



# The 52 New Foods Challenge

## How a Bay-area mom takes the stress out of feeding kids healthy foods

One Monday morning in 2011, Jennifer Tyler Lee watched in disbelief as her husband, Anthony, playfully got the kids ready for school—with no arguing or cajoling—simply by racing them to see who could be first. “That’s when I had that moment where I said to myself, ‘What happens if I take the struggles we’re having at the dinner table and turn it into a game?’” recalls Lee.

That night, the former Fortune 100 strategy consultant created a contest using index cards and craft paper. She challenged James, then 4, and 7-year-old Catherine, who refused to eat practically anything but peas and macaroni and cheese, to earn points for trying colorful veggies and fruits, plus bonus points for brand new foods. To Lee’s delight, the strategy worked. Before long, even Catherine no longer turned up her nose at garlic and kale.

### TIPS FOR PICKY EATERS

- **SET ASIDE 30 to 60 minutes one day a week to cook with your kids, not for your kids.**

- **THINK of meal preparation as a craft activity. Set up a low worktable with ingredients arranged like project materials.**

- **FOCUS on the fun, not the food. You don’t have to end up with a perfect recipe at the end. Explore with your kids and all the rest will fall into place.**

—Jennifer Tyler Lee

personal favorite and “the least likely food to end up on our table.”

The Challenge not only won over Lee’s kids; it transformed their mom, too. “Prior to doing this,” she says, “I tended to control every part of the process, so cooking projects were not really designed to engage the kids. They were designed to make it easy for me. And they were very heavily scripted. Coming at it with this fresh, new approach allowed me to let go and let the kids lead.”

Story by Nancy Henderson, a food writer in Chattanooga, Tenn.



Chris Chowanec

Jennifer Tyler Lee and her son, James, mix up a blueberry smoothie

### Blueberry Blast Smoothie

Use fresh or frozen berries—whatever you prefer—to make this nutritious smoothie.

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|---------------------------|--|
| 1 cup blueberries         | 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice   |
| 1 banana, peeled          | 1 Tbsp coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves, plus whole leaves for garnish |
| ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt |  |
| ½ cup fresh orange juice  |  |
| 4 or 5 ice cubes          |  |

**1.** Combine blueberries, banana, yogurt, orange juice, ice cubes, lemon juice and mint in a blender jar. Blend until smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour into glasses, garnish with mint leaves, and serve immediately. **Serves 2.**

**PER SERVING:** 150 cal, 0.5g fat, 0mg chol, 4g prot, 36g carbs, 4g fiber, 35mg sodium

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