free to change this recipe to match your family's tastes and the ingredients you have available. Use different types of beans, substitute your go-to dressing, sprinkle on freshly ground pepper or smoked paprika, or add your favorite fresh, frozen, or canned produce.
- If you are using no- or low-sodium beans, you may want to add more salt to the dressing. Make sure to taste the final salad for seasoning.

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