

CHILDHOOD NUTRITION

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From before birth, nutrition plays a critical role in children's health. Junk food, in the form of sugars, soft drinks, white flour products and hydrogenated vegetable oils can and often do destroy children's health. **FRUIT IS NO BETTER, AND FRUIT JUICES ARE OFTEN WORSE THAN JUST SUGARY FOODS, AS THEY ARE SO HIGH IN SUGAR. IT MATTERS NOT THAT IT IS "NATURAL" SUGAR – IT IS JUST AS BAD OR WORSE.**

Also, caffeine and hundreds of "FDA-approved" chemical additives also harm children. As a result, infections, obesity, diabetes and cancer are increasing among our children. Other nutrition-related problems include ADHD, learning disorders, delayed development, depression and many cases of autism.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Most parents want to feed their children correctly, but are not well-informed or are so busy and tired themselves that nutrition may fall by the wayside. Yet parents are the key to a child's nutrition.

BECOME INFORMED

*** Know that most babies today are born nutritionally deficient and toxic, no matter how normal they appear.** Many go into adrenal burnout at age 2 or even less in some cases. In other words, children today are very unhealthy! This is the reason children are having so many problems in school, with learning and behavior, with infections and more.

*** As a general principle, children do not need more drugs and vaccines, as the doctors too often prescribe.** They need to be breastfed until around age 3, they need to eat far better quality food, and the older ones need to rest more and drink much more water.

*** In spite of what doctors and the FDA may report, sugar in all forms, including fruit, damages children's health.** Sugar's empty calories actually deplete the body of vitamins and minerals. Sugars also upset calcium metabolism and the insulin mechanism, and can cause hypoglycemia and diabetes. Few would feed to their dog what many allow their children to eat. One can of soda pop may contain up to 8 teaspoons of sugar.

* Children are exposed to huge amounts of toxic additives like aspartame (Equal or Nutrasweet). Aspartame accounts for over 75 percent of the adverse reactions to food additives reported to the US Food and Drug Administration. Aspartame causes over 90 adverse symptoms, according to a 1994 Department of Health and Human Services report. Many are very serious, such as anxiety attacks, memory loss, diabetes, brain tumors, seizures and death.

Other harmful chemicals include caffeine in soft drinks, MSG in soup mixes and nitrites used to preserve packaged meats. These can have horrendous side effects in many children.

* Bleached white flour and hydrogenated vegetable oils found in hundreds of prepared foods are also harmful.

PLAN FAMILY MEALS

* Make eating and family meals an important and a pleasant task. Food is your connection with the earth, with nature, with each other and a basis for good health. Excellent nutrition is also required for the full development of a human being. Move away from the “pit stop” mentality - that eating is like filling the car with gasoline, basically a waste of time. Eating in a hurry or in a car wastes most of your food, as it is not well-digested.

* Commit to preparing simple meals at home. Consider taking cooking classes if needed, perhaps even with your child. Use a food steamer for an easy, tasty meal. Place whole vegetables, chicken or other food in the steamer and set it for 40 minutes, or whatever is needed. Food will not burn and it is not a lot of work. Microwave ovens are not good, so do not use them.

* Plan your family’s life around family meals, not the other way around. *Family meals are much appreciated by children.* Make meals relaxing and enjoyable. Start by saying grace to set the mood. Studies prove this simple act can enhance the quality of the food. Light a candle or use special napkins or plates to make meals special.

* Have the family sit together at the table and maintain a happy, peaceful mood. Following the meal’s blessing, my friend Megan has each child in turn say the best thing that happened to them during the day. Definitely turn off the TV and radio during meals.

* Discuss meal planning with children and give them healthy choices. Children like to participate in such decisions. Pre-planning the week’s menus can save time and money.

* Also involve children in preparing meals. Many children love having their own chef’s hat and apron, and love to imagine they are running a restaurant.

* Find creative ways to entice children with healthy food. Make up child-friendly names for healthy concoctions like ‘Danny’s Delight’. Stir-fried ground turkey and shredded vegetables, topped with a little chile sauce on a corn tortilla makes ‘Slippery Joes’, a child’s favorite.

* If your children like nut butter, mix some with water to make a dressing and cover vegetables with it, or cover them with a little diluted spaghetti sauce if this is more appealing. Make objectionable-tasting vegetables into vegetable soup to disguise the flavor. Try new vegetables along with the children.

SHOPPING

* Read labels as much as possible. *Fewer ingredients are better.* A good general rule is if you cannot pronounce an ingredient or don’t know what it is, don’t eat it. Buy organically grown meat, dairy and produce as much as possible. These contain much less toxic pesticides, growth hormones and other harmful chemicals.

* Avoid the big four: sugar, refined flour, hydrogenated oils and chemical additives. Especially avoid aspartame, (NutraSweet or Equal). Xylitol, sorbitol, or stevia are not as harmful. However, do your best to avoid all sweeteners and to move away from the sweetening habit entirely. Look for hidden sugars under names like dextrose, sucrose, maltose, corn syrup, invert sugar, fruit juices, barley malt, rice syrup, maple syrup and honey. If these are among the first three ingredients, the food is mostly sugar.

* Shop at health food markets to find better quality food. Trader Joe's is less expensive on many items. Shop the outside isles of the supermarket.

* Keep basic foods stocked all the time such as Foster Farms or other natural chicken and turkey, natural hamburger or lamb, vegetables. Skip the fruit, which I know is easy to eat as it does not require preparation and is sweet, but is not healthful. Dried fruit and fruit juices are the worst of these. If you must use fruit juices, *dilute them with a lot with water*. Children do not need fruit or sweets at all. They do need plenty of quality fats and oils, however, in their diets, such as those in raw dairy products.

If you cannot buy all fresh food, frozen vegetables are much better than going out to eat most of the time.

* Avoid most canned food. Canned tuna and all salmon is high in mercury and should not be eaten. However, canned sardines a few times a week only, are excellent.

* Simply do not buy junky foods such as candy, cookies, donuts, soda pop, pop tarts, ice cream and other sugary or poor quality items (I hesitate to call these foods). Buy only quality food, preferably fresh. It is worth going shopping a few times a week if needed to do this.

Instead of snacking, encourage your children and the adults in the family to have a small meal in mid-afternoon, perhaps, or after school. If you must have snacks, keep only quality snacks around the house such as leftover cooked vegetables, rice crackers or rye crackers, butter, sardines, turkey jerky or chemical-free beef jerky, goat cheese, yogurt, and blue and perhaps some yellow corn tortilla chips.

* Avoid buying fluoridated toothpaste. Fluoride is a poison. The same chemical is used in rat poison. Question the entire fluoride myth. Go to www.fluoridealert.org for more information.

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT NUTRITION

* ***Set a good example for your children.*** Eat as we recommend on this website, and do your best to enjoy it with your children.

* ***Explain to your children why nutrition matters.*** Share books, articles or videos with them. Discuss with them *why* we choose to eat healthy food so they can make good food choices.

* ***Then gently, but firmly, insist that your children eat correctly.*** Give them choices of healthful meals, but do not give in to their demands or whining for sweets or other things that are not the best for them. This takes some courage and strength, at times, but is well worth the effort.

* Refer to healthy food as ‘muscle food’ and the rest as junk food. Teach children to always finish muscle food first.

* When shopping, have children look into other shopper’s grocery carts, and then at the person pushing the cart. The nutrition connection is often obvious.

* ***Be your children’s nutrition guardian, not another friend who tempts them or wins them over with junk food.***

* Avoid letting your children eat what they wish because you feel guilty for working all day or not giving them what they want.

* Do not reward children with sweets or other junk food. It equates eating junk food with being happy or good. This will cause problems later in life.

* Limit television viewing, as it exposes your children to hundreds of junk food commercials that mislead them.

FRIENDS, SCHOOL AND PARTIES

* Controlling your children’s eating when they are with friends is difficult. Children do not like to feel different or strange because they cannot eat certain foods.

* The best approach is to keep your children away from other children who do not eat well or are a bad influence in any way. This is very important and is not depriving your children of “social experiences”. This is common sense.

* Seek out other parents who feel the same way you do and exchange ideas, recipes, books and experiences. Also, these are the families you want to interact with, and only these.

* Help your children make good food decisions. Ask your child to pay attention to how he or she feels immediately after eating junk food and a few hours later. This can help him or her see the connection between food and health.

* Use whatever methods will help motivate your child to eat better. Your child may want to have better skin, grow taller or be strong and better at sports. Some children may want to get sick less often, have more energy or get better grades in school. Quality food can help all of these.

* Your children should influence their friends when it comes to nutrition, not the other way around. If you notice your child comes back with junk food from certain friends, talk briefly to both children about why these foods are not healthful. They may taste good in the mouth, but the stomach does not like them at all, as they contain harmful chemicals and lack nutrition.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

* Pack healthy school lunches, or better yet, educate your children at home and avoid the problem of school lunches.

* Know that children often trade their food with that of others – most of whom are given junk food, fruit, nuts, and other things that are not very good by their parents.

* Do not give children wheat products for best nutrition. Instead, try non-wheat breads or blue corn tortillas. Blue corn chips make an excellent snack or use them as part of a meal of cooked vegetables and meat, preferably.

A thermos of thick vegetable soup with turkey, chicken or occasionally beef is also excellent. Avoid packaged convenience foods. Many may look like food, when indeed they are not good.

* Also, do not buy and do not give your children ‘food bars’ that are sold in health food stores and supermarkets. They are almost all much too sweet, terrible food combinations, and should be avoided. Also avoid trail mix and granola bars. They are too sweet, hard to digest and bad food combinations.

* **Drinks.** Children and adults should not drink with meals, but many children are dehydrated and need much more water between meals. Excellent drinks for children are spring water, bone broth, or up to 4 ounces of raw goat milk or raw cow milk if your child tolerates it. Other are a few ounces of carrot juice, or herbal teas.

Never give your children sugary drinks, such as soda pop, Kool-aid, vitamin drinks that are mostly sugar, sweetened tea, fruit juices, almond, soy or rice milk or other sweet drinks. Definitely avoid Gatorade, Recharge and other sports drinks. Pasteurized milk is also not a great food for many children. However, it is better than soda pop.

* Speak up to school authorities that you object to the sale of junk food in schools, and to parents bringing junk food treats into the classrooms for parties. Sane school districts in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and elsewhere have banned junk food from their cafeterias with good results.

Recently, the Appleton, Wisconsin high school decided to replace all junk food with healthier choices. The principal’s annual report showed vast improvements in behavior and grades. Make it happen in your school district, too, or pull your child out of public schools where junk food is often far too available to children and the general nutrition consciousness is often very low.

EATING OUT

* Ethnic restaurants often make food from scratch. Buffets allow you to see what you eat before you choose.

* Skip most fast food restaurants. If you must go, Subway is a bit better, perhaps, but not good. Help children make good choices at these places, avoiding the greasy nuggets and French fries. These are often soaked in carcinogenic refined vegetable oil.

VACCINES

This is not about nutrition, but it is so important we include it.

Vaccinations can be extremely harmful. We do not recommend vaccines at all. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated or threatened by school or other authorities that want your child vaccinated. Pull your child out of school or other activities, if needed.

In many states in America, school nurses and others have a form called *Request for Exemption to Immunization* that can easily release you from school immunization requirements. However, they often do not tell parents about this. To learn more, read [Vaccination](#) on this website. This website also contains a [Vaccine Refusal Form](#) you can use.

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