

I'm always trying to figure out a system," declares Jessica Seinfeld, wife of Jerry, 36-year-old mother of three, and author of the new cookbook *Deceptively Delicious: Simple Secrets to Get Your Kids Eating Good Food* (Collins). "And I'm all about solutions." From the decisive clip in her tone, it's easy to assume such productive vigilance has always been second nature to Seinfeld, but it's especially present now that she's a mother.

In this case, the system is the one she used to lure her two sons and her daughter—2, 4, and 6 years old, respectively—toward healthy eating. "I was spending so much energy trying to get them to eat vegetables—bribing them, begging them, whining at them," she says. "I wanted to take the conflict out of mealtime."

So instead of following the path of least resistance—nightly servings of Annie's mac and cheese—Seinfeld decided to disguise her vegetables as something else. Suddenly broccoli became part of the breading for chicken nuggets,

and sweet potatoes were hidden inside pancakes. Her secret: purees. She began blending her vegetables—she reserves Sunday afternoons for making and freezing several batches—and then smuggling them into dishes she knew her kids would eat. (The cauliflower puree, for example, has been hidden without detection in mashed potatoes as well as in chicken salad.)

Seinfeld's recipes were written with determined simplicity. After all, she has a day job too—running Baby Buggy, a nonprofit organization that distributes baby gear to New York City families in need—so she isn't merely imagining the demands of modern parenting. "The point of my book is getting your kids to eat good food, and getting it on the table in 20 minutes," Seinfeld says. "I have three kids crawling around my kitchen while I'm cooking dinner, and it drives me crazy. I'm afraid one is going to stick his hand in the oven while the other is trying to get ice out of the freezer and the third is about to fall over a chair."

Seinfeld believes in eating together as a family, but she recognizes how hard that can be. "I'm home for dinner four out of seven nights," she says. "Sometimes meetings run late, or I have a fund-raiser. Sometimes I can't be home. But my three kids always eat together, whether it's with me and Jerry, my mother, or our babysitter." And if it's up to Jerry to come up with dinner for the family? Seinfeld laughs. "It's cereal, cereal." 🍪

## puree genius

Cookbook author and nonprofit founder Jessica Seinfeld is not above tricking her kids into eating healthy food.

BY NELL CASEY

### Supertime Subterfuge

Jessica Seinfeld at the Union Square Greenmarket in New York City, hunting for produce. She mixes broccoli into crispy rice balls, carrot into turkey burgers, and zucchini into oatmeal-raisin cookies. Her book, *Deceptively Delicious*, is available September 18.

