



A PARENTS GUIDE TO CHILDHOOD NUTRITION

TECHNICAL MANUAL

H P R B W 5 4 1 0



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Chapter One

Insights into Childhood Nutrition



Why Children Need to be Healthy?

Childhood nutrition is fundamental to their overall growth and development

- In early childhood, adequate nutrition is vital to ensuring appropriate growth and preventing future development of diseases¹. Children's first foods often lack diversity and are low in energy and nutrients². Improper diets are one of the main determinants of the obesity epidemic among children¹.

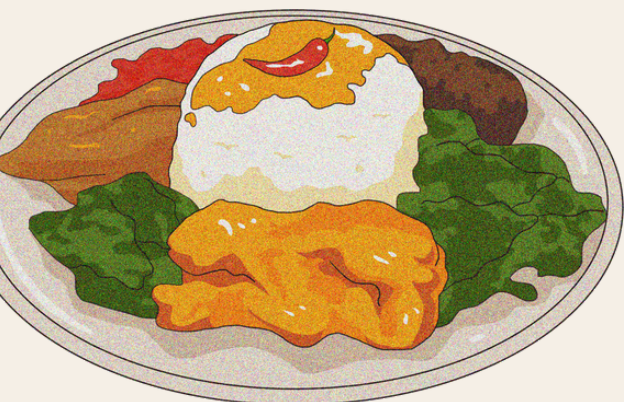
Additionally, it can help fuel cognitive development which is crucial for academic success. This is shown improved concentration, higher energy levels, or just overall better performance in academia.

Fun Fact:

Your brain uses around 20% of the energy your body gets from food.



Along with proper nutrition, children also need hydration. Water benefits the body by keeping joints and bones healthy and aiding blood circulation³.



Good nutrition not only benefits children's immediate health but also lays the groundwork for lifelong health.



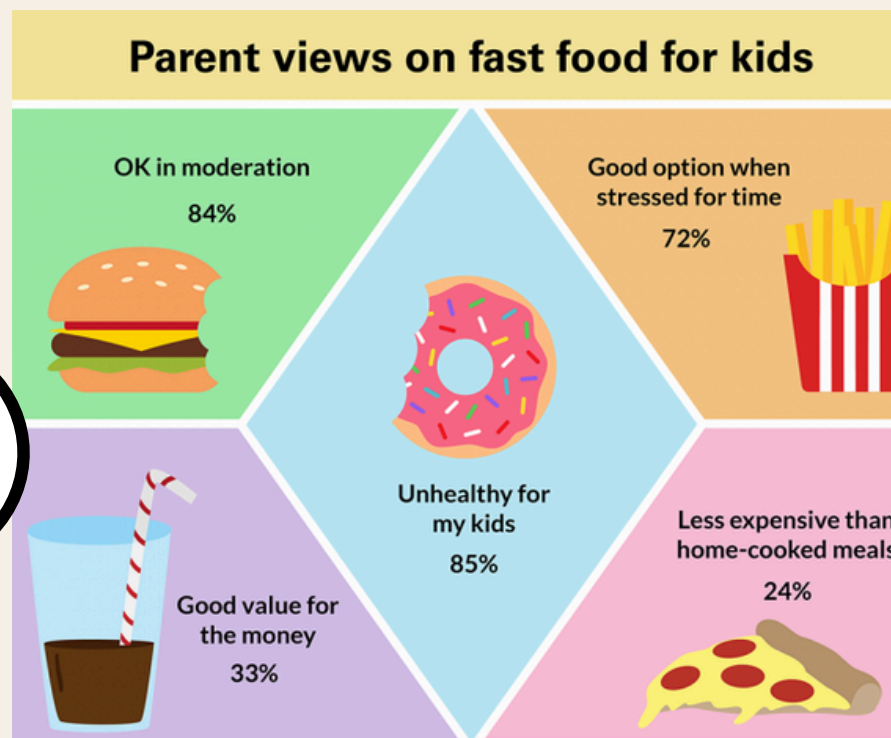
Childhood Nutrition Statistics

- Nearly half of deaths among children under five years old are linked to malnutrition in low-to-middle-income countries⁴.
- At least 149 million children under the age of five suffer from stunted growth, 45 million are too thin for their height, and 37 million are overweight⁴.
- One in five children live in households without consistent access to adequate food⁵.
- Household food insecurity affected 17.9% of households with children in 2023⁵.



Fun Fact:

~69% of parents are aware of dietary guidelines, but only a small percentage of that feel confident about meeting nutritional needs.



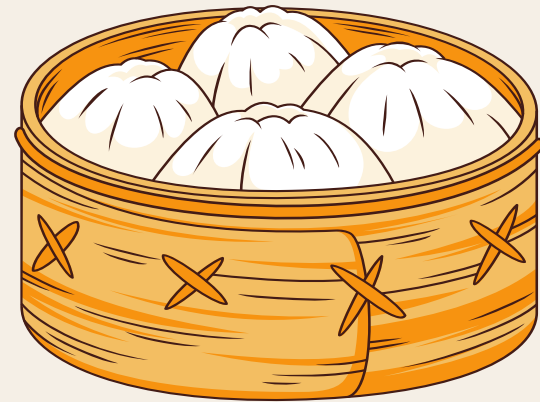
Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2021

Using the Manual



- This manual is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide on childhood nutrition. The manual is broken down into different chapters that address the importance of balanced diets and the effects of poor nutrition within children.

- Throughout this manual, the reader should be able to familiarize themselves with the foundations of childhood nutrition and why it matters. The manual educates the readers by showing educational statistics while also showing effective ways to make healthier choices for children.



- The purpose of this manual is to provide readers with a better understanding of nutrition and why it is crucial for long-term health. By the end of the manual, the goal is for the reader to reflect on their child's personal eating habits, and how they can address specific dietary changes in the future.

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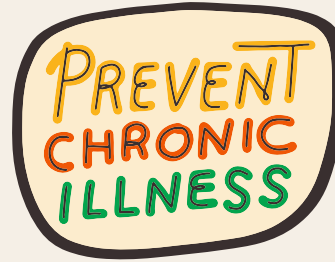
CHAPTER TWO

HEALTH EFFECTS/DISEASES RELATED TO MALNUTRITION



Health Effects Related

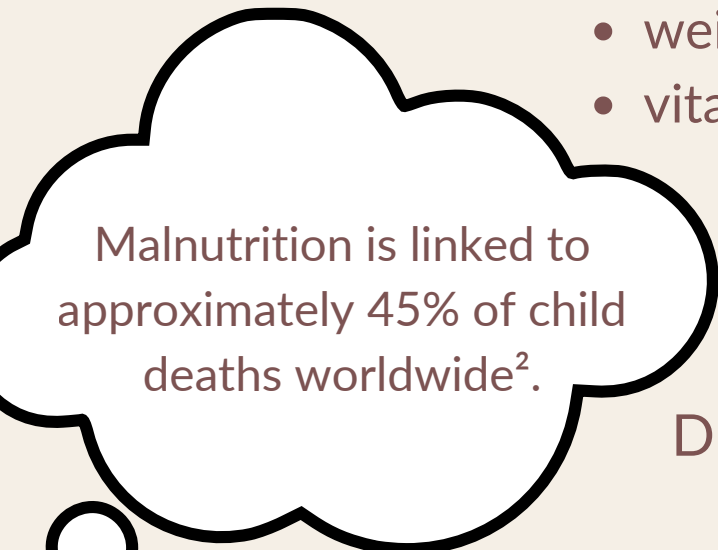
- Malnutrition is caused from a lack of nutrients within the body which is the result of undernutrition/overnutrition



Since nutrition plays a vital role in supporting the immune system, individuals are at higher risk for illness and infection with slower recovery times if they aren't receiving proper nutrients¹.

Malnutrition affects every system in the body and results in:

- increased vulnerability
- weight loss and muscle loss
- vitamin and mineral deficiencies



Malnutrition is linked to approximately 45% of child deaths worldwide².



Diseases Caused by Malnutrition³:

- Nutritional Anemia
- Kwashiorkor: protein deficiency disease
- Marasmus: extreme calorie deficiency disease



Treatment for Malnutrition



- When addressing malnutrition, the most important factor to note is that not every treatment is suitable for all⁴. Some individuals might only need to make simple changes to their diet to include more nutrients, while others require a complex eating schedule.

The first main goal of treating malnutrition is improving an individual's calorie and protein intake⁴.

4 ways to increase calorie intake:

1. Try and implement at least three small meals per day, with snacks if possible
2. Eat high protein foods such as meat, eggs, or beans
3. Eating foods such as yogurt, cheese, or fruits
4. Drinking high calorie drinks



- Treatment in children often requires specialized care in a hospital setting due to long-term health conditions⁵. This care includes vitamin and mineral supplements alongside high-energy foods to help rebuild the child's health⁵. Once their health stabilizes, they can gradually transition to a normal diet at home.



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Chapter Three

Benefits of Healthy Eating



Physical Benefits

Healthy eating is essential for your child's physical health, providing the nutrients they need to grow, develop, and thrive. Instilling healthy eating habits early helps create lifelong physical well-being and benefits

Physical Health Benefits

- A balanced diet helps support strong bones and muscles¹
- Supports the immune system³
- Protects children from childhood illnesses, malnutrition, and iron deficiency³



Prevention of chronic diseases

- In combination with exercise, eating healthy can reduce the chances of developing chronic diseases later on²
 - Including:
 - Type 2 Diabetes
 - Heart Disease
 - Obesity
 - Many others



How to Combine Healthy Eating and Exercise?

1) Provide a balanced diet.²

- Including:
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Whole grains
 - Lean protein (e.g, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt)



2) Encourage at least 60 minutes a day of moderate or vigorous intensity activity.²

- At least 3 days a week should include vigorous activity
- Have your child do a variety of physical activity, Such as:
 - Walking
 - Running
 - Sports
 - Playing outdoors



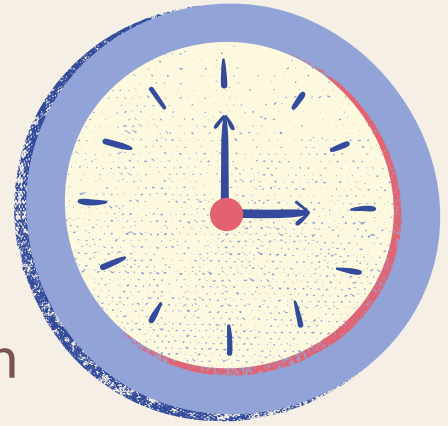
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How to Combine Healthy Eating and Exercise? Contin.

3) Prevent an upset stomach by following general guidelines on when and what your child should eat before exercising!

- If eating 3-4 hours before activity, have your child eat a meal with carbs and lean proteins⁶
 - Proteins high in fat can take longer to digest, contributing to an upset stomach.
 - Avoid foods and drinks high in sugar.
- If eating less than 3 hours before activity, give a lighter meal with easier-to-digest carbs.⁶
 - Including:
 - Fruits
 - Crackers
 - Bread
 - After intense activity, eat within 30 minutes, then again after 2 hours.

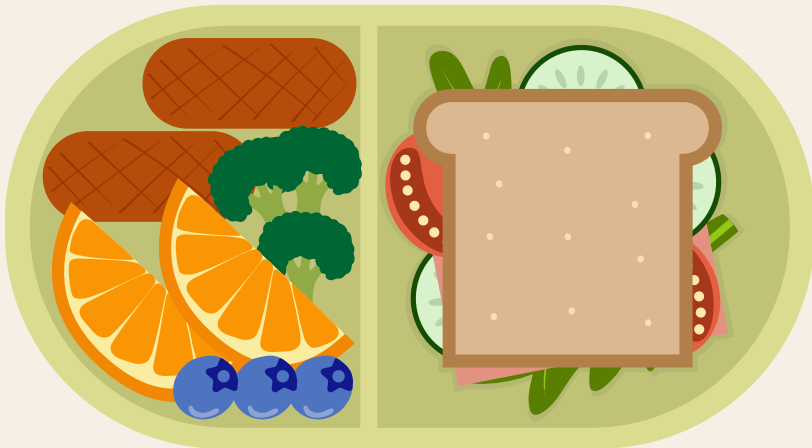


4) Ensure proper hydration before, during, and after physical activity.



Chapter Four

Meal Planning



STRATEGIES TO MAKE KIDS MEALS DELICIOUS AND HEALTHY

- Use the basic kid favorites and present them in new ways: Take foods kids already love such as cheese or crackers and present them with some cottage cheese on whole wheat crackers and grapes on the side
- Creating foods in different shapes and fun sizes like star shaped sandwiches with colorful dips and yogurts on the side



- Involve a reward system where the kid receives a cookie for every clean plate of veggies
- Avoid pressure and negative food associations but instead make healthy eating engaging and fun
- Present foods that are less tasty in a different way like cutting up spinach or mushrooms into tiny pieces where they can blend into the foods

WAYS TO INVOLVE KIDS IN MEAL PREPPING

- Choose recipes together: Whenever children are able to more familiar with what is going in their foods, they are more interested in eating it. Allow them to pick out a mixture of healthy options as well as foods they enjoy to create a balance

Meal planning is a great way to prep healthy meals ahead of time and allow kids to get familiarized with different ingredients due to their involvement



- Take kids on grocery store trips: Allowing them to see all the different varieties they have to choose from helps them see the different possible combinations of meals as well as choose their own foods; use “eating the rainbow” method
- Provide them their own tools and supplies to help prepare the meals where they would feel more comfortable eating their own food



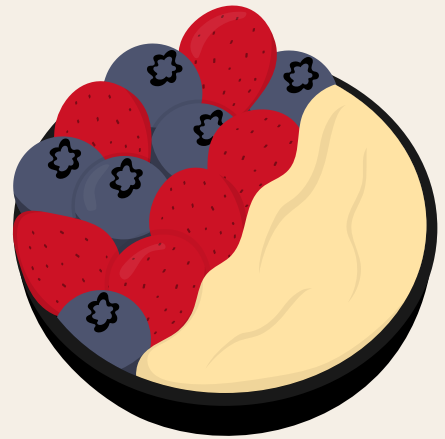
TIPS FOR IMPROVING HEALTHY FOODS

1) Be a role model by eating healthy yourself

2) Incorporate more fruits/vegetables, grains, protein, fiber etc.



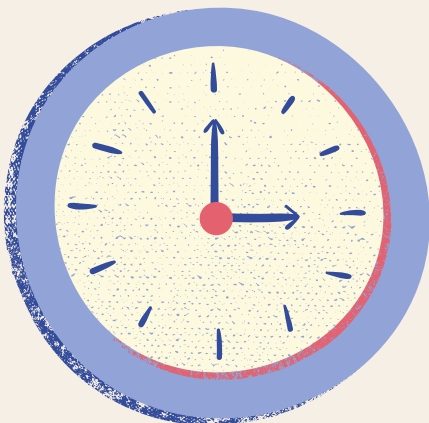
3) Limit sugar intake



4) Set a schedule for meals

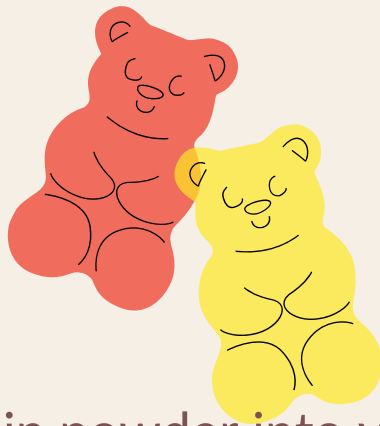
5) Use reward system to increase motivation

6) Offer variety and start off with less



CREATIVE WAYS TO INCORPORATE VITAMINS IN KIDS DIETS

- Make colorful smoothies incorporating fresh fruit like strawberries and blueberries with greens like broccoli to suppress the taste
- Use supplements they would enjoy such as gummies



- Incorporate vitamin powder into yummy foods like pancakes, milkshakes, yogurts etc.



- Incorporate powders in desserts such as muffins
- Make juices or popsicles with supplement powder

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Chapter Five

NUTRITION LABELS



UNDERSTANDING THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF A NUTRITION LABEL FOR KIDS NUTRITION

- Food labels are regulated by the FDA and other administrations such as the FSIS and FTC
- This ensures that food labels depict proper nutritional information
- Common beneficial labels to look out for in an adequate childhood diet are 100% organic, organic, made with organic foods, organic ingredients, no added sugar, multigrain etc.



UNDERSTANDING THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF A NUTRITION LABEL FOR KIDS NUTRITION PT.2

Reading and understanding a Nutrition Label is an adequate way of assessing the most important aspects of nutritious diet. For kids, low amount of sugar, high percentage of vitamins, and percent daily value are the most important aspects to prioritize. Following these steps creates a healthy way to pick the most ideal food items for your child.



HOW TO READ A NUTRITION LABEL

Step 1: Look at the serving size for the food item. This shows the consumer the size of one serving of the food item along with the total amount of servings in the entire amount

Step 2: Read the number of calories that are consumed in each serving. Understanding this calculates how much calories are being consumed in the suggested serving type and how many additional calories are consumed with eating more than one serving of the item.

Step 3: For children, the most important component that should be limited is sugar intake. At a young age, the less amount of sugar consumed is ideal. Some other ones that are important to cut down on are sodium and trans fats.

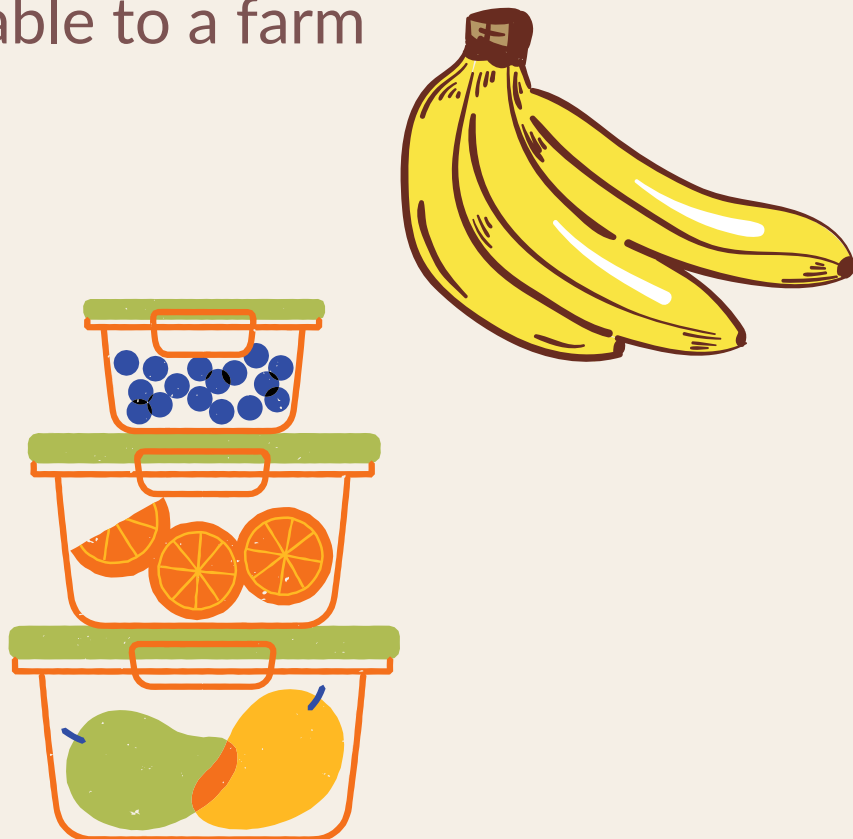
Step 4: Proper vitamin intake is essential for kids. The higher levels of vitamins the better. All of the categories in this section are important as well.

Step 5: The % Daily Value tells the consumer the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving. This helps decide what nutrient the consumer wants to focus on.



INGREDIENTS(NON-GMO) AND WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDHOOD NUTRITION

- Foods incorporating organic fruits and vegetables are optimal for growth and development; foods free of artificial additives or preservatives which are also known as genetically modified organisms are common in non organic processed foods
- Additives like these can cause harmful effects such as allergic reactions or hyperactivity
- Organic foods expose us to less pesticides that can cause potential diseases; these foods meet certain standards in how they are raised and are usually traceable to a farm



INGREDIENTS(NON-GMO) AND WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDHOOD NUTRITION PT.2

- Nutrition labels provide awareness about foods that are Non-GMO and will include labels like “The Non-GMO Project” or “Organic”.

100%
ORGANIC



- These labels reassure a consumer that the food they are feeding their children is mostly but not always GMO-free and contains less than 0.9% modified organisms

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Chapter Six

NUTRITION NEEDS



NUTRITION NEEDS BASED ON DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Nutrition is not a one-size-fits-all approach. As children grow, different nutrients are required to fuel their development and health. Understanding these changes is key to supporting your child at every stage of life.¹

Quick Nutrition Table¹

Ages	Basic Needs
Newborn to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended to be breastfed using breastmilk over formula if possible
6 months to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of solid foods one at a time to rule out allergies• Foods rich in iron and zinc• Avoid extra salt and honey, cow milk, seeds or similar hard foods• Breastfeeding may continue
Young Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer a variety of different foods matching their growth and physical activity levels such as proteins and vitamins
Early Teenage Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth spurts typically happen during this time, nutrient-dense foods and foods high in calcium should be included
Older Teens and Young Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foods high in iron and calcium are recommended• Reduce fat and salt intake• Establish healthy eating habits

RECOMMENDED SPECIFIC DAILY NUTRITION NEEDS



Ages 2 to 4:²

- 1,000 to 1,600 calories
- 2 to 5 ounces of protein
- 1 to 1.5 cups of fruit
- 1 to 2 cups of vegetables
- 3 to 5 ounces of grains
- 2 to 2.5 cups of dairy

Ages 9 to 13:²

- 1,600 to 2,600 calories
- 5 to 6.5 ounces of protein
- 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit
- 2 to 3.5 cups of vegetables
- 5 to 9 ounces of grains
- 3 cups of dairy

Ages 14 to 18:²

- 2,000 to 3,200 calories
- 5.5 to 7 ounces of protein
- 2 to 2.5 cups of fruit
- 2.5 to 4 cups of vegetables
- 6 to 10 ounces of grains
- 3 cups of dairy



Ages 2 to 4:²

- 1,000 to 1,400 calories
- 2 to 4 ounces of protein
- 1 to 1.5 cups of fruit
- 1 to 1.5 cups of vegetables
- 3 to 5 ounces of grains
- 2 to 2.5 cups of dairy

Ages 9 to 13:²

- 1,400 to 2,200 calories
- 4 to 6 ounces of protein
- 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit
- 1.5 to 3 cups of vegetables
- 5 to 7 ounces of grains
- 3 cups of dairy

Ages 14 to 18:²

- 1,800 to 2,400 calories
- 5 to 6.5 ounces of protein
- 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit
- 2.5 to 3 cups of vegetables
- 6 to 8 ounces of grains
- 3 cups of dairy

*Calories depend on the growth and activity level of your child

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Chapter Seven

WAYS TO TEACH CHILDREN HEALTHY CHOICES



WAYS TO TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES



MyPlate

What is it? MyPlate is a way for people to plan what and how much they will eat.

The plates are divided into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy.¹

How you can use it: Having your child choose what they want on their plate can be a fun and exciting way to not only choose what they want to eat but to ensure it is in healthy portions.¹



Making Healthy Snacks Available

Having healthy snacks such as fruits, vegetables, and healthy beverages on hand can be helpful in making them full enough to where they may not want to consume unhealthy snacks.²



Teaching Moderation

Offer small servings of their favorite foods once in a while. Introduce healthy options along the way to reduce their want for unhealthy foods. You should not limit completely their access to unhealthy foods as it may create a larger attraction.³

SIMPLE RECIPES

Cooking with your child can be a great way to engage them in the cooking process. When cooking, you can teach them ways to create tasty healthy and nutritious foods. Here are two simple recipes you can make with your children.⁴



Pasta and Broccoli⁵

Ingredients: 12 oz pasta, 6 and 1/2 cups of fresh broccoli, 5 cloves of garlic, 1/4 cup grated Parmesan, 2tbsp olive oil, kosher salt, black pepper

Instructions:

1. Large pot of salted water to a boil
2. Add broccoli and pasta at the same time and cook according to pasta instructions
3. When pasta is almost done cooking, reserve 1 cup of pasta water and drain pasta
4. Set a pot on the stove and set heat to high
5. Add 1tbsp olive oil and your garlic when hot. Cook until golden and reduce flame and add pasta back in
6. Mix and add remaining olive oil, cheese, salt and pepper to taste, and mix
7. Add 1/2 cups of pasta water and mix well
8. Serve in with additional grated cheese on the side



Baked Churros⁶

Ingredients: 1 cup water, 4tbsp unsalted butter, 2tbsp light brown sugar, 1/2tbsp salt, 1 cup all-purpose flour, 2 large eggs, 1tbsp vanilla extract, 3tbsp granulated sugar, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375F and line baking sheet with parchment paper
2. Combine water, butter, brown sugar, and salt in saucepan and cool over medium high till butter melts
3. Remove from heat and stir in flour till incorporated and let cool for 5min
4. Whisk eggs and vanilla in bowl and add to dough and stir
5. Transfer dough into plastic bag but do not seal completely
6. Snip off bottom corner and squeeze to make churro shapes on a baking sheet
7. Bake churro for 25-30min, turning halfway and till puffed and browned
8. Combine sugar and cinnamon on plate and roll hot churros in mixture

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Chapter Eight

Resources and Conclusion



Resources for Parents

- **Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**
- **Campus Kitchen**
- **Foodbank of Northeast Georgia**
 - **Food 2 Kids (Childhood Nutrition Program)**
- **Nutrition & Exercise Services for Childhood Obesity at Piedmont Athens Regional**
- **Feeding America**

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1: This chapter introduces why childhood nutrition is important and how it sets the foundations for long-term health. It also shares statistics on factors such as food insecurity and poor nutrition. These statistics are important to note for addressing disparities and critical for parent's understanding of children's lifelong health

Chapter 2: This chapter focuses on malnutrition, emphasizing its major health effects and potential for disease. This disparity is linked to nearly half of children's deaths worldwide. Additionally, this chapter addresses how to treat malnutrition.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the benefits of healthy eating for children, focusing on its positive impact on both physical and cognitive health. It also provides guidance on effectively combining healthy eating habits with regular exercise to support kids overall well-being.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the concept behind meal planning is defined as well as its benefits and efficient ways to involve kids in meal prepping their own meals. Some other topics covered in this chapter were effective ways to improve healthier eating habits in children along with creative ways to incorporate vitamins in meals.

Chapter 5: This chapter is all about nutrition labels and understanding the most impactful ingredients in a child's diet. This chapter also talks about how to properly read a nutrition label and how to scout out non-GMO or organic foods.

Chapter 6: This chapter is about the nutrition needs of children depending on their age and sex. In this chapter, the calories needed and types of food/nutrition needed for varying age ranges are discussed.

Chapter 7: This chapter is about ways to teach children how to make healthier choices by listing some helpful methods to teach children about their food. Two recipes are included at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 8: This chapter dives into the different resources that can be used to implement future changes as well as a conclusion to why childhood nutrition is necessary. The programs listed are designed to assist in improving dietary habits, access to nutritious foods, and helping grow long-term healthy eating behaviors.