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Healthy Kiddos: Nutrition for Children

Breanne Nalder Harward, MS, RDN

As parents, we want to do what we can to ensure our children are healthy. Proper nutrition is essential to good health, disease prevention, and adequate growth and development so it is important that good eating habits start early. Whether your child is a toddler or a teen, here are important nutrition tips that will help your child develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.

- Eat as a family- Research shows that the diets of children who eat frequent family meals include higher amounts of important nutrients, more servings of fruits and vegetables and lower amounts of fat. In addition, family mealtime may contribute to healthier weights and improved performance in school.
- Model healthy habits- Kids model their behavior after parents and other adults in their life, so it's important to practice what you preach when it comes to nutrition.
- Allow your child to develop their own food preferences- Avoid passing on your food preferences to your children. For example, if you don't like broccoli still serve it and avoid the urge to make comments like, "gross!" This will help to ensure that your child will try it with an open mind and just may end up being a broccoli lover.
- Make breakfast a daily event- Breakfast is known as the most important meal of the day yet over 1/3 of children skip it. Eating breakfast helps to ensure that kids get the nutrients that their growing bodies need. In addition, eating breakfast is linked to a reduced risk for obesity and better performance in school.
- Include your child in meal planning, grocery shopping and preparation- This can be a great opportunity for you to teach them about healthy foods. And picky eaters are more likely to try foods that they have helped to pick out or prepare. When shopping encourage your child to choose a new fruit or veg each week to try.
- Expose kids to a variety of foods- Although it may seem like all your child wants to eat is mac n' cheese or peanut butter and jelly, continue to serve them a variety of foods. Children often need to be exposed to new foods many times before they will want to try it or enjoy eating it.
- Be flexible and allow treats- Raising a healthy child means serving them healthy foods most of the time but also allowing them to occasionally eat foods just because they are fun to eat and taste good. Allowing occasional treats teaches them how to include these foods in their diet in moderation.
- Don't force them to eat if they are not hungry - Make sure to serve them kid-sized portions, (which often seem really small compared to adult sized servings) and then allow them to ask for more if they are still hungry. If they are often not hungry at mealtimes, try to cut down on their snacking between meals and limit their consumption of low nutrient beverages like fruit drinks and soda as those can fill them up while providing little nutrition.

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SuperNutes
A wide variety of vital micronutrients are needed for a growing child's body. Micronutrients play a role in strengthening immune function, converting food into energy, detoxifying chemicals, manufacturing neurotransmitters and other key signaling molecules in the body, and maintaining tissue repair and cell regeneration. SuperNutes is a chewable children's multivitamin and mineral supplement that provides essential vitamins and minerals needed to support a growing child's development.

ViraKid
ViraKid is a children's chewable formula that boosts immune function and provides support for immune challenges. Elderberry has been shown to provide effective immune support, and the distinct purple color creates a fun element for kids. Be on the lookout for purple tongues!

Flora Bites OR Flora Boost
A chewable or powder probiotic formula for children, designed to promote healthy gut microflora, protect intestinal integrity and support immune function. Each creamy, natural orange-flavored cube or scoop of yummy drink mix contains a 5 billion CFU blend of Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifidobacterium lactis, as well as 20 mg of vitamin C for comprehensive digestive and immune system support.

Recipe: Green Waffles
These waffles are a fun way to add a little color to your kiddo's breakfast!

Ingredients
- 1 1/2 cups oat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon (we recommend ceylon cinnamon)
- pinch salt
- 1 Tablespoon ground flax seed
- 1 medium mashed banana
- handful spinach leaves
- 1 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk of choice
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla extract

Instructions
1. Mix together 1 1/2 cups oat flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon cinnamon and a pinch of salt.
2. In a blender, purée 1 tablespoon ground flax seed, 1 medium mashed banana, a handful of spinach leaves, 1 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk of choice and 1 tablespoon vanilla extract.
3. Add wet to dry and mix together until combined. Let sit for at least 5 minutes to allow the oat flour to rehydrate.
4. Add to preheated waffle iron and cook according to manufacturer's directions.

Notes
- The spinach in the waffles may make them taste slightly vegetal— to help balance, you can add in a tablespoon of honey to the batter.
- This waffle batter can be made into pancakes, if you prefer!
- Makes 4 servings
- Recipe printed from Plant-Based Juniors at plantbasedjuniors.com