Western Health is participating in a province-wide vegetable and fruit public awareness campaign. There is a need to promote vegetables and fruit, as survey data indicates that people in Newfoundland and Labrador consume less vegetables and fruit than the Canadian average. Yet, it is well known that vegetables and fruit have a positive impact on health.  This public awareness campaign is targeted to parents and caregivers of children aged five to 13 years, since they have primary responsibility for food that is available in the home, and have a strong influence over the food that children eat. Children who have more access to vegetables and fruit are more likely to eat these foods.

Focusing on parents and caregivers within the Western Health region has the potential to reach approximately 5,000 children in that age group. This campaign will help address the barriers to eating vegetables and fruit. The key messages of the campaign are:

* **Fresh. Frozen. Canned. All Good Options.**
* **Enjoy veggies and fruit with every meal and snack.**

One of the common barriers to eating vegetables and fruit every day is that people feel they cost too much. Here are some tips to help address those barriers to eating vegetables and fruit.

* Canned and frozen vegetables and fruit may cost less and are just as healthy. You can also stock up on these when on sale.
* Buy “No Name” or store brands rather than brand name items.
* Buy larger bags or containers and divide into smaller servings.
* Don’t forget about canned and frozen options – they can be stored

for long periods of time

Another common barrier is “My family doesn’t like vegetables and fruit!”

Try these tips to increase vegetable and fruit consumption:

* Don’t give up! It can take trying a new food up to 20 times before deciding

if you like it.

* Prepare vegetables and fruit in different ways to change the flavour or

texture (e.g., raw, baked, dried, cooked, etc).

* Add vegetables and fruit to your family’s favorite meals. For example, add

vegetables to pizza, sandwiches, wraps and pasta, or have fruit on the side.

It is also a concern that “Vegetable and fruit preparation takes too long!” Try some of these suggestions to make eating vegetables and fruit less time consuming.

* Buy vegetables and fruit that don’t need a lot of prep work – cherry

tomatoes, baby carrots, bananas, oranges, apples, berries, and grapes

are great options!

* Frozen and canned options are quick and ready to use! Add them to soup

or casseroles, or heat them in the microwave to serve as a side dish.

* Chop veggies ahead of time like carrots, celery, peppers, and cucumber

so they are ready to grab for a quick snack.

* Stock up on fruit cups and dried fruit that are easy to grab and go – keep

them at home, work, in your desk or gym bag!

* “Mixes” like spinach, cabbage, and broccoli make salads and stir-fries fast

and easy.

To learn more about how you and your family can eat more vegetables and fruit go to the website at [www.westernhealth.nl.ca/VeggiesAndFruit](http://www.westernhealth.nl.ca/VeggiesAndFruit)

Stephanie Buckle, R. D. Regional Nutritionist