

Oct 2011

॥ Mahiti ॥

From The Editor's Desk

Dear readers,

This issue talks of food for the preschool child. The toddler is known to be a fussy eater, and the trend is likely to continue into preschool years, almost before the parent realises. The reasons for this are many- developing tastes; genuine struggle for assertion of independence; habits formed by parents and sometimes the genuine pleasure of getting a raise out of the parent!

We often do not realise that healthy eating habits can be inculcated very easily with the preschool children; by the same token, it is just as easy to habituate the child to unhealthy eating also!

This issue talks very generically about the nutritional needs of a preschool child. This is an introduction to the issue, and each family has to decide what is the healthiest option for their children, as there are no cookie-cutter "diet" for children. Especially in our country, where the traditional meals have been very well-balanced and healthy and generally make use of indigenous ingredients as well as cooking methods.

Regards,
Gayatri Kiran



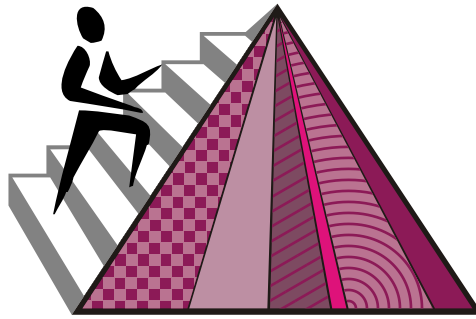
In This Issue

**Food
for thought**

SAMYUKTA
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANCY

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Eating and Feeding right



STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



GRAINS

Make half your grains whole

- Look for the word "whole" in front of the grain name on the list of ingredients



VEGETABLES

Vary your vegetables

- Eat more dark vegetables
- Eat more orange vegetables
- Eat more beans and peas



FRUITS

Focus on fruits

- Eat a variety of fruits
- Choose fresh, seasonal fruits
- Go easy on fruit juices



OILS

Know your fats

- Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils



MILK

Get your calcium-rich foods

- Large part of preschool diet.



MEAT & BEANS

Go lean on protein

- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry
- Bake it, broil it, or grill it
- Vary your sources with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds

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Tips to help your child eat healthy

- Be a positive role model for your preschooler. Setting good examples of healthy eating and fitness is much more effective than instituting rules about food intake and exercise.
- Milk intolerance and other food allergies can also occur in toddlers and pre schoolers which have to be detected and treated effectively. Again this can be one reason why a preschooler may be a fussy eater too.
- Choose foods that are nutrient-dense. Foods that are fresh or less processed are generally the most nutrient-dense. Important food choices for preschoolers are fresh fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products
- Wash hands often. Avoid unpasteurized milk and juices, raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish
- By 15 months of age, most children have developed enough fine motor skills to feed themselves without help. Encourage self-feeding.
- Expect and tolerate child-like table manners. Let a child be a child. Children are always learning from your table manners.
- Foods that cause dental caries should be avoided.
- Wholesome snacks children may enjoy are- fresh fruits, hard-boiled eggs, sandwiches, idli, dosa, upma, poha, dhokla, sprouts etc.
- Give special consideration to providing foods that appeal to the child's senses. Include finger foods; foods that crunch or crackle when you eat them; foods that differ in texture; foods with different flavor.
- Finicky food habits are often temporary and will disappear if not reinforced by emotions and unnecessary rules. Food should not become the object of bribes or punishments. Acknowledge personal likes and dislikes.
- Keep portions child size and let the child be the guide for the size.
- Mealtime can be a family time. Mealtime is a good time to teach nutrition by example. Good eating habits that preschoolers learn from their parents can develop into lifelong patterns.
- Plenty of water is needed to regulate body functions in small children. As a percentage of body weight, children have more water in their bodies than adults; therefore, their bodies can become dehydrated more quickly than adult bodies. Offer water to your preschooler several times during the day.
- When it comes to cooking, prefer going in for cooking techniques like steaming, boiling and baking, rather than going in for frying, because that tends to involve extensive usage of oil, thus making the food item high in calories.

(Information partly from - National Network for Child Care - NNCC. Martin, H. D. and Charlotte Kern. (1992). *Nutrition for the preschool child.* Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.)

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Nutrients	Functions	Some Sources
Proteins	Muscle building	Paneer, peas, cheese, milk pulses, egg, fish, meat
Carbohydrates	Fuel for the body	Grapes, bananas, sugar, chapatti, rice, carrots, potatoes, bread
Fiber	Digestion	Whole grains, cereals, fresh and dried fruits, and vegetables
Fats	Provide calories for active children	Ghee, groundnuts, oil, almonds, butter, fried stuff
Minerals - Calcium	Strong bones and teeth	Milk and milk products, green leafy vegetables, almonds.
Iron	Supply oxygen to cells	Green leafy vegetables, whole grains, dried fruits, meat, poultry, fish
Vitamins	Helps body fight diseases	Citrus fruits, dark green or yellow vegetables, tomatoes, eggs, carrots.

Letters To The Editor

We plan to grow and thrive from our reader responses. Please feel free to write in to us, by mail or post.

We will try to publish as many responses as we can.

Your responses are awaited at mahiti@samyuktadc.com



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