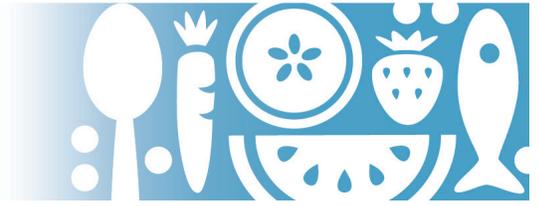




**HEALTHY  
KANSAS  
HOSPITALS**

HEALTHY OPTIONS ARE THE ROUTINE, EASY CHOICE.



## Sneaking More Vegetables into Meals

Just about everyone needs to be eating more vegetables. Some of us love them and eat them at every meal. And then there are those who can't stomach the thought of chomping on something green that looks like a tree. It's not just some four-year-olds who don't like vegetables – it's adults too!

If you're the primary cook in your family, and pasta sauce and French fries are the only vegetables going down at your home, you may want to get a bit sneakier. Here are some ways to help you add vegetables into meals without anyone knowing. You get to be creative, and it doesn't take much work. Saving time and eating healthy make a winning combination!

### Get Shredded!

Grab a box grater or the grating attachment on your food processor to shred zucchini, beets, carrots or parsnips to add to all sorts of recipes. Add a vegetable serving to your favorite whole grain muffins and quick breads by mixing shredded zucchini into your batter before baking. You also can sauté shredded carrots, summer squash or butternut squash for about five minutes before adding them to pasta sauce for a quick, vegetable-filled meal. Even your pickiest of eaters may not notice!

### Get Mushy!

Replace half the ground meat in recipes like burgers, meatloaf and meatballs with cooked chopped mushrooms. Finely chop your choice of mushrooms using a knife or a food processor, then sauté in a little olive oil until soft – about three minutes or so. Once the mushrooms are cool, gently mix them with your lean ground chicken, turkey or beef. Cook thoroughly and follow the recipe as is. Voila! Another vegetable-enriched meal for the family.

### Get Cheesy!

Cooked and pureed orange vegetables like butternut squash, sweet potatoes and carrots can be blended, unnoticed, into cheesy dishes like macaroni and cheese, lasagna or baked enchiladas. You end up using less cheese, which cuts some of the saturated fat and sodium. You also can add the sweeter-tasting vegetables to a blender with some low-sodium broth and puree them into a smooth soup that most children (and adults) will love.

### Be Smooth!

Grab that blender and put it to work! When you're making your favorite fruit smoothie, add in a frozen banana and some spinach, carrots, squash or just about any vegetable (cooked is easier to blend, FYI). The frozen banana

makes for a sweet, thick and creamy smoothie, and it adds a strong banana flavor that helps hide the flavor of the vegetables. Want a more colorful smoothie? Try adding beet, avocado or sweet potato to change the tint. You'll be surprised at how bright – and healthy – your breakfast will be!

**Have you successfully snuck vegetables past your family before?  
Share your story on Facebook and Twitter using #PlusColor.**



The Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation of the Kansas Hospital Association has created a series of resources designed to inform and support efforts to promote healthy food and beverage environments in Kansas hospitals. The content of this document is based on information available on the American Heart Association website at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org). These resources are funded by the Kansas Health Foundation. For more information, visit the Healthy Kansas Hospitals website at [www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org](http://www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org).



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