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Foreword

Children today are more likely to consume foods that are delicious rather than nutritious, and most foods that come under the delicious category are usually either highly sweetened or salted, either way the delicious choice is not good for the child at all. Get all the info you need here.



Nutrition for Kids

Essential nutrients for children all parents should know

Chapter 1:

Importance Of Child Nutrition

Synopsis

It is up to the adult to ensure the meals a child consumes are as balanced as possible. With balanced meals, the child will be able to have all the necessary nutrition needed for optimum and normal growth patterns both mentally and physically. Besides the various food groups and nutrition supplements that should be part of the daily diet plan of a child, the preparation style of the food should also be taken into consideration to ensure its nutritional integrity.



The Basics

The following are some recommendations to consider when keeping a child's nutritional balance, foremost in his or her daily food intake:

Always make it a point to offer nutritional snacks such as fresh fruits, vegetables and yoghurt. When a child chooses such nutrition packed snacks habitually it effectively decreases the possibility of unhealthy food choices and intake.

Teaching a child the importance of reaching for a glass of water instead of sweetened drinks is another good habit to inculcate. Water is not only a cheaper alternative but is also one that is ultimately the only totally healthy liquid to consume.

Sharing a nutritious meal with a child, as often as possible will help to encourage the child to make healthy choices simply by watching the adult's positive eating habits.

Basically, with proper nutritional intake the child will be able to develop mentally and physically without any unusual problems. The health conditions of the child would also be better both in the growing stage and as a good foundation for the future adult phase in life.

Chapter 2:

The Common Nutrient Deficiencies

Synopsis

From infancy to the toddler age group, there is usually quite a limited amount of foods that can be consumed. Ensuring that these foods are highly nutritious can be quite a challenge for the adult in charge of ensuring a complete and healthy diet plan.

Although infants who are on a breast milk diet as supposed to be able to get the best and most complete nutrition needed, most mothers today are not conscious of their own heating habit and certainly not ensuring total nutrition content.

When this happens the milk produced will not have all the ideal nutritional content. Then same applies for the younger children age group where simply providing snacks and food that are convenient and quick for consumption are often not highly nutrition upon examination.

Nutrients

The following are some of the deficiencies that are likely to show up in the health of children:

- Vitamin D – this is common in infants born to mothers with low levels of vitamin D in their own body systems. This usually leads to development of Rickets, which is a bone debilitating disease.
- Vitamin K – it is becoming a very common practice to administer a dose of this vitamin in a newborn as it help to prevent a rare condition which causes bleeding into the brain.
- Iron – most infants who are breastfed for longer than 6 months are usually are risk of developing iron deficiency in the first year. This can be changed with some additional foods into the diet plan besides simply depending on only the breast milk for sustenance.
- Vitamin A – this is a fat-soluble nutrient that is stored in the body and used according to the body needs and when there is an insufficient amount of this vitamin in the child system, frequent infections occur.

Chapter 3:

Teach Your Children About Healthy Eating

Synopsis

There are a lot of reasons why a child should be taught to eat healthily from a very young age. With good eating habits inculcated into a child daily dietary regiment the assurance of getting all the nutritional needs for the body will be well under control. It would also ensure the child's weight and health conditions are kept to its optimum.



Important Info

The following are some recommendations on who to approach the topic of healthy eating habits for children:

Guidance and not dictation, is the way to help children adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed food choices. Providing a healthy array of stacks within easy access of the child will help this process even more.

Teaching a child to consume food at a slower rate is also another way to show them good and healthy eating habits. Eating slowly will allow them to actually learn to taste and enjoy the foods being eaten thus helping them to eat less and yet feel fuller.

Including children in food shopping sprees is another good way to educate them on healthy food varieties available and how to discern these for the benefits of the body.

Making this exercise as fun and informative as possible is good for the child's future healthy food choices. Encouraging children to help in the actual food preparations is also another good exercise to inculcate in the daily routine of food preparation.

This is also another fun way to introduce healthy food to the child and encourage them to form a habit of eating such foods.

Encouraging the consumption of water over other drink choices is also another healthy choice to follow. Water is a much better choice as it not only hydrates but also is less like to cause unwanted negative build-ups in the body system.



Chapter 4:

Fight Child Obesity

Synopsis

Most families today have a rather high ratio of obesity within the family unit. This is due to a variety of reasons of which the popular ones are lack of exercise and the intake of very unhealthy foods.



Change The Foods

The following are some recommendations as to how to go about putting some control back into the individual's hands and help them along with the fight towards obesity:

Maintaining an even meals routine is one way to start the journey towards rectifying the negative presence of obesity. When a child is used to keeping to specific times for meals and is strictly discouraged from indulging in eating outside these time frames, then there is less likelihood of the said child looking for food outside the time frames set.

This will then help to eliminate the need to eat all the time which is mostly due to habit rather than the actual fulfillment of hunger.

Making meals interesting and easy is another way to encourage children to have fun during meal times. This association of food and fun should also be a learning curve for the child whereby the specific positive attributes of each food group is made known to the child.

This will not only enhance and child's knowledge but will also be a fun way to learn things. The take particular delight in being able to display their knowledge to others and this should be capitalized upon.

Setting a good example for the child to follow is also advised as most children are very in tuned to their surroundings and will automatically follow what they observe.

Being a good example and staying healthy in the process will encourage the child to understand the merits of fighting against obesity and making healthy food choices.

Keeping only healthy foods and snacks available also encourages as the child will they be only used to these items and will naturally seek them out when the need arises.



Chapter 5:

Optimal Nutrition For Your Children

Synopsis

With the lifestyles most people adopt today there is very little room to ensure a proper nutrition regiment is followed. This is also the scenario when it comes to nutrition-balanced meals for children.



Balance It

Most people eat on the go or eat while doing something such as multi tasking, and children to have learnt to pick up on this bad habit. When this happens very little attention is given to what is being consumed as the prime concern here is to satisfy the hunger pangs.

Thus in the quest to focus on more nutritionally based diet the first thing to do would be to actually a lot specific times for meals where the entire exercise is designed to focus on the food and the eating process.

The next would be to actually plan out the child's dietary needs according to the best nutritional values of the foods chosen. Including a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables especially the leafy green kinds into diet plan should be given some level of importance.

Making use of a variety of fruits and vegetables will encourage the child to look forward to the meals being prepared. Most of the body nutritional content can be gotten from a healthy supply of fresh fruits and vegetables.

While eating proteins and carbs is also necessary for the optimum growth patterns it should be done in a controlled manner so as to ensure a comfortable and healthy balance is struck. The phytonutrients from these sources will produce the necessary amount of vitamin C, E and beta-carotene.

Another important nutrient for optimum child development would include the carotenoid which includes alpha and beta-carotene, lycopene, lutein and zeaxanthin, all of which converts to vitamin A for the body functions. A good dose of flavonoid which is loaded with antioxidants also helps to keep the child's arteries and cholesterol levels in check.



Chapter 6:

Meal Plan For Your Kids

Synopsis

Planning a meal menu for kids can be very challenging most because kids can be rather fussy eaters and seem to enjoy meals that have very little nutritional value. Therefore a lot of thought and effort is needed to make the meal enticing enough to be well received.



Planning

The presence of the unhealthiness in a meal is especially true when it comes to the fried food variety where the main unhealthy ingredient in the preparation method is oil.

This style of preparation should be reconsidered whenever possible and substitutes such as baking, grilling, broiling or serving it item fresh should be chosen.

Meals that are colorful are often well received by children as they are naturally drawn to the various colors in the foods. Thus choosing to prepare salads as a fast food option would be encouraged.

The use of a variety of vibrant colored vegetables and fruits is both welcoming to the eye and also very nutritious. Serving snacks that are nutritionally based is also another style to include in the meal plan for kids.

Having only snacks that have good nutritional content readily available for the child will ensure the need and source of the unhealthy snack is kept to a minimum.

Meal planning should also include a variety of sandwiches, and here again the idea is to provide color and variety. Making sandwiches that are low in fat flour content and using filling made from grilled or baked ingredients would be better than deep fried fillings.

Most kids enjoy eating a variety of fillings and substituting a conventional sandwich with a tortillas wrap would be an interesting

and innovative way of including items into the meal plan. Using other wraps which are healthy should also be part of the meal menu, and these can include simple ingredients such as cabbage leaves, and different types of flat bread.



Chapter 7:

Essential Vitamins And Minerals For Children

Synopsis

The following are some recommendations on the essential vitamins and minerals that should ideally be part of the child's diet plan:



Vitamins

Calcium – for healthy bones and teeth there is a need to have the adequate amounts of calcium in the body system at all times. Growing children need this element to ensure optimum growth. Calcium can be gotten by consuming milk, dairy products, spinach, kale and almonds.

Iron – iron assists in keeping the blood healthy and oxygen flowing well into the tissues. Any lack of iron in the body system will cause an anemic condition and this can cause a lot of negative effects on the child. Iron can be gotten from red meats, beans and iron fortifies foods such as in certain cereals.

Magnesium – this mineral is used to keep the heart beating healthily and also creates a strong immune system and strong bones. For growing children this is an important element to ensure, there is adequate supply of as these age groups tends to have more bump, falls and minor accidents than other age groups. A good source of magnesium would be in whole grains, fish, nuts, potatoes and dairy products.

Potassium – this is another important element that is needed to ensure optimum body functions are developed accordingly. These would include the development of kidneys and the blood pressure conditions. A good source of potassium can be gotten from potatoes, bananas, avocados and fish.

Then there is the list of vitamins which also help in various different ways to ensure the child's body not only copes well with fending off any diseases but also achieves optimum growth both mentally and physically.



Chapter 8:

Overcome Eating Disorder

Synopsis

Most eating disorders are caused through simple negligence or uninformed parenting or over enthusiastic eating regiments. Any one or a combination of these can have serious effects on the overall healthy growth of a child. Ideally there should be some guidelines to help the young and inexperienced parent to recognize and cope with this possibility.



What's Needed

There are three main types of eating disorders and they include Pica Disorder, Rumination Disorder and Eating Disorder of Infancy or Early Childhood. The Pica disorder centers on eating non-food material such as hazardous and any toys and such.

The Rumination disorder is a chronic eating condition that focuses on the regurgitation of food taken but not severe enough to be classified as vomiting. Lastly there is the Eating disorder of Infancy and Early childhood and this is where the malnutrition is not caused by a medical problem.

In the quest to adequately address this problem there are several recommendation that can and should be followed as this would eventually help to create a better eating experience for both the child and the adult involved in the exercise.

With these recommendations carefully followed it is also possible to reverse the eating disorder to help the child adjust to normal feeling patterns which will be both beneficial to the overall health and also have the added benefits to the child being able to simulate well into eating habits that are more socially acceptable.

Increasing the number of calories, mineral, vitamins and amounts of fluids the child consumes in one way of getting the child into a more balanced and acceptable eating plan. Ensuring the food is presented in an appealing design and with variety, will also encourage

cooperation on the part of the child to actually partake in the meal presented. Trying to identify the presence of any illnesses that maybe contributing to the eating disorder is also another exercise that can be conducted to correct the eating disorder problem.



Wrapping Up

Having healthy children is the desire of any parent as healthy children are happy children and the visits to the doctor which can be rather costly and stressful in certainly limited if not eliminated altogether.

