

Nutrition For Kids

TRAINING GUIDE



Learn All The Secrets,
Tips & Guidance You Need To Ensure The
Right Nutrition For Your Kids!



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Introduction



The nutritional needs of children and adolescents are different from those of adults because children are growing and developing. Children need a wide range of nutritious foods, with high intake of important minerals and vitamins such as protein and calcium. If your child's intake of good food is poor, they can fail to gain or lose weight. This may be followed by failure to grow taller.

Do you want your child to eat a nutritious meal today? As it happens, parents make a lot of decisions before that one meal gets on the table tonight. Any one of those decisions can sabotage the hoped-for outcome. At the same time, feeding your kids in a healthy way is only one of your objectives among the many you have in running busy lives. Do you also want not only that tonight's dinner be eaten, but that your child develop healthy eating habits for life? Raising a healthy eater is complicated.

This guide will help you and your children to learn the importance of proper nutrition in early age.

So let's get started!

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CHAPTER 1

7 Reasons Why Childhood Nutrition
Is So Important





Childhood nutrition has been a focus in our society for some time now, as we're learning more and more how important it is for children to learn healthy eating habits at a young age. We also know that thousands, if not, millions of children aren't getting the proper nutrition that they need.

There are seven major reasons why childhood nutrition is so important. Proper nutrition in children...

- Supports the immune system
- Establishes good eating habits
- Provides essential vitamins and minerals
- Ensures proper physical growth and development
- Promotes brain development
- Helps establish sleep patterns
- Affects moods

Childhood nutrition is essential for everyday life. Read on for more information regarding why nutrition is important for your child and to dig deeper into the seven reasons why it is important.

Why is Childhood Nutrition Important?

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Children need proper nutrition in the form of healthy, balanced meals each and every day. A child's meal should consist of fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein, and grains. Each of these foods contains the vitamins and minerals needed to help maintain a healthy life. A child receiving all the nutrients will live a healthier lifestyle.



7 Reasons Why Childhood Nutrition Is So Important

There are many reasons why providing a child with proper nutrition is important. Some are more beneficial than others. However, these are more of a general collection of why childhood nutrition is so important.

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1. Proper Nutrition Strengthens Immunity

Staying healthy is important. Not just with exercise but also with proper nutrition. Providing a child with proper nutrition can be beneficial for their overall health. Immunity to physically being healthier can help determine if a child is getting the correct nutrition amount.

Children are around germs every day. For the immune system to be able to provide immunity, the body needs vitamin C and D, zinc, selenium, iron, and protein. The best and natural places to find these are in a food.

This means that a child that has healthy daily nutrition can produce the immunity cells and the antibodies that are needed for any illness or germs that the body needs.

Some foods that are full of immunity support:

- Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Strawberries
- Oranges
- Broccoli
- Fish
- Red meats such as beef
- Fortified foods such as milk, oatmeal, and tofu
- Egg yolks
- Shellfish

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- Nuts
- Tofu
- Meats: chicken, pork, beef
- Garlic
- Turkey
- Red meats
- Pumpkin seeds
- Spinach

Maintaining a good nutritional diet not only provides immunity support but also for overall health. Children need to eat good nutritious meals that are needed for all basic body functions. Having good nutrients in a child's life will improve their quantity of life and provide relief from the body, attacking itself to gather up all the nutrients that are needed.

2. Promotes Lifelong Healthy Eating Habits

Healthy eating habits ensure that your child can maintain the correct bodyweight for their body types. In some cases, your child may have to be put on an eating schedule or given in certain quantities.

Healthy eating habits can make it easier for your child to adjust to the new eating plan. Some ways to help with proper or good eating habits can be the following:

- Water place of juice or soda. This can cut back on the sugar that is already a part of your child's nutrition plan.

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- Eating slow can help send signals to your brain that you are getting full. It also helps with preventing overeating that can cause tiredness after meals, as well as gastric problems from eating too much too quickly.
- Stick to the serving sizes. Sticking to serving sizes can do wonders to a child's eating habits. Instead of a whole bowl of mac-n- cheese and six(6) slices of pizza, doing moderations and following the serving sizes, and eating slowly, can increase the feeling full effect and be used as a guide to what is considered healthy.
- Eat fruits and vegetables during meals but also as snacks in place of chips or cakes. Including fruits in snack time can greatly benefit your child's healthy by replacing good sugars with bad sugars such as those included in soda or snack cakes.

3. Provides Essential Vitamins and Minerals

Parents give their children vitamins in the shape of animals every day, but most don't realize that proper nutrition gives their children a wide range of the essential vitamins and minerals they need.

Getting the proper nutrition for your child is important. Vitamins and minerals not only help with growth but also help with bone growth, battle infections, help our organs such as our eyes to see.

There are a variety of foods that can provide the vitamins and minerals we need. Here are a couple of foods that carry the essential vitamins and minerals needed:

- Nuts and seeds

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- Green vegetables
- Tuna
- Dairy products
- Avocados
- Fruits and other vegetables



4. Eating the Right Foods Encourages Physical Growth

From infancy to early adulthood, proper nutrition creates many doors for growth, from developing good bones and muscles to maintaining the proper blood supply and organ functions.

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If a child is not able to obtain the nutrients that are needed for growth, there are risks. A child that is malnourished will not be able to achieve the physical growth that they are capable of having. This can result in lowered height, weight, and physical performance.

Malnourishment also can contribute to feeling tired more easily. This energy loss can cause different things, from lack of exercise to having problems focusing.

When a child is not obtaining the nutrients needed for energy, the child may seem more relaxed and not interested in games or outdoor play. This can increase the risks of muscle problems due to lack of use. Not using body functions responsible for movement can cause muscles to degenerate or weaken.

5. Childhood Nutrition Enhances Brain Development

From early on, a child needs a certain amount of nutrition for development. When a baby is growing, the proper nutrients aid in the development of brain and organ function. However, some parents are unaware that proper nutrition needs to start during pregnancy.

Throughout childhood, the brain constantly changes and gathers new information. A child will obtain new information daily. This new information is gotten from electronics, parents or other family, friends, and teachers.

A child that lacks proper nutrition can be more relaxed in class or having trouble concentrating. Difficulty concentration can be caused by malnutrition itself or due to the child being hungry. If the child is hungry, they may feel sick or even just be thinking of food itself.

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There are many ways to eat healthy and healthy eating habits. It is important to start when your children are smaller and start eating actual food outside of baby or pureed foods.

6. Facilitates Healthy Sleep Patterns

Throughout this article, discussions on moods and child development have been pointed out. What most parents don't realize is how important nutrition is for sleep. Giving your child the proper nutrition can help regulate sleep patterns. Sleep is a huge part of growing and being able to function throughout the day.

As said before, a child can have a hard time falling asleep due to feeling hungry or lack of food. However, they can also have these problems with too much food.

That's why making sure your child has had the meals or nutrition they need an hour before bed is always a good idea. It help them run off that excess energy that food can give children, as well as make sure that they have a full belly for a good restful sleep.

Good eating habits also can help with relation to proper nutrition. Giving your child healthy meals and healthy snacks and drinks can prevent a higher sugar intake as well as caffeine intakes that are present in sodas, chocolate, coffee, and teas.

7. Nutrition Directly Affects Children's Moods and Behavior

Your child's mood is directly affected by food. We all are aware of the phrase "hungry" that people use daily. This is typically meaning that a person is so hungry that they have become or were angry or grumpy.

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Usually, when this person that is “hungry” gets the food, they are happy and back to themselves. This can relate to children as well. Parents of toddlers especially can relate to this. Toddlers are still learning how to express themselves. In these cases, sometimes a toddler, or child, may not realize that they are hungry and become irritable or angry.

Usually, after some time and a lot of patience, the parent or guardian will offer a snack or a meal to the child. After the child starts to eat, the irritability goes away.

Poor nutrition or too much nutrition can cause moods other than irritability to occur. Too little or too much food can also cause depression or hyperactivity. Depression can be caused by many different factors other than nutrition, of course.

However, a child that may suffer from malnutrition can become depressed or develop anxiety. Children, in this case, can withdraw into themselves. Feeling hungry or ashamed that they do not have enough food or they are considered poor by others. This can directly affect their mood as well as social interactions and concentration in school.

Does Nutrition Affect Learning?

Students tend to focus more after breakfast, lunch, and snack time. This not only allows them to take a small break from learning and relax their mind but also provides them with a well-needed boost for energy.

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Energy is important to help with tiredness as well as feeling hungry. When a child feels hungry, that's all they will think about. This can make distractions increase and learning decrease. It can cause the child to be timid and embarrassed among peers because of the social interactions needed for learning.

How Does Nutrition Affect The Growth And Development Of A Child?

Growth and development for a child are based on the nutritional needs each child requires. If a child obtains too much nutrition, or overeating/drinking, it can cause health problems such as obesity, binge eating disorders, and depression or sadness.

However, if a child lacks proper nutrition or is malnourished, they can have stunted growth and developmental delays. This, in turn, can cause things like failure to thrive to occur. This not only affects growth but also psychological development.

Final Thoughts

Proper nutrition is always important for infants, children, teenagers, and young adults to have. Having the nutritional needs met for each child can help them to achieve their full potential in cognitive development as well as physical development.

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It is always great as a parent to do healthy eating habits as well as getting proper exercise for themselves as well as helping their children to develop these traits too.



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CHAPTER 2

**Why Is It Important For Children
To Eat A Balanced Diet?**





How your child eats today can have a huge impact on their health throughout adolescence and adulthood. Eating food containing important nutrients helps children grow, and is essential for children's mental and physical development.



Why is a balanced diet important?

By giving your child a healthy balanced diet, you are ensuring that they are getting all the essential vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that children need for healthy growth and development. Certain nutrients are required for a variety of reasons. Some nutrients worth noting are:

This is just a small list of important nutrients and their uses in the body. You can see that children will need foods that give them all these nutrients for their growth and development.

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- Calcium and Vitamin D: Essential for the normal growth and development of bones in children.
- Iron: Supports normal cognitive development in children.
- Vitamin D: Helps support the immune system.
- Omega-3 DHA supports normal brain function.

This is just a small list of important nutrients and their uses in the body. You can see that children will need foods that give them all these nutrients for their growth and development.



What is a balanced diet?

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To get a balanced diet, you need to ensure that your child is eating a wide variety of nutritious foods from all the different food groups. As a general guide, children should eat:

- Lots of fruit and vegetables (more veg than fruit)
- Whole grains (such as brown rice, whole grain bread and whole grain pasta)
- Beans and lentils
- Lean meat and fish (especially oily fish)
- Nuts and seeds

How can I encourage my child to eat a balanced diet?

The best way is to make food fun – it shouldn't be something you are forcing them to do or eat.

Here are 5 top tips for you to make eating a balanced diet fun!

- Remember that different colors of fruits and vegetables contain different combinations of nutrients. Think about a rainbow of color with your food. Try to put as many different colors of food on your child's plate to ensure a huge variety of nutrients. Think of foods with the colors - green, white, yellow, orange, blue, purple, red. Make this a game with your child – can you think of a food which is this color? How many different colors can we get on the plate of your meal?

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- Be a role model yourself. As a parent, it's important to show by example. Eat all these healthy foods yourself. Show your child how enjoyable they can be.
- Get creative in the kitchen – make food fun. Cut food into funny shapes, make faces out of the food and enjoy the process of making the meal. Let the children experiment with the different flavors and textures of food.
- Let them choose what they want to eat for their meal from a chosen group of foods. Children love to be involved in decision making!
- You can also get the children involved in the food shopping. Discuss where the fruits and vegetables came from. Let your child make healthy food choices themselves at the shops.



What can I do if my child won't eat the foods they need for growing?

First of all don't worry! The majority of children go through phases with their eating, but their habits also change over time. Something they would never eat

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before will suddenly become a favorite! Sometimes it's just not possible to get children to eat food containing important nutrients. This is why a good quality children's multivitamin and mineral can be beneficial. A good quality children's multi vitamin and mineral will contain the nutrients required for your child's health and can help top up your child's diet and help fill any gaps to support their growth.



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CHAPTER 3

**Healthy Eating:
Helping Your Child Learn Healthy Eating Habits**





Childhood is the best time to learn the healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Healthy eating can help your child feel good, stay at or reach a healthy weight, and have lots of energy for school and play. In fact, healthy eating can help your whole family live better.



How do you help your child learn healthy eating habits?

Share the responsibility. You decide when, where, and what the family eats. Your child chooses whether and how much to eat from the options you provides.

Young children are good at listening to their bodies. They eat when they're hungry. They stop when they're full. When we try to control how much children eat, we

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interfere with this natural ability. Keeping this division of responsibility helps your child stay in touch with those internal cues.

Help your children learn to eat slowly and recognize when they are full. Don't let rules, pleading, or bargaining dictate your child's eating patterns.

You can use some or all of the ideas below to get started. You may find other ideas that work for your family, and you can add those to these lists.

First steps

- Set up a regular snack and meal schedule. Most children do well with three meals and two or three snacks a day. When your child's body is used to a schedule, hunger and appetite are more regular. This helps your child feel more in tune with his or her body.
- Find at least one food from each food group that your child likes, and make sure it is readily available most of the time. Don't worry if your child likes only one vegetable or one or two kinds of meats or fruits. Kids tend to accept new foods gradually, and their preferences expand over time.
- Have your child eat a healthy breakfast. It helps your child stay at a healthy weight. Eating breakfast starts the process for using calories throughout the day. If you are in a hurry, try cereal with milk and fruit, nonfat or low-fat yogurt, or whole-grain toast.
- Eat as a family as often as possible. Keep family meals pleasant and positive.

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- Don't buy junk food. Get healthy snacks that your child likes, and keep them within easy reach.
- Be a good role model. Your own eating and lifestyle choices are a powerful teaching tool. Your child sees the choices you make and follows your example.

Portion sizes

- Serve modest portions. For example, children between the ages of 2 and 8 should have 2 to 3 ounces of meat or meat alternatives each day. Children between the ages of 9 and 18 should have 5 to 7 ounces of meat or meat alternatives each day. Remember that 3 ounces of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.
- Limit sweet drinks. Encourage your child to drink water when he or she is thirsty.
- Offer lots of vegetables and fruits every day. Children between the ages of 2 and 8 should have 1 to 1½ cups of vegetables and 1 to 1½ cups of fruits each day. Children between the ages of 9 and 18 should have 2 to 3 cups of vegetables and 1½ to 2 cups of fruits each day. That may seem like a lot, but it is not hard to reach this goal. For example, add some fruit to your child's morning cereal, and include carrot sticks in your child's lunch.

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**Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits**

Eat protein foods

**Make water
your drink
of choice**



**Choose
whole grain
foods**

After a few days or weeks

- Offer new food. When trying a new food at a meal, be sure to include another food that your child already likes. Don't give up on offering new foods. Children may need many tries before they accept a new food.
- Don't say "Clean your plate." Try not to manage your child's eating with comments such as "Clean your plate" or "One more bite." Your child has the Compliments:

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ability to tell when he or she is full. If your child ignores these internal signals, he or she will not be able to know when to stop eating.

- Make fast food an occasional event. Order the smallest portions available. Get your children in the habit of sharing one small order of french fries.
- Don't use food as a reward for success in school or sports. For example, don't use favorite foods as rewards for behaving well. And don't reward desired eating behavior (such as finishing a plate of food or trying a new food). If you serve dessert, consider it part of the meal, not a treat to follow the main course.
- Be a good example. If you don't want your child to eat less nutritious foods (for example, those that contain high amounts of fats or sugar), don't have them in the house. If you eat these foods but try to keep them away from your child, the child will learn to sneak these foods, beg for them, or view them as highly desirable.

Use knowledge to reinforce healthy eating habits

Help your children understand healthy eating by teaching them about food—where it comes from, how it grows, what nutrients it contains, and how many calories (how much energy) it has.

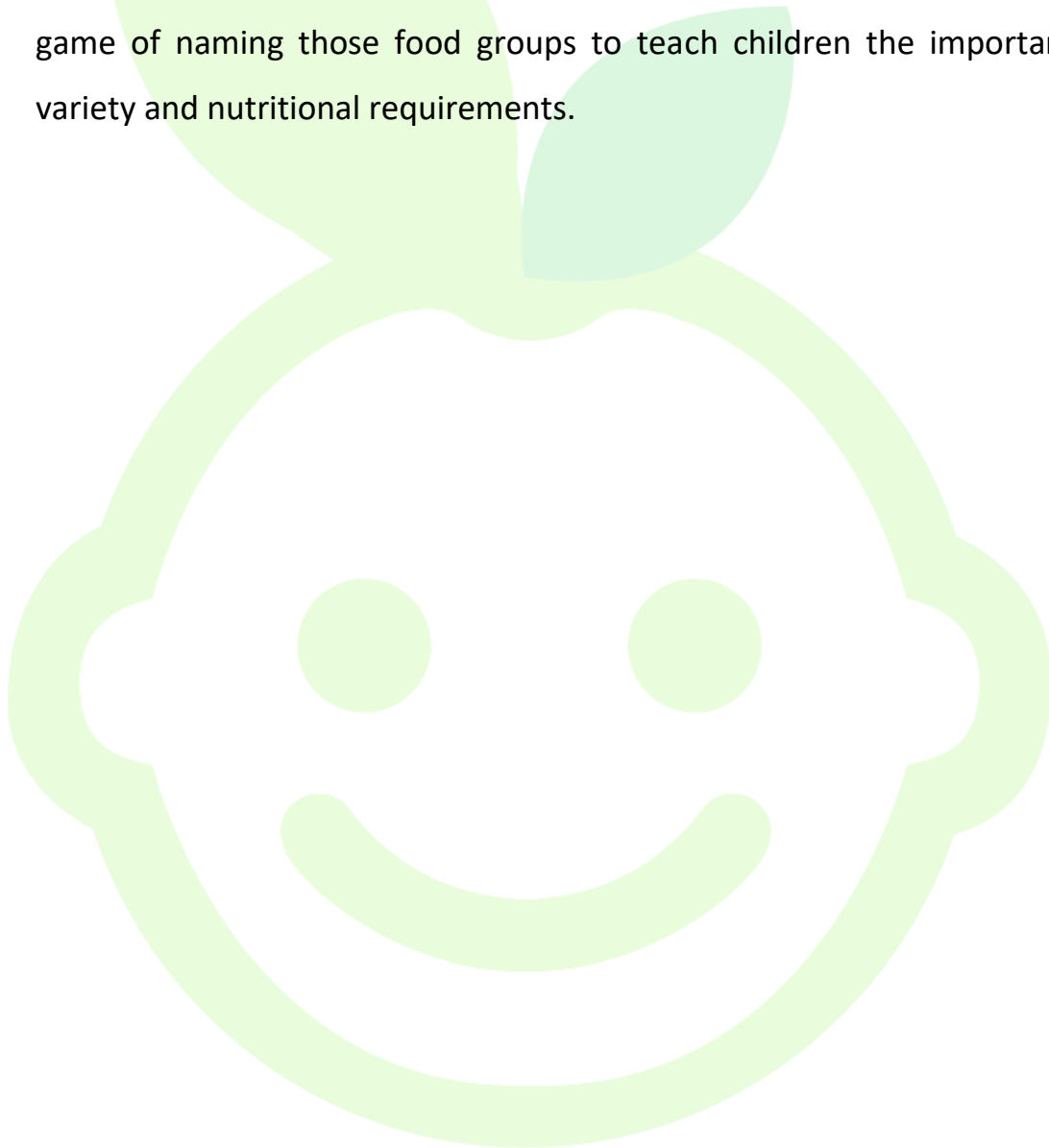
- Grow some of your own food in your backyard or in a pot on the back porch. Let your children have their own plants to take care of.

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- Let your children start helping you cook as soon as they show interest. Teach them simple, healthy recipes.
- Let older children help you with shopping. Use it as a chance to teach them about food labels. Challenge them to find healthy foods by reading the labels.
- At the dinner table, point out the various food groups in the meal. Make a game of naming those food groups to teach children the importance of variety and nutritional requirements.



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CHAPTER 4

Healthy Food For Kids





Peer pressure and TV commercials for junk food can make getting your children to eat well an uphill struggle. Factor in your own hectic schedule and it's no wonder so many kids' diets are built around convenience and takeout food. But switching to a healthy diet can have a profound effect on your child's health, helping them to maintain a healthy weight, stabilize their moods, sharpen their minds, and avoid a variety of health problems. A healthy diet can also have a profound effect on your child's sense of mental and emotional wellbeing, helping to prevent conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and ADHD.



Eating well supports your child's healthy growth and development into adulthood and may even play a role in lowering their risk of suicide. If your child has already

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been diagnosed with a mental health problem, a healthy diet can help them to manage the symptoms and regain control of their health.

It's important to remember that your kids aren't born with a craving for French fries and pizza and an aversion to broccoli and carrots. This conditioning happens over time as they're exposed to more and unhealthier food choices. However, it is possible to reprogram your children's food preferences so that they crave healthier foods instead.

The sooner you introduce wholesome, nutritious choices into a child's diet, the easier they'll be able to develop a healthy relationship with food that can last lifetime. And it can be simpler and less time-consuming than you imagine. With these tips, you can instill healthy eating habits without turning mealtimes into a war zone and give your kids the best opportunity to grow into healthy, well-balanced adults.

Encourage healthy eating habits

Whether they're toddlers or in their teens, children develop a natural preference for the foods they enjoy the most. To encourage healthy eating habits, the challenge is to make nutritious choices appealing.

- Focus on overall diet rather than specific foods. Kids should be eating more whole, minimally processed food—food that is as close to its natural form as possible—and less packaged and processed food.

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- Be a role model. The childhood impulse to imitate is strong so don't ask your child to eat vegetables while you gorge on potato chips.
- Disguise the taste of healthier foods. Add vegetables to a beef stew, for example, or mash carrots up with mashed potato, or add a sweet dip to slices of apple.
- Cook more meals at home. Restaurant and takeout meals have more added sugar and unhealthy fat so cooking at home can have a huge impact on your kids' health. If you make large batches, cooking just a few times can be enough to feed your family for the whole week.
- Get kids involved in shopping for groceries and preparing meals. You can teach them about different foods and how to read food labels.
- Make healthy snacks available. Keep plenty of fruit, vegetables, and healthy beverages (water, milk, pure fruit juice) on hand so kids avoid unhealthy snacks like soda, chips, and cookies.
- Limit portion sizes. Don't insist your child cleans the plate, and never use food as a reward or bribe.

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Healthy food for kids starts with breakfast

Kids who enjoy breakfast every day have better memories, more stable moods and energy, and score higher on tests. Eating a breakfast high in quality protein—from enriched cereal, yoghurt, milk, cheese, eggs, meat, or fish—can even help teenagers lose weight.

- Breakfast needn't be time consuming. Boil some eggs at the beginning of the week and offer them to your kids each morning along with a low-sugar, high-protein cereal, and an apple to go.
- Make breakfast burritos filled with scrambled eggs, cheese, chicken, or beef on a Sunday and freeze them.
- An egg sandwich, a pot of Greek yoghurt or cottage cheese, and peanut butter on wholegrain toast can all be eaten on the way to school.

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Make mealtimes about more than just healthy food

- Making time to sit down as a family to eat a home-cooked meal not only sets a great example for kids about the importance of healthy food, it can bring a family together—even moody teenagers love to eat tasty, home-cooked meals!
- Regular family meals provide comfort. Knowing the whole family will sit down to eat dinner (or breakfast) together at approximately the same time every day can be very comforting for kids and enhance appetite.
- Family meals offer opportunity to catch up on your kids' daily lives. Gathering the family around a table for a meal is an ideal opportunity to talk and listen to your kids without the distraction of TV, phones, or computers.
- Social interaction is vital for your child. The simple act of talking to a parent over the dinner table about how they feel can play a big role in relieving stress and boosting your child's mood and self-esteem. And it gives you chance to identify problems in your child's life and deal with them early.
- Mealtimes enable you to "teach by example." Eating together lets your kids see you eating healthy food while keeping your portions in check and limiting junk food. Refrain from obsessive calorie counting or commenting on your own weight, though, so that your kids don't adopt negative associations with food.
- Mealtimes let you monitor your kids' eating habits. This can be important for older kids and teens that spend a lot of time eating at school or friends' houses. If your teen's choices are less than ideal, the best way to make

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changes is to emphasize short-term consequences of a poor diet, such as physical appearance or athletic ability. These are more important to teens than long-term health. For example, “Calcium will help you grow taller,” or, “Iron will help you do better on tests.”

Limit sugar and refined carbs in your child’s diet

Simple or refined carbohydrates are sugars and refined grains that have been stripped of all bran, fiber, and nutrients—such as white bread, pizza dough, pasta, pastries, white flour, white rice, and many breakfast cereals. They cause dangerous spikes in blood sugar and fluctuations in mood and energy. Complex carbs, on the other hand, are usually high in nutrients and fiber and are digested slowly, providing longer-lasting energy. They include whole wheat or multigrain bread, high-fiber cereals, brown rice, beans, nuts, fruit, and non-starchy vegetables.

A child’s body gets all the sugar it needs from that naturally occurring in food. Added sugar just means a lot of empty calories that contribute to hyperactivity, mood disorders, and increase the risk for obesity, type 2 diabetes, and even suicidal behaviors in teenagers.

How to cut down on sugar

The American Heart Association recommends that sugar intake for children is limited to 3 teaspoons (12 grams) a day. A 12-ounce soda contains up to 10

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teaspoons or 40g of added sugar, shakes and sweetened coffee drinks even more. Large amounts of added sugar can also be hidden in foods such as bread, canned soups and vegetables, frozen dinners, and fast food. In fact, about 75% of packaged food in the U.S. contains added sugar.

- Don't ban sweets entirely. Having a no sweets rule is an invitation for cravings and overindulging when given the chance.
- Give recipes a makeover. Many recipes taste just as good with less sugar.
- Avoid sugary drinks. Instead, try adding a splash of fruit juice to sparkling water or blending whole milk with a banana or berries for a delicious smoothie.
- Create your own popsicles and frozen treats. Freeze 100% fruit juice in an ice-cube tray with plastic spoons as Popsicle handles. Or make frozen fruit kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, and berries.

Avoid foods that impair your child's mood

- A diet high in processed foods, such as fried food, sweet desserts, sugary snacks, refined flour and cereals can increase the risk for anxiety and depression in kids.
- Kids who drink four or more cups of soda or sweetened fruit drinks a day—including diet versions—have a higher risk for depression.
- Caffeine from soda, energy drinks, or coffee drinks can trigger anxiety in kids and aggravate feelings of depression.

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Find healthier junk food alternatives

Fast food is typically high in sugar, unhealthy fat, and calories and low in nutrients. Still, junk food is tempting for kids, so instead of eliminating it entirely, try to cut back on times when your child eat fast food and, on the times that they do, make the healthiest choices possible.

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Kid-friendly junk food alternatives

Instead of...	Try...
French fries	"Baked fries" grilled in the oven and salted lightly
Ice cream	Yogurt; sorbet; fresh fruit smoothies
Fried chicken	Baked or grilled chicken
Doughnuts or pastries	Bagels; English muffins; home baked goods with less sugar
Chocolate-chip cookies	Graham crackers, fig bars, vanilla wafers, fruit and caramel dip
Potato chips	Baked vegetable chips or, for older children, nuts

Eating out with kids

- Skip the fries. Instead, take along a bag of mini carrots, grapes, or other fruits and vegetables.
- Watch portion size. Stick to the children's menu or go for the smallest size. Order pizza by the slice—it will satisfy your child's craving without tempting overindulgence.
- Order the kid's meal with substitutions. Children often love the kid's meal more for the toys than the food. Ask to substitute healthier choices for the soda and fries.
- Opt for chicken and vegetables in a sit-down restaurant, rather than a big plate of macaroni and cheese.

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- Be wise about sides. Sides that can quickly send calories soaring include fries, chips, rice, noodles, onion rings, and biscuits. Better bets are grilled vegetables, side salads, baked potato, corn on the cob, or apple slices.

Be smart about fat

Kids need healthy fats—and plenty of them—in their diet. Healthy fat helps kids fill up (and stay full), concentrate better, and improves their mood.

Healthy fats

- Monounsaturated fats, from olive oil, avocados, nuts (like almonds, hazelnuts, and pecans), and seeds (such as pumpkin, sesame).
- Polyunsaturated fats, including Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, and sardines, or in flaxseed and walnuts.

Unhealthy fats

Trans fats, are found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, and other processed foods made

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with “partially hydrogenated” vegetable oils (even if they claim to be trans-fat-free). No amount of trans fat is safe.

Encourage picky eaters to enjoy a wider variety of foods

Picky eaters are going through a normal developmental stage. Just as it takes numerous repetitions for advertising to convince an adult consumer to buy, it takes most children 8-10 presentations of a new food before they will openly accept it.



Instead of simply insisting your child eat a new food:

- Offer a new food only when your child is hungry; limit snacks throughout the day.

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- Present only one new food at a time.
- Make it fun: cut the food into unusual shapes or create a food collage (broccoli florets for trees, cauliflower for clouds, and yellow squash for a sun).
- Serve new foods with favorite foods to increase acceptance. Add vegetables to their favorite soup, for example.
- Have your child help prepare meals—they'll be more willing to eat something they helped to make.
- Limit beverages and snacks, to avoid filling up between mealtimes.



Make fruit and vegetables more appealing

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Whether picky eaters or not, kids don't always want what's healthy for them—especially fruit and vegetables. But there are ways to make them more enticing.

The first step is to limit access to unhealthy sweets and salty snacks. It's much easier to convince your child that an apple with peanut butter is a treat if there are no cookies available. Here are some more tips for adding more fruits and veggies to your child's diet:

- Let your kids pick the produce. It can be fun for kids to see all the different kinds of fruits and veggies available, and to pick our new ones or old favorites to try.
- Sneak vegetables into other foods. Add grated or shredded veggies to stews and sauces to make them blend in. Make cauliflower “mac” and cheese. Or bake some zucchini bread or carrot muffins.
- Keep lots of fresh fruit and veggie snacks on hand. Make sure they're already washed, cut up, and ready to go. Add yogurt, nut butter, or hummus for extra protein.

GMOS and pesticides: Keeping your children safe

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are mainly engineered to make food crops resistant to herbicides or to produce an insecticide. Since children's brains and bodies are still developing, they are more sensitive to these toxins. Eating organic produce has been shown to reduce pesticide levels in kids, but tends to be more expensive. So how can you keep your children safe if you're on a budget?

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- Feed your kids plenty of fruits and vegetables, whether they're organic or conventionally grown—the benefits far outweigh the risks.
- When possible, go organic for fruits and vegetables that you don't peel before eating, such as berries, lettuce, tomatoes and apples. Choose conventional produce for thick-skinned fruit and veggies like oranges, bananas, and avocados.
- Explore local farmers' markets for less expensive organic produce.
- Scrub conventionally grown produce with a brush. Washing won't remove pesticides taken up by the roots and stem, but will remove pesticide residue.
- When buying meat, choose organic, grass-fed whenever your budget allows. Choosing cheaper cuts of organic meat may be safer (and no more expensive) than prime cuts of industrially raised meat.

Don't ignore weight problems

- Children who are substantially overweight are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, poor self-esteem, and long-term health problems in adulthood.
- Addressing weight problems in children requires a coordinated plan of physical activity and healthy nutrition.
- The goal is to slow or halt weight gain (unless directed by your child's doctor), thereby allowing your child to grow into their ideal weight.

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- Don't fall into the low-fat trap. Because fat is so dense in calories, a little can go a long way in making kids feel full and keeping them feeling fuller for longer.
- Eating a breakfast high in quality protein—from enriched cereal, yoghurt, milk, cheese, eggs, meat, or fish—can help overweight teenagers eat fewer calories throughout the rest of the day.



Encourage exercise

The benefits of lifelong exercise are abundant and regular exercise can even help motivate your kids to make healthy food choices.

- Play with your kids. Throw around a football; go cycling, skating, or swimming; take family walks and hikes.
- Help your kids find activities they enjoy by showing them different possibilities.

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Nutrition For Kids

CHAPTER 5

Common Nutritional Problems In Toddlers





Nutrition problems are very common in toddlers. Every parent tries their best to give their child everything they need for a peaceful and happy life. Food comes first on that list. But the question is, are children getting enough nutrition from the food they are eating? We have heard parents complaining that despite eating a heavy meal their child looks weak and has few nutritional deficiencies.

The nutrients that children require are quite different from adults as they are growing. You need to concentrate on the nutrients that help them in their growth. Making sure that your child is receiving all the required nutrients can be quite a task as it is influenced by their likes and dislikes. It can get even more difficult for children who are choosy eaters. And, you will have to search for an alternative nutrient if your kid is allergic to some kind of food.

Five common nutritional deficiencies in toddlers

Here are some common nutritional deficiencies toddlers have:

Vitamin D

If infants have vitamin D deficiency it means they were born to mothers with low vitamin D. In toddlers this deficiency is caused due to avoiding them from sun, milk allergies or giving them strict vegan food. Every day, in the early morning hours, let them have few minutes under the sun; it will help boost vitamin D.

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Vitamin K

Vitamin K is necessary for proper blood clotting and stopping blood flow. Infants are at more risk as they don't receive enough vitamin K from breast milk. However, they overcome this as they grow. Bleeding from nose, gut, irritability, and vomiting are the common signs toddlers with vitamin K deficiency exhibit. It's advised to immediately seek medical advice and take required supplements.

Iron

Pre-mature babies are at a greater risk of developing this deficiency. Hence, they are given iron-fortified formula after birth. Deficiency of iron can lead to anemia. Start introducing iron-rich foods as soon as they start solids. Kids who just eat vegan

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foods are at a greater risk. If your kid looks pale and bruised easily then it's better to consult a doctor. Prunes, apricots, meat, eggs are said to be rich in iron.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is crucial for eye health and boosting the immune system. It helps to prevent blindness in children. Milk, eggs, carrots, spinach, broccoli, sweet potato, papaya, peaches, apricots are the food items rich in vitamin A. Include these foods in your toddler's meals every day or every alternate day.

Calcium

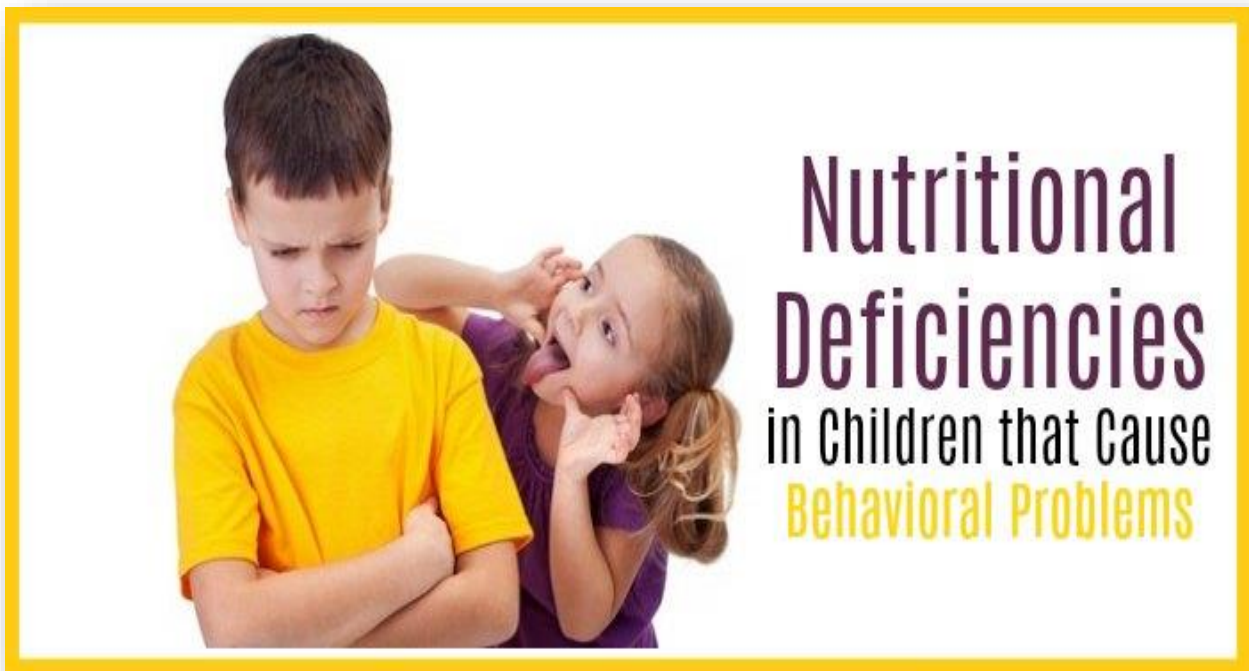
It is necessary for your baby to develop strong teeth and bones. If your kid has calcium deficiency symptoms won't be seen immediately. Weaknesses, numbness, low memory, are the possible symptoms seen in toddlers. All dairy products are rich sources of calcium. Give them on a daily basis.

Signs of nutritional deficiency in toddlers

The signs mentioned below are the possible symptoms of nutritional problem witnessed in toddlers. Few of these can be genetic. It is always a good option to seek expert advice to know the exact cause

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Delayed speech

Delayed speech can be due to a deficiency in B12. Natural foods are a good option than giving supplements. Chicken, fish, eggs, dairy, shellfish are rich in B12. There are no vegan sources of B12.

Hyperactivity

Hyperactivity in children might be due to poor bacterial flora and digestion. It makes it hard for the body to absorb nutrients. And, even digestion problems can be seen. In such cases, removal of processed food is recommended. Include foods that help in the process of digestion. Broths, soups, and food with high fiber should be given to your toddlers.

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Dry skin/hair

Dry skin and hair are considered as a sign of deficiency due to lack of vitamin A, D, E, and K2. Add fat-soluble vitamins to your kid's diet. Liver oil, eggs, salmon, milk, and yogurt are the ideal foods.

Frequent colds and flu's

To protect your kid from catching a cold or flu it is important to give a well-balanced meal which includes a bit of every nutrient. And, boost your kid's immune system by encouraging him to play outdoors more often. Bit dirt does no harm.

Cranky mood

For mood stabilization omega3 acids are vital. Salmon, coconut oil, and butter help to protect omega3 in the brain. Carrots absorb extra estrogen in the body and balance the hormones.

Obesity

When one doesn't consume high nutrition food, they get hungry very often. The same thing is applicable to kids when they eat processed foods while they are hungry; it helps them develop extra bad fat in their body.

Solutions to tackle nutritional deficiencies in toddlers

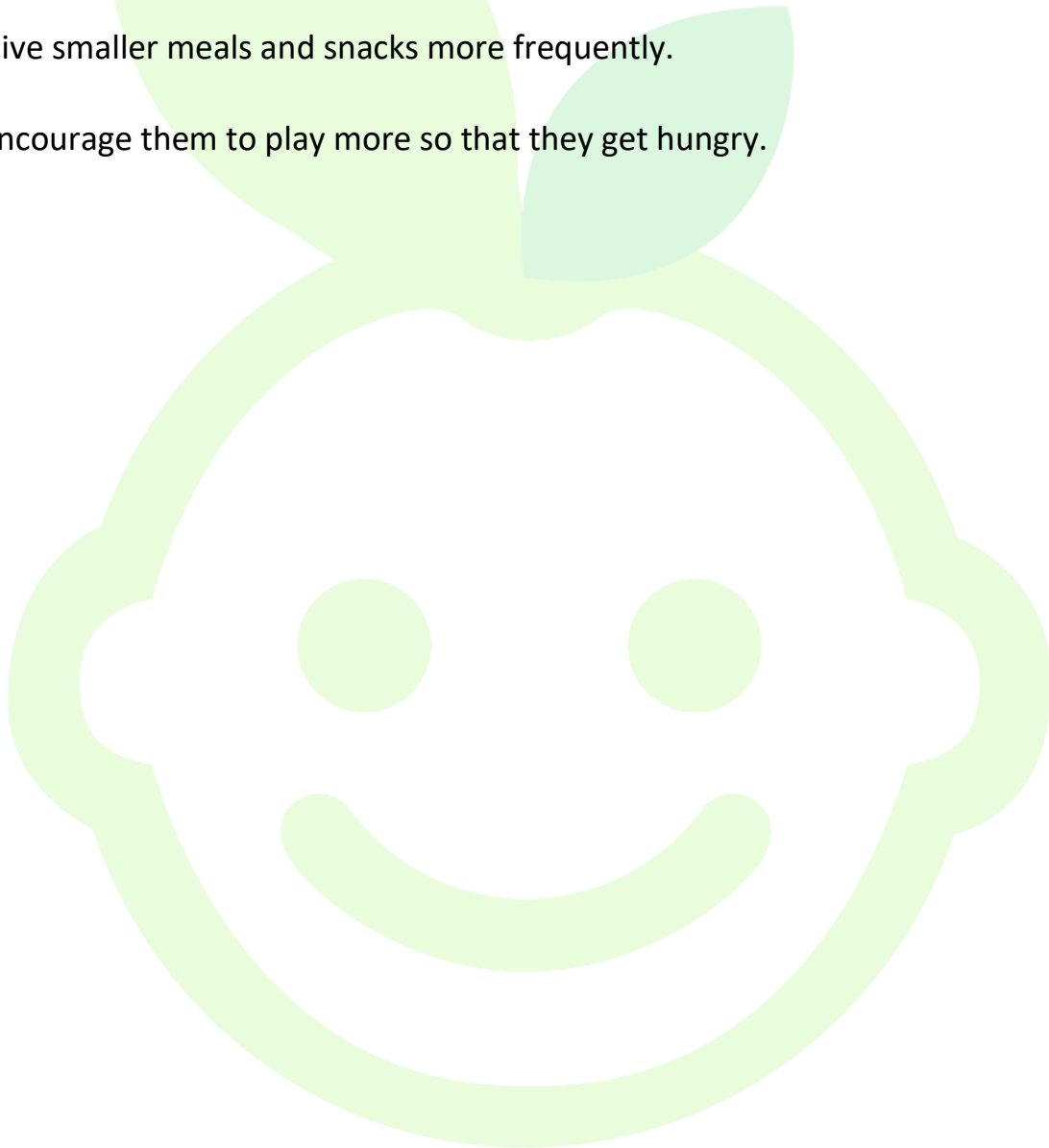
1. Plan meals that include your child's favorite food.

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2. For snacks don't go for packed ships or drinks, instead give them high-calorie snacks such as yogurt, eggs, pudding, cheese, sandwiches, breadsticks, cheese, etc.
3. Garnish your food with parsley, red and yellow peppers to make it look attractive.
4. Avoid sugars and try to implement more protein and fat.
5. Give smaller meals and snacks more frequently.
6. Encourage them to play more so that they get hungry.



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Nutrition

For Kids

CHAPTER 6

Best Vitamins For Kids:
Do They Need Them (And Which Ones)?



Vitamins for kids: as a parent you're likely familiar with the importance of them. After all, feeding your little one a healthy and varied diet that's packed full of the nutrients is what they need to run, jump, explore and play.

Many of these essential nutrients are vitamins, which perform unique and important roles within your child's body to support their overall health and wellbeing.

But, what are the key vitamins for kids? How are they different from minerals? And, how may you ensure your child gets enough of them when picky eating is involved?



What is the Importance of Vitamins for Kids?

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Vitamins are a group of essential nutrients that support an array of your child's important bodily functions and maintain their general health and wellbeing.

Childhood is a unique window of rapid growth and development, and each vitamin has a unique role of play within the body during this time. It's particularly important for children to meet their daily vitamin needs to support their growth, development and overall health.

For example, did you know vitamin D helps to support your little one's healthy bone growth?

Providing good nutrition is one way you may help to set them on the path to a healthy future during this period, by ensuring they receive adequate amounts of essential nutrients, including vitamins.

What Does A Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) Mean?

In order for vitamins to perform their important functions, we need to ensure we have enough of them within our bodies. To do this, we must consume a certain amount of them each day.

Depending on the vitamin, the recommendation for your child's intake falls into one of two categories: Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) and Adequate Intake (AI).

An RDI is the average amount of a nutrient that a healthy individual requires depending on their age and gender. When an RDI can't be established, an AI

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measurement is used based on the average intake of a healthy population of individuals (so it isn't age or gender-specific).

What is the Difference between Fat-Soluble and Water-Soluble Vitamins?

Vitamins can be divided into two main categories: fat-soluble vitamins and water-soluble vitamins.

As the name suggests, fat-soluble vitamins can be stored in the fat cells of the body for a short time. Conversely, water-soluble vitamins cannot be stored in the body.

If they are not used or absorbed in a short period of time, they are flushed out. That's why it's important to replenish our levels of water-soluble vitamins every day.

Which Vitamins Are Fat-Soluble?

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin E
- Vitamin K

Which Vitamins Are Water-Soluble?

- All B-Group Vitamins – Discover the different B-group vitamins here
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- Vitamin C

Would you like to learn more about the difference between fat and water-soluble vitamins? Discover more information here.

What are the Difference between Vitamins and Minerals?

Vitamins and minerals are both groups of essential nutrients that are classed as micronutrients and are important for supporting our overall health.

However, where vitamins and minerals differ is in their source and structure.

Vitamins are organic substances that are produced by living things, including the plants and animals that we eat. For example, carrots produce a pigment called beta-carotene as they grow and, when we eat the carrots, we can absorb this beta-carotene and convert it into vitamin A within our bodies.

On the other hand, minerals are inorganic substances that are found in the earth. The minerals in the soil are absorbed by plants and help them to grow. When humans and animals eat these plants, the minerals are passed along to us.

What are some of the Key Vitamins for Children?

As a parent, you likely know the importance of vitamins for kids in their general health and wellbeing.

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But, did you know that each vitamin has its own unique roles and functions to play within their growing body?

Discover some of the key vitamins for kids, why they're important and where to find them in food:

Vitamin A

Vitamin A helps to support your child's healthy eyesight, skin and bones as well as maintain their immune system health and function.

In their immune system, it helps to maintain mucous membrane health, which is your child's first line of defense against unwanted bugs and germs. To learn more about mucous membranes and the immune system, [click here](#).

If you're looking for food sources of vitamin A, sweet potatoes, carrots and capsicum are a good place to start. They contain beta-carotene, which the body can convert into vitamin A.

Vitamin C

As one of the better-known nutrients, you may have heard about vitamin C's role in supporting immune system health. It's also important for your little one's healthy growth, as it's involved in producing collagen, which is a major protein in bones.

Fun fact: Humans are the only animals that can't produce their own vitamin C, which is why we must obtain it from the food we eat.

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These foods include berries, kiwifruit, tomatoes and citrus fruits, which are all dietary sources of vitamin C.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D works with calcium to help support your child's healthy bone growth and development. It's also important for supporting their normal, healthy immune responses and immune cell production.

You might have heard vitamin D referred to as the 'sunshine' vitamin because of our body's ability to produce it after sun exposure.

This is unusual and unique to vitamin D. ordinarily we are unable to synthesize vitamins and must source them from our diets instead.

In normal circumstances, most of our vitamin D is obtained when our skin is exposed to direct sunlight. The amount of sun exposure needed to produce adequate vitamin D differs by location, find recommendations for Australia's capital cities here. Alternatively, you may be interested in learning about the signs and symptoms of inadequate vitamin D.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that supports immune system health and function.

Nuts, seeds and cold-pressed vegetable oils, including wheat germ oil, are among some of the best sources of Vitamin E, which is an antioxidant that also supports immune system health.

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Other dietary sources include spinach, sweet potatoes, egg yolks and some dairy products.

Vitamin K

Vitamin K helps to support your little one's blood and bone health, where it plays a role in the blood clotting process.

Did you know: shortly after birth, many babies receive vitamin K in an injection or by mouth? This is usually arranged after a discussion between the parents and their doctor or midwife.

In older children, green leafy vegetables, plant oils and margarine are all dietary sources of vitamin K. Interestingly; it can also be produced by the bacteria in the gut.

B-Group Vitamins

There are a range of B-group vitamins, each with their own roles to play in your child's body and unique dietary sources.

Vitamin B1 is important for supporting your child as it helps their body to break down the food they eat and turn it into energy. It also helps to support healthy muscle function and a healthy nervous system.

Whole grains, meat, fish, nuts, legumes and yeast are all dietary sources of thiamin. And, in Australia, baking flour is also fortified with the vitamin.

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Vitamin B2 is an antioxidant, which like thiamin, is important for helping the body to turn food into energy. It also helps to support your child's hair, skin and nail health.

Food sources of riboflavin include milk and eggs as well as fortified breads and cereals.

Much like thiamin and riboflavin, niacin is involved in producing energy from the food we eat. It also helps to support healthy skin.

Fish and meat are the go-to dietary sources of vitamin B3, but cereals, whole grains, seeds and legumes also contain considerable amounts of niacin.

In addition to its involvement in energy production, vitamin B5 also helps to support your child's body in times of stress as it is important for maintaining healthy stress responses.

Fun Fact: The name 'pantothenic acid' is derived from the Greek work 'pantos' meaning 'everywhere'. This is because pantothenic acid can be found in nearly all plant and animal foods.

Therefore, it is quite easy to meet your body's vitamin B5 needs through dietary sources. Foods with particularly sizable pantothenic acid content include seafood, milk products, eggs, legumes, avocados, sweet potato and mushrooms.

Did you know vitamin B6 contributes to more than 100 bodily processes? This B-Group vitamin supports your little one's healthy red blood cells, fuels energy

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production by assisting the breakdown of food, and maintains healthy immune system function.

Some dietary sources of vitamin B6 include salmon, tuna, chicken, potato, avocado and fortified cereals.

Folate plays a range of important roles in supporting your little one's healthy growth and development. In fact, it's particularly important during preconception and pregnancy, where it supports the proper development of fetal tissues. Click [here](#) to learn more about the importance of folate during preconception and pregnancy.

Leafy green vegetables including spinach and kale are sources of folate, as are legumes, wholegrain breads and cereals.

Cobalamin is another B-Group vitamin that contributes to breaking down food and converting it into energy. Vitamin B12 is also supports a healthy nervous system and immune system health.

Animal products including oysters, sardines, eggs, fish, cheese and milk are dietary sources of vitamin B12.

Fun fact: Plants don't need vitamin B12 to survive, and as such, cobalamin isn't found in any plant-based foods.

Common Reasons Some Children May Have Inadequate Vitamin Levels

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The best way to ensure your child reaches their Recommended Daily Intake of nutrients is through a healthy and balanced diet. So, factors that disrupt mealtimes and make it difficult to provide a variety of foods may mean their vitamin intake isn't always optimal.

Common factors that may impact with a healthy, varied diet include:

- Picky eating
- Food preferences
- Food sensitivities
- Lifestyle choices such as veganism or vegetarianism

If your little one is going through a fussy phase, you may find these tips useful for helping them to overcome their picky eating.

If you have any concerns about your child's nutrition, take them to see a health professional. Your local GP will be able to assess their individual dietary needs and provide tailored advice accordingly.

Getting Enough Vitamin D

Most of the vitamin D intake is from sun exposure. Therefore, inadequate sun exposure may lead to inadequate vitamin D levels.

To help ensure your child gets enough vitamin D, it's important that they spend enough time outdoors with their skin exposed to sunshine while also practicing sun safety.

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The amount of time they will need to spend outdoors varies depending on where you live.

In Brisbane and Darwin, just a few minutes of sun exposure on most days of the week should be adequate for meeting your child's vitamin D needs year-round.

For children in Perth, Sydney and Canberra, a few minutes of sun exposure on most days of the week should support your child's adequate vitamin D levels during the summer. However, depending on the weather, they may need 2-3 hours of sunlight per week during the winter months of June and July.

Further south in Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart, a few minutes of sun exposure on most days of the week should be adequate during the summer. However, during the winter months from May to August, two to three hours of sunlight per week should be enough for your child to maintain adequate vitamin D levels.

Tips to Help Support Your Child's Vitamin Intake

There are four main steps to supporting a healthy and varied diet:

- Encourage your little one to 'eat the rainbow', by promoting a variety of fruits and vegetables. Try sneaking nutrients into their favorite foods with these tips.
- Incorporate whole grains and dairy products or their alternatives.
- Add in lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, legumes and eggs.

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- Limit their intake of highly processed fast foods to help reduce saturated fats, added sugar and excess.

Of course, if you have any concerns about your child's nutrition or vitamin intake, talk to your family GP or pharmacist.

How to Compare Vitamin Supplements (What You Should Look For)

Your health professional may recommend a dietary supplement for your child to help support their vitamin levels during times of inadequate dietary intake.

If this is the case, you may be wondering what the differences are between products.

Some key things to look for when comparing vitamin supplements are:

- Comprehensive formulations – some vitamins and minerals work together in the body, like how vitamin C can support iron absorption. Look for supplements that contain these ingredient combinations.
- High-quality ingredients – including active B-group vitamins, bioavailable nutrients, and gentle ingredients.
- Age-specific products – children require different nutrient amounts at different ages and stages. Look for products that are tailored to your child's specific age group.

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Of course, if you have any questions about selecting a dietary supplement for your child, talk to a health professional who can guide you based on their individual needs.

What Does Vitamin Bioavailability Mean?

When your little one consumes a vitamin, its bioavailability is the amount of the nutrient that is absorbed and has an active effect within their body.

Put simply, the higher a vitamin's bioavailability, the more of it that will get sent to the parts of the body that need it.

Vitamins come in different forms, some of which are more easily absorbed (or more bioavailable) than others.

What are the Common Forms of Vitamins for Kids?

When it comes to vitamins for kids, there are arrays of different products on the market that come in a range of different forms. Three of the most common forms for little ones are liquids, gummies and tablets.

If your health professional has recommended a vitamin supplement for your child, you may like to consider the following factors for liquid, gummy and tablet vitamins:

Liquid Vitamins

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- Easy to administer to children of all ages
- Can often be mixed into juice, water or their favorite foods
- Finding a product that tastes great may be difficult, but there are some out there! Look for products that utilize innovative flavor technology and brands that taste tests their flavors with children.
- Without a measuring device, it may be difficult to give your child the correct dose. Look for products that include a measuring device.

Gummy Vitamins

- Easy to administer for children who are old enough to chew them properly
- Gummy format might be confused with lollies, and children may want to consume more than the recommended dose
- May contain added sugars
- Are often made using heat in the manufacturing process, which may degrade some vitamins including vitamin C

Tablet Vitamins

- Most tablets for children are chewable but they must be chewed properly, and may not be suitable for children under the age of four-years-old
- Parents may need to crush tablets before giving them to young children or those who struggle to chew them properly
- Tablets may be easy to administer for children once they're much older and can safely swallow them
- Some tablets may contain added sugar, sweeteners or bulking agents

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- Some tablets may have a chalky texture, which may be off-putting to some children

Can My Child Overdose on Vitamins?

Different vitamins work within the body in different ways depending on whether they are water-soluble or fat-soluble.

Water-soluble vitamins aren't stored within the body and need to be replenished each day, so overdosing on them is very unlikely.

On the other hand, fat-soluble vitamins can be stored in the body. These stores of vitamins may build up over time and become toxic when taken in very high doses.

An example of this is vitamin A. According to the World Health Organization, excessive amounts of vitamin A may lead to vitamin A toxicity, and high intake may lead to adverse effects within the body.

To avoid this, look for supplements that contains beta-carotene rather than vitamin A. Our bodies can absorb beta-carotene and turn it into vitamin A based on our needs. So, if your child has adequate vitamin A stores and doesn't need anymore, their body won't convert beta-carotene into vitamin A. But, on the other hand, if their vitamin A levels are lacking, the body will convert more beta-carotene to meet this need.

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NUTRITION For Kids

CHAPTER 7

Ways To Conquer Childhood Obesity





There's good news about obesity in children: It's reversible. No doubt childhood obesity is serious. It can cause lifelong medical issues including low self-esteem and depression. It also significantly increases the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, asthma, and sleep apnea. The American Heart Association reports that obese children have an 80 percent chance of remaining obese for life.

But obesity is reversible. As a parent you have the ability to turn things around for your children who are overweight. And in doing so you can also help yourself and other family members who may also be overweight.



What Causes Obesity In Children?

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While genetics may play a role for some kids, lifestyle is the major reason. That's good news. It means that every day is a new opportunity to make changes that can eliminate obesity in your family. Ask your child's doctor if you think there is a reason other than lifestyle that is causing your child to be obese.

How Can I Reverse Obesity In My Child?

Here are four important ways that you can help your children turn the corner on losing weight and improving their health:

1. Know your child's BMI. You can determine if your children are at a healthy weight by calculating their Body Mass Index (BMI). Popular with doctors, the tool uses each child's height and age to determine if their weight is normal or if they are underweight, overweight or obese. Use this BMI Calculator for Children and Teens by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to determine if your child is a healthy weight. Then you can act accordingly.
2. Eat and drink healthier. When your children develop healthy eating habits at a young age, chances are they'll continue to follow healthy diets as they enter adolescence and adulthood. Healthy eating includes fresh, whole foods like fruits and vegetables, whole grains including whole wheat pastas and breads, low-fat dairy, lean protein like beans, tofu, nuts and fish, and very little sugar. It also means less salt, caffeine, and processed foods — all of which can contribute to high blood pressure in children.

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There are several good reasons why your child should eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Not only are they loaded with important vitamins and minerals, they also are packed with fiber that fills them up and makes them less likely to overeat. Fruits and veggies make great snacks too. If your kids seem to get hungry between meals, Melinda Ruff, MD, has ideas for snacks that have staying power.

3. Don't let your children skip breakfast. This important meal kick starts their metabolism, helps burn more calories, and prevents overeating later in the day. And monitor what they're drinking. Most youth don't drink the recommended amount of water. Seven cups a day is the goal for 4- to 8-year-olds; 9- to 13-year-olds need nine or 10 cups a day; teens need 10 to 14 cups a day, according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Soda, sports drinks, and juice drinks are not healthy alternatives, as they generally are loaded with sugar. Stick with water or low-fat milk instead.
4. Get active. Regular exercise burns calories, builds muscle, and keeps the weight off. Children under age 18 need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day to stay healthy, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Exercise that is moderate to vigorous is best. This can include jogging with the dog, bicycling, playing sports, or anything else that increases their heart rate and causes them to break a sweat.
5. Becoming more active also means reducing screen time. Kids who spend a lot of time in front of screens are more likely to be overweight. Set reasonable limits on the amount of time your kids spend watching TV,

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playing video games, and using computers, phones, and tablets not related to school work.

6. Be a good role model. “As the head of the family, it’s a parent’s job to set a proper example for their children,”. “When mom and dad are having a healthy snack or a balanced meal, or drinking water instead of soda, children will want to do so also.” If you want your kids to be more physically active, get moving along with them. When kids see their parents breaking a sweat, they’re going to rise to the challenge — and the entire family will benefit.



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Nutrition For Kids

Chapter 8

Eating Disorders In Children 12 And Under :
Learn The Warning Signs



When it comes to eating disorder in children under 12, early detection and prevention is the solution. Here we take a closer look at the warning signs you should be looking out for,

Most people think of teenagers or young adults when they think of eating disorders, but they can affect young children as well. The rates of eating disorders among young girls and boys under 12 have been growing in recent years, so it is important for parents and anyone who works with young children to recognize the signs. Physical growth is such an important component of childhood, and eating disorders can cause significant damage to a child's body.



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Causes and Risks

Researchers do not know what causes eating disorders, but they have a strong sense of what increases the risk of developing one. Eating disorders can be heritable, so if a parent, sibling, or another relative of a child has an eating disorder, they are 7-12 times more likely to develop one than a child who does not. Children diagnosed with chronic illness are also at higher risk, particularly those diagnosed with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.³ Children who struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental illness may also be at increased risk.

Common Types of Eating Disorders in Children

Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (AFRID) is a common eating disorder experienced by young children. Children with AFRID experience a disturbance in their eating which can include a lack of interest in food or a sensory aversion to certain foods. For example, a child might be averse to swallowing or the texture of foods they once enjoyed. They might also fear getting stomach aches or vomiting if they became sick because of a certain food. These aversions and restrictions can lead to weight loss and nutritional deficiency among young children.

Pica is a type of condition where a child might eat non-food or non-nutritional substances persistently. To be diagnosed with pica, the behavior must fall outside of the child's expected developmental level (i.e. an infant who chews on objects would not qualify). These substances often include dirt, soap, chalk, sand, ice, and hair.

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Anorexia nervosa can affect both young girls and boys. Children with anorexia think they are overweight when they seem very underweight to other people. Children might obsess about their food intake and with how to control their weight. They might exercise intensively or binge and then purge. Anorexia can cause significant damage to physical health and growth, so it is important to seek treatment as soon as possible for a child.

Other less common eating disorders among children include bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder.

Early Signs

Early detection and prevention is the key to treating eating disorders in young children. The signs are often subtle, as your child does not have to be focused on body image or weight to have an eating disorder. Your child also does not have to meet the criteria for a disorder to benefit from intervention. Early warning signs can include:

- fear of stomach aches
- aversion to tastes or textures
- tantrums
- excessive bowel movements
- worry about body image

Signs of a more developed eating disorder can include:

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- refraining from eating
- reducing food portions
- weight loss
- lack of growth
- thinning of hair
- delay of puberty
- constipation or digestion problems
- hiding or hoarding food
- mood swings
- fine hair growth on the body

Treating Eating Disorders in Young Children

There are many components of treating eating disorders among young children. Regaining weight is an essential component so that the child's physical and nutritional health is restored. Because parents and caretakers play such a significant role in the child's life, family-based intervention and treatment is usually recommended. Parents often blame themselves for the child's eating disorder, so when parents can become more confident and empowered to help their child, the outcome is often better. Children may also receive behavioral interventions to help expose them to foods they avoid and to help them regain a healthy relationship with eating.

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If you are the parent of a child with an eating disorder, it's important to reach out to your child's pediatrician, nutritionist, or other mental health professionals to help you feel supported and get the best care for your child. Setting the course for a healthy relationship with food will benefit your child's entire life. So even if you are uncertain whether there may be a problem, it never hurts to reach out to professionals. Whom can you talk to today to get help for your child?



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NUTRITION FOR KIDS

CHAPTER 9

*How To Pack A Healthier
School Lunch For Your Child?*



Among the many things parents worry about at the beginning of the school year – and especially this year with coronavirus (COVID-19) always lurking – packing a healthy lunch is an important part of the equation.

With the rising tide of obesity in the nation over the last 30 years, it's not only extremely important that children eat healthy, balanced meals throughout the day – it's vital. Eating a nutritious school lunch is the key to helping minimize the childhood obesity epidemic, but it's also helpful in warding off illness. Making sure that your child is eating nourishing foods can help their immune system perform at its best.



Practice what you preach

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We know that good childhood eating habits not only lead to better eating habits as adults, but also less risk of obesity in general. Because of this, parents need to stay involved with the nutritional choices that children make as they grow into teens.

Children establish their eating habits early on in their lives. They also mirror their parents in a variety of habits, which is why it's important to practice healthy eating, make family meals and establish meal-planning techniques.

With the new school year starting up, it's the perfect time to reflect back on your eating habits as parents to ensure better health for yourself and your family. This reflection can be a great teaching moment for kids, and it's a great way to talk to your children about nutrition, food moderation, portion size and overall long-term health.

Start practicing this now at home. And you can start small. If your kids aren't used to having a vegetable with their lunch, slowly begin to offer one veggie of choice each day. And make sure they see you do it too! As they get used to that you can add a second serving and by the time they are going to school you can work your way up to an appropriate portion for a school lunch.

When school lunches are your only option

Ideally, packing your child's lunch would be the best way to ensure that they eat a balanced lunch filled with one full serving or more of fruits and vegetables, but sometimes it's not always an option.

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If you're opting for school lunches, sit down with your child and review the weekly lunch menu that's offered at their school. Getting to know the weekly menu and discussing the meal options with your child will help ensure a healthy and more balanced plate.

"This strategy gives parents a great opportunity to discuss the benefits of different meal options and why certain foods may be healthier and make them feel better than others," says Hyland. "Plus, involving the child in any decision-making process typically leads to better outcomes and acceptance – and the meal-planning process is no exception."

It's also important to note that if your child has concerns for food allergies, it's crucial to alert the school authorities ahead of time. A letter from your physician outlining your child's food allergies is the best way to ensure support from the school.

Packing your child's lunch

Spend some time as a family creating a list of enjoyable foods with your kids. Then rotate the food options from the list into your meals. This can help decrease boredom and ensure that they actually eat the packed lunch. Create a colorful chart or write food ideas on Popsicle sticks to make for a fun and easy selection! This ensures that the food options are nutritious and things you have at home.

You can also start by asking your children what fruits and vegetables they would enjoy eating for lunch, but you may have to rethink how to make healthy food more

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kid-friendly. For example, a sliced up apple may be much more appealing than a whole one, says Hyland.

Once you have your food options, each morning (or on Sunday night you can pack for the whole week), you or your child will pick one food item per category below, which will make up the lunch.



Protein

- Sliced chicken breast.

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- Cheese cubes or string cheese.
- Mixed seeds & nuts. (Like pumpkin, sunflower, almond, and walnut.)
- Hummus.
- Plain yogurt.
- Hard boiled eggs.

Grains

- Low-fat granola.
- Whole-wheat crackers.
- Pita bread.
- Mini bagel.
- Homemade muffins.
- Wheat or rye bread.
- Small tortillas.
- Granola bar.

Fruit

- Grapes.
- Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries.
- Apple or pear slices. (Toss with lemon juice to avoid browning.)
- Banana.
- Peeled, seedless clementines.
- Dried apricots.

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Veggies

- Baby carrots.
- Cucumbers.
- Cherry tomatoes.
- Snap peas.
- Celery sticks.
- Bell pepper strips.
- Cooked veggies in a thermos or can be eaten cold.
- Salad.

Healthier sides and snacks

- Dark chocolate-covered raisins.
- Air-popped popcorn.
- Homemade oatmeal raisin cookies.
- Homemade granola bars.
- Sweet potato or kale chips.
- Whole-grain tortilla chips with salsa.
- Graham crackers or pretzels. (Choose whole-grain varieties!)
- Avocado slices. (Toss with lemon juice to avoid browning.)
- Olives.
- Trail mix with nuts and dried fruit.

And what about the drinks?

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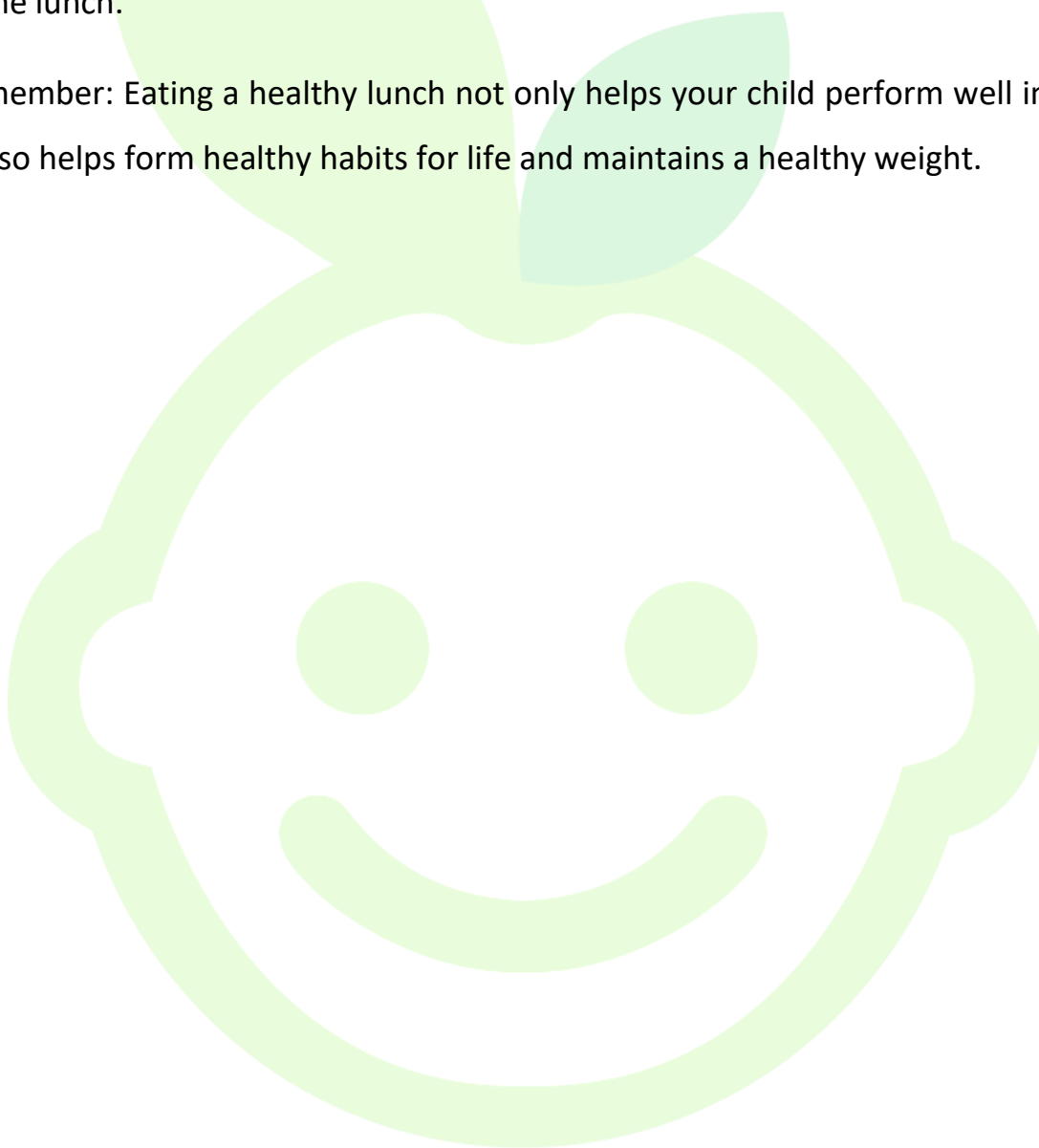
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Although kids are notorious for begging for delicious (and sugar-loaded) drinks with their meals, the ideal beverage choices for lunch are water or low-fat, unflavored milk. If you need to pack juice, choose a 4 or 6 ounce bottle of 100% juice.

Also, you can freeze a small bottle of water for your child and use it as an ice pack in the lunch.

Remember: Eating a healthy lunch not only helps your child perform well in class. It also helps form healthy habits for life and maintains a healthy weight.



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NUTRITION FOR KIDS

Chapter 10

**A Dietitian's Best Advice
If Your Child Is Underweight**



As a parent, of course you're trying to keep your child happy and healthy. You're focused on providing the right amount of nutrients to help them grow and be strong.

But despite your best efforts, some children still may not achieve the recommended weight. This leaves you asking "is my child underweight for their age or size?"



So what makes a child underweight? How can you get an underweight child to gain weight they need to grow? You may also wonder "when should I worry about my child's weight?" if the things you do as a parent don't seem to be helping.

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Pediatric registered dietitian answers some common questions about weight, and how healthcare providers can help families get on track and help their underweight child gain in a healthy way.

Q: What qualifies as ‘underweight’ for a child?

A: A child is underweight if they’re in the bottom 5th percentile for weight compared to their height. Underweight is not only classified compared to other children their age, but to their height as we clinically look for a child to be proportionate.

The way pediatricians and dietitians monitor children is on a weight-to-length measurement for children from birth to age 2.

After age 2, we use the Centers for Disease Control growth charts to look at weight, height and BMI (body mass index) for age. BMI for this age range compares a child’s weight to their height. A BMI for age less than the 5th percentile indicates a child is underweight.

Q: How can I tell if my child is underweight?

A: There are several signs that parents should watch for:

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- Every kid has their own optimal weight. But if your child's weight percentile declines on the growth charts at annual pediatrician visits, that's cause for concern.
- At home keep an eye on how clothes fit your child. If a younger child doesn't begin to outgrow her clothes each season, you should meet with your pediatrician.
- At bath time or at the swimming pool or beach during warm months, watch to see whether you can see your child's ribs. Ribs that stick out or are prominently visible are a sign that your child may be underweight.

Q: Are there medical issues that cause this problem?

A: Children born prematurely are often underweight because their growth needs to catch up with peers. But a common reason older children are underweight is inadequate food intake.

This may or may not be a result of picky eating. There are also several medical issues that can suppress appetite or block nutrient absorption. These include:

- Medications: Those used in attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which can suppress appetite.
- Food allergies: These can make getting enough calories a challenge. The more food allergies, there is the greater challenge.

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- Hormonal or digestive problems: These or other issues of inadequate nutrient absorption can sometimes keep children from gaining weight as they grow.

Q: Are there daily situations that might keep my child from maintaining a healthy diet?

A: When a pediatrician finds that your child is underweight, he or she may schedule a one-day consultation with a dietitian. The goal is to rule out poor food intake as the issue, and if so, the dietitian can offer recommendations.

You'll usually be asked to keep a food record that examines your child's eating habits. The dietitian will also look at other possibilities:

- For daycare-aged kids: Some centers are better than others at documenting that your child is consuming enough calories during the day.
- For older kids: Sports and other school activities often create a hectic schedule where kids just don't eat enough. If active, they may also have a higher caloric need but may not be making up for it.
- For children who stay with multiple households: When parents are separated or divorced, that could cause kids to miss meals without either parent communicating or knowing.

Q: What eating habits should children avoid?

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A: There are some common trends that many parents should focus on preventing or avoiding to help their child gain weight properly.

- “Grazing” or excessive snacking: This is one of the most common pitfalls. Families should set meal and snack times so that the child has time to get hungry before sitting down to a nutritionally balanced dinner. “Grazing” will fill the child up on foods with low energy density. They’ll actually get more calories if they wait for meals.
- Use of electronics: Where to eat is just as important as what to eat. Healthy snacks are encouraged but children should eat them at the table — not mindlessly in front of the television, phone or computer screen.
- Avoid fruit juices: Especially those with added sugar. Juices and other sugary beverages will fill kids up without providing them with any energy, fat or protein.
- Protein powders: These aren’t recommended since even underweight kids still seem to get enough protein in their diet (and these powders don’t provide a balance of nutrients needed for weight gain).

Q: How can families help children gain weight in a healthy way?

A: Believe it or not, the goal is to incorporate more fats into the child’s diet — not just any fats like saturated fats from fried foods, but healthy fats like those from oils and nut butters. Here are some suggestions:

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- Add nut butters. For example, encourage kids who like raw fruits and vegetables to eat celery sticks or apple slices with peanut butter.
- Sneak in healthy oils. It is also beneficial to sneak in some olive oil or other heart healthy oils by adding it to foods, which can help even the pickiest eaters.
- Try oral supplements. Ask to speak with a registered dietitian about if an oral supplement is right for your child.

The overall goal is to instill sustainable, healthy eating habits. That's why it's important to meet with a dietitian who will also help monitor your child's progress and offer tips and recipes.

Q: What if my family has special dietary needs or beliefs?

A: Dietitians work closely with parents and families to aid their understanding of why food intake is inadequate and make a plan that fits each family's goals and beliefs.

"Dietitians focus on working one-on-one with families to help children gain weight in a way that is consistent with the family's dietary preferences," Hyland says. "They can work with all sorts of preferences and varieties of food, including organic foods, whole foods, vegan diets, or diets influenced by religious or cultural beliefs."

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Conclusion



Nutrition for kids is based on the same principles as nutrition for adults. Everyone needs the same types of nutrients — such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein and fat. Children, however, need different amounts of specific nutrients at different ages.

At Healthy Kids, we are passionate about nutrition for kids. Children have their own unique nutrient needs and meeting those needs is vital for a child to grow up big and strong (and healthy)!

A child's diet should consist of a variety of foods that contain a range of nutrients. Browse through our Training Guide to learn about what's the best formula to fuel your child's growth and development.

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