

Nutrition Activity

Did you know that before the 20th century, oranges were so expensive and hard to get that they were usually only eaten on special occasions such as holidays? Today, oranges are readily available in most grocery stores almost year round. Oranges are an excellent source of vitamin C which is important for a strong immune system and helps to reduce inflammation in the body. Oranges can contribute to good heart health and are thought to help prevent certain cancers. The salad recipe below is a great way to enjoy oranges. The recipe is simple, but uses the flavors of mild cheese and a light orange-coconut dressing to add an interesting twist.

There are really two parts to this recipe: the preparation (cutting fruit and cheese and putting things in bowls) and the assembly (which involves counting out the right number of ingredients). Have patience with your young cook, who may be just learning to count, or too excited to take the time. You can make a number salad, too, and let your child help you count.

Older children may want to participate in the preparation, including shopping for ingredients and cutting things. If you are working with a three or four-year-old, prepare the sliced fruit yourself and let your youngster put it into the bowls. Your young cook will feel a strong sense of accomplishment simply from assembling this fun dish.

Cooking Hints and Safety Tips:

- ❖ If your child wants to help with the cutting, use a serrated dinner knife or a plastic picnic knife. Put a piece of tape on the handle so there'll be no confusion over which end to grasp. **Do not let your child use an adult knife!**

Tools: Small bowls for the various ingredients; tablespoon; child-appropriate knife; cutting board; bowls and spoons for mixing and eating

Number Salad Recipe

- A handful of toasted coconut
- 2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
- 1 orange, peeled, seeded, and sectioned
- 1 small apple, sliced thin (peel for children under 3 years of age)
- 5 dice-sized cubes mild cheese (shred cheese for children under 3 years of age)
- 1 small ripe banana, sliced
- 1 small bunch seedless grapes-chopped

- 1) Cut the fruit and cheese. Cut the fruit in small pieces so each child can make their own bowl of fruit salad. Put each ingredient into a separate small bowl.
- 2) Count out the salad ingredients into a bowl: **1** pinch of coconut, **2** tablespoons orange juice, **3** pieces of orange, **4** apple slices, **5** cheese cubes, **6** banana slices and **7** grape pieces.
- 3) Stir and eat!

Taken from *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes* by Mollie Katzen and Ann Henderson.

