

# Childhood Nutrition

WHAT ALL PARENTS SHOULD KNOW



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# Foreword

Getting your child or a child that you are looking after to eat healthy can seem like a somewhat impossible task. Kids can be very picky at times and for the most part, vegetables and other healthy foods are not high on their list of preferences. The good news is that it is possible to get your child to eat healthy nutritious food and you can even get them to like it.

A lot of the process of getting your child to eat healthy is a trial and error process. You are going to have to keep trying new things and preparing them different ways until you become familiar with what healthy things your child does and does not like.

There are a lot of tips and tricks you can use to get your child to eat healthy, many parents just are not aware of them. You should use as many of these tricks as you can because proper childhood nutrition is extremely important for the development of a child. Children who are malnourished in their earlier years will have noticeable health problems in the future and may suffer from certain deficiencies such as anemia. I am sure you do not want your child to have to go through something like this so get them eating healthy!

## Childhood Nutrition

*What all Parents Should Know*

# Chapter 1:

## *The Importance of Proper Nutrition*

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### Synopsis

Childhood nutrition is highly important for the healthy development of a child. The sad thing is that a lot of kids are malnourished in today's world and many of them actually go to bed hungry at night. At the same time there are children all around that are considered to be obese and their health is beginning to show the evidence.

As mentioned before, proper nutrition is very important for any person but this is especially true when it comes to childhood nutrition. This is due to the fact that the food that your child consumes today will have a direct impact on their growth and their health throughout their adolescent and adult years. This can either be a negative or a positive impact, depending on what the child is consuming.

If you want your child to grow up to be big and strong and also have excellent health you need to do your part as a parent and make sure that your child is getting all of the nutrients that they need. This task can be somewhat difficult at times but it is important that you remain determined and persistent.

## **Nutrition Basics**

It is very important that you are aware of how important proper nutrition is as a parent and that you are knowledgeable of how to properly give your child nutrients.

The following chapter will go over the importance of properly nitrating children. You will also be provided with a few tips and guidelines that you should consider following.

If you do not help your child by steering them towards healthier eating habits they will surely have negative effects on their health that you will notice later in life. Providing your child with well-balanced nutritional meals will help to prevent certain eating disorders and other issues such as anemia or obesity.

The following are some examples of why proper nutrition is so important:

- **Childhood Obesity Prevention**

As mentioned before, it is extremely important to make sure that your child eats healthy food that is full of nutrients, especially in their earlier years. That is why it is so shocking that roughly twenty-five percent of children in the United States that are between the ages of two and eighteen years old meet the criteria to class them as being overweight. That is quite a bit of overweight children. It may be hard for you to believe but that fact comes straight from the CDC so start believing! The scary thing is the fact that overweight and obese children have a much greater risk of developing health problems later on in their lives. They will be at risk for joint issues and pain. As well,

they will be at risk of getting serious problems such as cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes. Teaching your child at an early age to eat healthy and choose a piece of fruit over a candy bar will greatly reduce their risk of experiencing these problems.

- **Healthy Growth**

Optimal nutrition is vital for a child to grow in a healthy manner. It is important to make sure that your child is consuming the proper amounts of nutrient dense food such as fruits and vegetables to support optimal growth. Calcium is also very important. This nutrient will ensure that your child grows up to have fully developed and strong bones. Calcium deficiencies can have some very undesired effects on your child's health so you want to make sure that you are giving your child adequate amounts of calcium.

- **Nutritional Breakfast**

It is very important that you make sure that your child has a nutritional breakfast every day, especially on days that they have school. Studies show that children who have a nutritional breakfast before class do much better and can focus and participate much more. An interesting fact is that children who do not have breakfast or have a unhealthy breakfast are much more likely to have behavioral issues and problems learning while in school. On the other hand, children who are well nourished are much more likely to have better memory and problem solving skills.

- **Consequences of Improper Nutrition**



As mentioned before, proper nutrition is extremely important for a child, especially in their earlier years. If a child does not consume the proper nutrients they will surely face certain issues in the years to come of their life. For example, lack of proper nutrition as a child can lead to problems such as having a shorter or slumped over stature. Another issue that these children may face is a delay in them reaching puberty and this can have a serious impact on the rest of their life. As well, children who are not receiving proper nutrition are at a risk of becoming dehydrated or facing certain health issues such as anemia. Their academic performance will likely be affected and this also can have lasting consequences on their life. Then there is always the fact that your child might become over-weight or obese. This can cause the child to experience serious health and social problems in life.

It is extremely important that you as the parent make sure that your child is getting all of the nutrition that they need. Your child counts on you to keep them safe and making sure that your child is eating right is part of keeping them safe. The best part is if you teach your child at an early age to eat healthy, they will likely continue to eat healthy, even when they are grown and have moved out. It may be a bit challenging at first to prepare healthy meals and get your child to eat it but it will get easier with practice and as you become more familiar with what healthy foods your child likes and what healthy foods they do not like.

# Chapter 2:

## *What Nutrients are Kids Commonly Missing?*

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### **Synopsis**

There are certain nutrients and different types of vitamins that are very important for a child when it comes to their development. This is actually true for the health of all people and not just that of children's. The truth is however, a lot of people are not aware of how important these nutrients are or exactly what types of nutrients they should be looking for in their food when making meals for their children.

Most children who are lacking in nutrients are usually lacking from the same minerals and vitamins and other forms of nutrients. The lack of these nutrients may not present any immediate noticeable effects on the child's health, but eventually it will take its toll.

The following chapter will go over what nutrients kids are commonly missing and will also provide you with some examples of ways in which you can incorporate these nutrients into your child's diet.

## **Commonly Overlooked Nutrients**

Many people, especially doctors and other in the medical field, would agree that far too many children are consuming too many calories and not enough healthy foods such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables. This is exactly what is contributing to the problem of childhood obesity in the United States. It is highly important that you begin teaching your child from a young age to eat healthy and to consume all of the nutrients they need in order to maintain good health and be strong.

There are some forms of nutrients that are more common to be missing from a child's diet than others. The following are some examples of these nutrients:

- **Calcium**

Many children do not have enough calcium in their diet. The problem with this is the fact that calcium contributed to children developing strong bones. New research also suggests that there are many other benefits from calcium that were previously unknown. For example, it is now believed that calcium can prevent breast cancer as well as other forms of cancer. As well, calcium is not believed to help protect your heart and arteries. With as high of a rate of heart issues and breast cancer as there is we should be doing everything that we can as a parent to help ensure that our children will not have to go through health issues such as these later in life. One way that you can get your child to start consuming more calcium would be to have them eat a bowl of fortified cereal with breakfast. Do not use whole milk for the

cereal. Also, you may want to consider sending them to school with yogurt for a snack.

- **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D is another form of nutrient that is extremely important for the growth of healthy and strong bones. Vitamin D is absorbed through the skin and it provided by sunlight. The thing is that kids seem to be spending less and less time playing outside and more and more time sitting on the couch watching TV. Limit the amount of time that your child can play video games or watch TV each day and this will surely contribute to them getting out in the sun much more often. There are other ways you can get vitamin D other than the sun. A few examples would be rockfish, tuna, or vitamin D fortified milk.

- **Potassium**

Potassium is a very important part of anyone's diet, but this is especially true when it comes to the diet of a child. It is a little known fact but a lack of potassium in a diet can result in high blood pressure and other undesired medical issues. You need to make sure that your child is consuming enough potassium because it is extremely important. Potassium can be found in many different types of food. A few examples would include beans, spinach, potatoes and tomatoes. Tasty fruits such as bananas also contain high amounts of potassium.

- **Fiber**

Many people are not aware of just how important fiber is in their child's diet. Consuming the proper amounts of fiber on a daily basis is

a great way of preventing certain issues such as heart disease and type II diabetes. Fiber is an indigestible part of plants that we eat in our food. It helps digestion and other parts of your health. You can give your child a lot of fruit or vegetables to help them get the right amount of fiber or you can try feeding them nuts or cooked dry beans.

- **Vitamin A**

Making sure that your child gets enough vitamin A is very important for many different reasons, however many children are still lacking when it comes to the intake of this vitamin. The problem with this is the fact that vitamin A contributes to healthy eyesight. Vitamin A also contributes to a healthy immune system and is also involved with tissue growth. I am sure that you do not want your child to have to wear coke bottle thick lenses on their glasses by the time they are in their teens so make sure they are getting enough vitamin A. You can get your child to consume more vitamin A by feeding them food such as sweet potatoes, romaine lettuce, as well as dark and bright colored vegetables.

# Chapter 3:

## *Teach Your Children to Eat Healthy*

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### Synopsis

It is very important that your child knows how important it is to eat healthy food and that they are aware of what types of food are healthy and what types of nutrients are important. It is also very important that your child is aware of what foods are unhealthy and what types of food they should eat in moderation.

Everyone deserves a sweet treat from time to time but it is important to know how to limit these treats and not make them a part of your child's diet. The duty of teaching a child how to eat properly falls on the parent's lap. It is important that you are aware of the fact that you need to teach your child to eat properly and that it is nobody else's job but yours.

The following chapter will go over the importance of teaching your child to eat healthy food and will provide you with some guidelines that should help you do so in an effective manner.

It is highly important that you teach your child about the importance of proper nutrition. It is also highly important that you inform them of the dangers and negative impacts not eating healthy can have on their life.

## **Be a Good Example**

You need to teach your child to eat healthy food and you need to start teaching them these things from a very early age.

One of the best ways to teach your child to be healthy would be to set an example and eat healthy foods yourself. Think about it, your child follows everything you do and uses you as their example for what you are supposed to do and how you are supposed to act in life. Therefore, if you set your child a positive example and make sure that you eat a healthy diet they will almost surely follow suit and see it as a normal thing to eat healthy foods.

Another good way to teach your children about the importance of proper nutrition is to learn how to limit the amount of sugary treats and other types of unhealthy snacks that you introduce into their diet. Make sure that your child knows that it is ok to have an occasional candy bar but make sure that they also know that it is not a good idea to eat one every day.

Try to keep more healthy drinks around the house as opposed to having an endless supply of soda. Raising your child to enjoy healthy food will likely lead to them continuing those eating habits throughout their life. On the other hand, raising your child to enjoy unhealthy food will also likely result in your child continuing those eating habits throughout life.

As mentioned before, teaching your child to eat properly and to have a nutritional diet is extremely important for the development of a child. It is best to start this process as soon as possible because children absorb information like a sponge, especially in their earlier years.

# Chapter 4:

## *Optimal Nutrition for Kids*

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### **Synopsis**

I am sure that after learning all of the previous information regarding nutrition and how important it is for your child, you are wondering how you can go about making sure that you are providing your child with these nutrients. As mentioned before, there are many people who are completely unaware of what foods contain what nutrients. If you are one of these people do not be embarrassed because it is actually quite common. It has become a habit for our society to worry more about what tastes and smells good when it comes to food and not the nutrients that the food contains.

It is important that you have your child on a diet that consists of proper nutrition. If you are unsure of what foods contain what nutrients and what the best types of food to feed to your child are, you are in luck because this next chapter is just for you.

The following chapter will go over optimal nutrition and will provide you with some examples of types of food that you can feed your children to ensure they are getting proper nutrition.



## **Healthy Food for Optimal Nutrition**

There are a lot of different types of food that are available that are packed full of nutrients and are very healthy to eat. The problem is that you are going to have to find a way to eat these more healthy foods over their favorite snacks that are on the unhealthy side. Sometimes it may feel like this process will be impossible but trust me it is possible and it really is not that hard, if you go about it in the right fashion.

There is a lot of healthy food that is actually quite appealing when it comes to the way it looks and smells. A lot of the process of trying to get your child to eat healthier food will be trying to find healthy food that he or she likes.

The following are some examples of different types of healthy food you that you can feed your child:

- **Eggs**

Eggs are very healthy and make a great breakfast. They are packed with protein which is very important to have in your child's diet. They also contain many other nutrients, one of them for example would be vitamin D. If you remember, we discussed earlier that vitamin D is important for your eyesight as well as your immune system. One of the best things about eggs is that most people like them, especially children. This will make it much easier to get your child to eat something healthy. Try making cool designs or funny faces with the eggs as this will also help to get your child to eat them.

- **Oatmeal**

Oatmeal is another healthy food that you should not have a hard time getting your child to eat. Oatmeal contains high amounts of fiber-rich whole grains. Oatmeal is digested slowly which will also give your child a steady stream of energy to get them through their day. This will allow your child to find it much easier to concentrate and participate while at school.

- **Fruits**

Having your child eat fruit is always a good idea. No matter what type of fruit it is, it is guaranteed to be full of vitamins and minerals. As well, your child will consume fiber while eating fruit and this is very important for their digestive system. Try to have your children eat a variety of different fruits as this will have more of a nutritional effect.

- **Nuts**

Nuts are very nutritional and can be very good for your child to consume. You can get protein from nuts as well as other essential vitamins. Also, nuts offer a healthy source of fat and this is extremely important in a child's diet because they will need it to allow proper growth. As well, the fat provided from the nuts will give your child the energy they need to remain productive throughout the day.

- **Milk**

Milk is always important to incorporate into a diet, this is especially true when it comes to child. Milk is full of protein and calcium and these are both very important factors of your child's health and growth. The good thing about milk is the fact that it should not be

difficult for you to get your child to consume it. There are many different ways that your child can consume milk besides just drinking it. Be creative with it and your child should have no problem consuming milk.

- **Tomatoes**

A sad fact is that it seems as if the cancer rate around the world continues to climb higher and higher as time goes by. The good thing is the fact that there are certain types of food that you can feed to your child that will help them to prevent from getting serious illnesses such as cancer. Tomatoes are an example of this type of food. This is due to the fact that tomatoes contain something called lycopene. Lycopene is believed to fight off certain types of cancer. Cooking the tomatoes is even better because the heat will cause the tomatoes to release even more lycopene which will make them even healthier for your child to eat.

# Chapter 5:

## *Meal Time for Your Kids*

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### **Synopsis**

Many people and parents are unaware of the fact that it is not only what your child eats that contributes to them eating healthy but also the environment and eating habits that your family has as a whole.

Meal time is very important and it should not be spent in front of the TV. Meal times are a chance for bonding, and believe it or not they offer a perfect opportunity to teach your children the importance of eating healthy food.

The following chapter will go over the importance of eating meals as a family and will provide you with some example of how exactly you can use meal times to influence your child to eat healthier food.

## **Use Meal Times to Provide Examples**

Meal times provide parents a great opportunity to communicate with their child or children. This time can be used as an opportunity to talk to your children about the importance of eating healthy foods as well as provide them with some examples of things that could happen to them if they do not eat healthy food.

The following are some examples of how and why eating as a family can encourage healthy eating habits that will be sure to keep your child well nourished.

- **Parents are Examples**

As mentioned before in this book, your child looks up to you for guidance in everything you do, including the food that you choose to eat. If your child sees you eating healthy food on a regular basis, they will be much more likely to eat healthy food as you set an example for them.

- **Kids are Different**

If you have more than one child, you are probably more than aware of the fact that children like and dislike different things. For this reason you need to understand that your child may not like the same healthy foods as one of your other kids. You will need to determine what each of your children's likes and dislikes are and use this information during meal planning.

- **Social Interaction**

The social interaction that is provided by eating meals as a family can contribute to a child having healthier eating habits for many different reasons. One of the most beneficial reasons is probably the fact that eating as a family and having conversations as a family will force your child to slow down with their eating. This will help your child better determine when they are full and this will help your child refrain from over eating.



# Chapter 6:

## *Illnesses Associated with Poor Nutrition*

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### **Synopsis**

There are many dangers associated with children developing poor eating habits from an early age. Some of these dangers include actual physical illnesses. Some of these illnesses can have a very negative on a child's life in the future. In fact, some of these illnesses can actually greatly limit the things that they will be able to do. Some of these effects will stop them from being able to live a normal happy life. Some of these effects can actually be life threatening and if not controlled can actually lead to death.

Eating healthy and teaching your children about the benefits of nutritional food is very important and they are never too young to begin teaching them these things. In fact, the earlier you teach them the better the effect will be.

The following chapter will provide you with some examples of the types of illnesses that can be developed as a result of poor nutrition.

## **The Dangers of Poor Nutrition**

Although being over-weight or obese are serious issues, there are far much worse consequences that can come as a result of poor nutrition. The scary thing is that some of these illnesses are irreversible. This basically means that once a person has the illness they will have it for the rest of their life. I am sure that you do not want your child to have a difficult life and I am positive that you do not want them to have to suffer from an illness for the rest of their life. The best place to start to make sure your child does not develop diet related illnesses is to make sure that they have healthy eating habits.

The following are some examples of the different types of illnesses that can be developed as a result of poor nutrition:

- **Anemia**

Anemia is a serious problem and it can come with a lot of undesired health results. Anemia is an illness that causes a person's blood to become weak. They have a hard time replacing blood and this leads to some serious problems. Anemia can cause problems such as shortness of breath. It can also cause dangerous problems such as getting light headed or even fainting when standing. People with anemia will also have a faster heart beat and they will feel weak and tired the majority of the time.

- **Beriberi**

Beriberi is an illness that affects an individual's ability to turn food into useable energy. This illness is caused by a thiamine deficiency.



This disease can actually cause a person to completely lose their appetite and this can be very dangerous for your child's health if they stop eating. Beriberi also causes serious problems such as severe weakness. This weakness is even worse in the legs. Those who have Beriberi have a hard time trying to do the simplest things such as standing up.

- **Diabetes**

Having a diet that consists of unhealthy food combined with a lack of exercise is a recipe for diabetes. This is especially true for people who have diabetes that already runs in their family. If diabetes is hereditary in your family it is very important that you make sure that your children are eating a nutritional diet. Diabetes is a very serious disease and it can cause some very serious negative health issues. In most cases, diabetes cannot be cured it can only be managed. I'm sure that you do not want your child to have to be inconvenienced by a life of counting carbs and measuring insulin shots. In severe cases, diabetes can even lead to limbs needing to be amputated as a result of gangrene and even death. There are some more common symptoms of diabetes and the following are a few examples.

Early diabetes will cause a person to always feel thirsty. They will notice that they always feel tired and that they urinate on a more frequent basis. They will often have an appetite that cannot be satisfied and will also experience periods of weight loss. Later more serious symptoms would include periods of blurry vision. They may also experience frequent headaches and periods of dizziness. People

with diabetes can develop sores on the bottom of their feet that do not heal, in extreme cases this can lead to amputation.

After reading all of this information I am sure that you will do everything you can to make sure that your child has healthy eating habits and that they are getting all the nutrition that they need. As stated earlier in this book, it is your job as a parent to make sure your child is safe and making sure your child is eating right is a form of keeping your child safe.



## Wrapping Up

I am sure that just as with all other parents, you want nothing but the best and happiest life for your child or children. One of the best places to start to ensure your child will have a healthy and happy life is to make sure that they are raised with an understanding of how important proper nutrition is.

As stated before, it may be difficult to get your child to eat healthy foods in the beginning. This is especially true when it comes to children that are already used to unhealthy snacks, drinks, and treats. With enough effort and determination you can surely make it happen though. After all, we are talking about the future of your child so therefore there is no such thing as trying too hard.

You will likely have to try many different types of healthy food before you find the kinds that your child likes. Once you discover healthy food that they do like make a note of it and then continue trying new things. One trick that is very effective for getting children to eat healthy food is to make it look more appealing by placing it on the plate in creative ways. Make it colorful with healthy dressings.

I hope that this book has provided you with some information that will help you in your battle to ensure that your child is receiving the best nutrition possible in their diet. Just remember, it will get easier as the time goes by.

I thank you for your time and I wish you the best of luck!