

Sheena Hendon Health

Eat your Greens –

They are good for you

*Healthy eating and meal planning
for you and your family*

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A quick guide to healthy eating

Our role as parents and caregivers is to provide our children with healthy, nutritious meals. Their role is to eat it.

Variety is the spice of life

It's really important to eat varied and interesting foods everyday. Varied so that you get all the nutrients – vitamins and minerals, protein, carbohydrates and fats – to keep you healthy, and interesting so you actually enjoy what you eat. Healthy food does not have to taste bland and boring and there's no need to eat foods that are unpalatable just because 'they're good for you'. Invest in a good cookbook to give you some ideas for food preparation and recipes and have fun experimenting!

Handy Hint

Check out Annabel Karmel's books on feeding children – you can find them in most bookshops. They have lots of delicious, but healthy recipes and great ideas.

Drink plenty of fluids

As most of our body is made up of water it is really important we drink a lot to replace fluids and to ensure we remain hydrated. If we drink enough water it means our body can work to maximum efficiency. As a rule of thumb, don't wait to take a drink before you feel thirsty – you are already dehydrated by then. As a rough measure adults need to drink about two litres (8 glasses) and kids 1 litre of water every day and drink even more after exercise and in warmer weather. The water that makes up tea, coffee or alcohol doesn't count I'm afraid.

Handy Hint

Buy a number of one litre mineral water sipper bottles and refill them with bulk bought mineral water from your supermarket. Keep a full bottle in the car, on your desk, by the bed....so that you have easy access to water wherever you are.

A refreshing summer drink – iced water with cucumber, lemon or strawberries floating in it.

FOR KIDS: Steer clear of sugar laden fizzy drinks. Water, watered down fruit juice and milk is best. Each child should have their own drink bottle to prevent germs spreading.

Watch how much you are eating

Most of us pile far too much food on our plates. As a rule of thumb a serving size is about the amount you can fit in to the palm of your hand – e.g. one apple, a small piece of steak or a small chicken breast. See later for ideal meal sizes for your kids.

Also be aware of how much of your protein, carbohydrate or fat you have on your plate. Ideally a dinner should contain 50 percent veggies or salad, 25% protein (meat, fish, egg...) and 25% carbohydrate (rice, lentils, bread...). Kids should have more carbs and a little less protein.

Seasonal and fresh foods are best

Fresh food is usually of better quality than processed foods (frozen/canned/packaged). There are less preservatives, nutrient levels are higher and it tastes better.

Seasonal fresh foods are even better, because they haven't lost any nutrients whilst they have been stored. Not to mention they are cheaper. Also, fruits and vegetables possess properties in the same way that medicinal herbs do. Summer foods are generally light and juicy while those of the cooler months are more dense and compact. Moist, easily digestible foods are appropriate for warmer weather but don't provide enough energy for cooler weather. Winter foods are warming and should include beans, legumes and

root vegetables. Summer foods are cooling and should include juicy fruit and salad style vegetables.

Lastly, if you can, purchase organic foods – they are not exposed to harmful chemicals and they taste better too.

CARBOHYDRATES - Sources of energy foods

Wholemeal bread, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, oats, all fruits and vegetables

The chief function of carbohydrates is to provide energy for the body and brain, so they are important for growing children who have a greater need for energy than adults

Include a good amount of **complex carbohydrates** such as whole grain bread, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, muesli, legumes, beans and peas, nuts, seeds and soya products in your diet. Complex carbohydrates can lower blood cholesterol, regulate blood sugar levels, regulate bowel movements, reduce the appetite and maintain energy levels. If you know anything about glycaemic index – these foods all have a low index.

Be careful not to confuse complex carbohydrates with what we call **refined carbohydrates** such as sugar, chocolate, chippies, cakes, biscuits and soft drinks – these should be limited in a healthy diet, because firstly they also tend to be full of bad fats and eating too much can lead to disorders such as diabetes and obesity.

Handy Hint

Going out for a long bike ride or walk, then remember to take some complex carbohydrates with you to keep your energy up. Bananas, nuts and low sugar muesli bars are ideal. Take some water too!

Kids need several servings of natural carbohydrates a day such as wholegrain cereal and bread, pasta, pulses and potatoes to stay on top both physically and mentally. Children often need more carbohydrates than adults as they are more active.

Are you eating enough fibre?

Fibre reduces constipation, lessens the risk of diabetes, gall stones and heart disease. It also lowers the risk of some types of cancer and increases the number of healthy intestinal bacteria which are necessary for a healthy bowel.

The best source of dietary fibre is from whole foods – whole grains breads, fruits, vegetables, peas and beans, though it can also be found in processed fibre products such as oat bran.

Handy Hint

As a good source of fibre is the skins of fruits and vegetables, it is better to just wash, rather than peel them.

Kids: be careful you don't overdo the fibre for kids as this can stop the absorption of many vitamins and minerals.

Eat your fruit and veg

'Five plus a-day' is the rule of thumb. If you are eating five portions of fruit and veg a day (one portion is about the size of the palm of your hand) then you are doing well. But the more the better. Why? Because fruit and veg are a great source of, and provide a good range of, nutrients - vitamins, minerals, trace elements, essential fatty acids, antioxidants and fibre that help us keep healthy. For example the vitamin C in an orange helps fight off colds and may reduce the risk of cancer, and the fibre in prunes will help you keep regular and may help in reducing intestinal and bowel cancers.

So that you don't lose too many nutrients the best way to cook veggies is to steam, stir-fry, roast or bake them. (no need to microwave or boil them to death!) or of course eat

them raw. Fruit is best eaten whole (rather than juiced) to retain the fibre and to slow down the absorption of sugars.

Handy Hint

A simple way to roast vegies. Wash, peel and cut up a selection of veggies, such as carrots, parsnips, potatoes, courgettes, peppers, pumpkin, broccoli, in to similar size pieces. Coat in olive oil, chuck in a few cloves of garlic and a handful of rosemary and place in a preheated oven (about 180 degrees) for 40 minutes, turning frequently. Try roasting them on the barbie too.

PROTEIN

Ensure an adequate and regular intake of protein foods for growth and repair

Chicken, fish, meat, eggs, milk, cheese yogurt, nuts, seeds, pulses, lentils, quinoa, soya products, milk, yogurt, tofu

Our bodies are made up of 25% protein. Protein is essential for growth, repair and development. It provides the body with sustainable energy, and is needed for the manufacture of hormones, antibodies, enzymes, and is essential for building skin, hair, nails, cartilage, bones, ligaments. It also helps maintain the proper acid-alkali balance in the body.

It is found in animal products such as meat, eggs, fish, milk and cheese and also in vegetable proteins such as beans and legumes. Animal protein is a good source of easily absorbable iron and of Vitamin B₁₂. Vegetable proteins are considered incomplete proteins – they do not contain all the essential amino acids. To overcome this, vegetable proteins need to be combined correctly, e.g. grains with beans (lentils and rice or tofu and rice), grains with nuts (peanuts and rice or nut butters and bread), beans and seeds (sesame seed paste and beans).

Handy Hint

Protein smoothies are a great way to get extra protein into the diet for people on the run. Buy a tub of whey (or rice or pea) protein powder; add the recommended number of scoops to 200 ml of apple juice), a handful of fruit and a tablespoon of flax oil. Whizz in a blender and pour into a glass.

FOR KIDS: Instead of protein powder and juice add milk and yogurt for protein. Although a growing child requires more protein than adults, be aware that too much can overload the kidneys. Spread protein intake throughout the day.

FATS

The Fats of Life

Choosing the right fats for your child is essential for healthy development and functioning of the brain and nervous system, eyes, skin and hormonal balance.

Although much attention has been focused on the need to reduce dietary fat, the body does need fat. During infancy and childhood, fat is necessary for normal brain development. Throughout life, it is essential to provide energy and support growth. Fat is, in fact, the most concentrated source of energy available to the body. However, after about two years of age, the body requires only small amounts of fat - much less than is provided by the average NZ diet. Excessive fat intake is a major causative factor in obesity, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, and colon cancer, and has been linked to a number of other disorders as well. To understand how fat intake is related to these health problems, it is necessary to understand the different types of fats available and the ways in which these fats act within the body.

Saturated fats are found in animal products (meat and dairy foods) and in some plant oils (coconut and palm oils). These fats build cell membranes and are used as an energy source. Excessive saturated fats in the diet are associated with high cholesterol levels, especially the level of low density lipoproteins (LDL's) or bad cholesterol, cardiovascular disease and an increased risk of some cancers. These are the 'bad' fats – however, it is important to have some of these fats in your diet as they contain the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and k – but not too much!

WATCH HOW MUCH FULL FAT MILK YOUR KIDS ARE DRINKING!!

Include dairy products in moderation

Dairy products can provide a wide range of nutrients; however some people may experience symptoms of dairy intolerance if intake is excessive. Yoghurt is an important food that is easily digestible and provides beneficial bacteria and calcium. Yoghurt should contain live cultures (acidophilus) – many 'snack' type, or flavoured yoghurts do not.

Handy Hint

An easy way to reduce fats is to rethink your choice of spreads for sandwiches. Instead of butter, peanut butter or margarine, try spreading a little avocado, almond butter, olivani or vegemite. Or even leave the spread off altogether.

Unsaturated fats are found in cooking oils and margarine, nuts, seeds, fish and some vegetables. They are more unstable than saturated fats and are susceptible to structural changes when exposed to heat, light or oxygen.

There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated fats (such as olive, canola, peanut, and avocado oils) and polyunsaturated fats (such as safflower, sunflower, corn and soya oils)

Essential fatty acids - Omega – 3 and Omega-6

Omega 3 - Oily fish, eggs, nuts, seeds and omega 6 – safflower and sunflower

There is a lot of information around at the moment about the goodness of fish and flax oil and that is because they are both good sources of omega-3 fats. Omega- 3 and omega – 6 are known as essential fatty acids because they cannot be made by the body and must be obtained via the diet.

Essential fatty acids are necessary for the normal function of most tissues in the body and deficiencies can lead to scaly/dry skin, infertility and impaired immune function. The dietary ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids should be 1:5, however in most diets the ratio is 1:14 - this means that we are consuming excess omega-6 fatty acids in relation to omega-3 fatty acids. Increasing oily fish intake and using oils such as flaxseed oil (high in omega-3) or olive oil (low in omega-6) will help to improve this ratio.

Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids include linseeds or linseed (flaxseed) oil, pumpkin seeds, canola oil, mustard seed oil and soya bean oil. Oily fish are also an important source of omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and tuna.

Foods high in omega-6 fatty acids include safflower, sunflower, walnut, soya bean, canola and grape seed oils. Evening primrose and star flower oils are also good sources of omega 6 fatty acids.

IN SUMMARY

Eat mainly monounsaturated fats and those containing omega 3 and omega 6 oils

Eat saturated fats in moderation

Foods to avoid or restrict

- Sugar all types should be minimised as well as the foods that contain sugar, e.g.: cakes, biscuits, puddings, soft drinks, fruit juices, cordials, jams, ice-cream and lollies.
- Salt most of our salt intake comes in the form of processed foods – cheese, sausage, canned foods, spreads etc, and not through adding salt during cooking.
- Alcohol excess alcohol consumption has been linked to cancers, liver disease, heart disease and hypertension. Everyone should have at least two alcohol-free days per week
- Caffeine caffeine increases anxiety and aggravates insomnia. It may alter blood-lipid levels and can affect mineral balance in the body. Caffeine has also been associated with the reduced fertility and other conditions such as endometriosis, fibroids and PMS.

Meal Planning Guidelines for kids

1. Vegetables and fruit

These contain carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

For preschoolers: at least 2 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit each day.

School children: at least 3 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit each day.

Vegetable serve examples: 1 medium potato or root vegetable (135g); 1/2 cup cooked vegetables; 1/2 cup salad leaves; 1 medium tomato.

Fruit serve examples: 1 apple, pear, banana or orange; 2 small apricots or plums; 1/4 cup fresh fruit salad; 1/4 cup stewed fruit; a cup fruit juice.

2. Breads, cereals, pasta and rice are high in carbohydrates and fibre.

Preschoolers have small stomachs and cannot eat the same amount of fibre as older children or adults. Increase fibre gradually with a variety of vegetables, fruit, bread and cereals.

Breads and cereals make good snacks for school children. Choose some that are whole grain.

For preschoolers: at least 4 servings each day.

School children: at least 5 servings each day; at least 6 for older children

Serving size examples: 1 roll; a small muffin; 1 medium slice bread; 1 cup cornflakes; 1/2 cup muesli; 1/4 cup cooked cereal; 1 cup cooked pasta; 1 cup cooked rice; 2 plain sweet biscuits.

3. Milk and milk products

These provide protein and calcium. After 2 years of age, gradually introduce reduced and low-fat milk and milk products.

For preschoolers and school children: at least 2-3 servings each day.

Serving size examples: 250ml milk; 1 pottle yoghurt; 2 slices cheese (40g); 2 scoops ice cream (140 g).

4. Meat and meat products, chicken, seafood, eggs and dried peas, beans and lentils

These foods provide protein, vitamins and minerals, including iron and zinc.

For preschoolers and school children: at least 1 serve each day.

Serving size examples: 2 slices cooked meat (100g); 3/4 cup mince or casserole; 1 egg; 1 medium fish fillet; 3/4 cup dried cooked beans; 2 drumsticks or 1 chicken leg.

From: Ministry of Health Food and Nutrition Guidelines for healthy 2-12 year olds.

Healthy Meals and Snacks for your Children

We suggest that you and your family get into the habit of eating regular structured and healthy meals. Meals eaten should be breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner

Please note if you suspect your child has an eating disorder or an intolerance or allergy have them checked out by a naturopath or nutritionist.

MEAL	MENU	SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE WITH WHEAT/GLUTEN DAIRY INTOLERANCE
BREAKFAST IDEAS		
	Pottle of acidophilus yogurt (steer away from chocolate, sweetened kind) plus one piece of toast with honey or marmite/vegemite/nut butter or avocado or jam. Use olivani as spread rather than butter.	Soy yogurt Use spelt/ rye or gluten free bread. Use olivani/avocado spreads instead of butter
	Weetbix with fruit and yogurt added and milk	Ricicles/cornflakes/gluten free muesli/cereal or millet porridge with rice or almond milk
	Creamed corn on toast with grated reduced fat cheese (e.g. edam)	Use soy cheese Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread.
	Porridge with raisins and honey cooked with milk or water. Add stewed apple or other fruit to top Add a teaspoon of flax oil	Use millet porridge
	Wholemeal/oaty muffins – with pineapple and raisins	Use gluten free flour to make muffins
	Cereal (low sugar) Reduced fat cheese Fruit	Use gluten free flour to make muffins
	Fruit smoothie – 200 ml milk blended with 1 pottle of acidophilus yogurt plus two tablespoons of fruit – berries, peaches, banana... Add 1 tsp of flaxseed oil A muffin/or toast	Use soy yogurt and rice/almond/soy milk
Weekend breakfasts	Cheesy scrambled eggs with toast and peach slices (or seasonal fruit)	Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread. Soy cheese
	Bready egg tarts Line muffing pans with slices of bread and break an egg into each one. Top with herbs and cheese and bake in oven for 20 mins or until eggs set	Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread. Soy cheese
MORNING OR AFTERNOON TEA		
	Bite size chunks of cooked corn	

MEAL	MENU	SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE WITH WHEAT/GLUTEN DAIRY INTOLERANCE
	on the cob	
	Plain (unbuttered) popcorn with added chocolate buttons and dried apricot pieces.	
	Fruit platters – seasonal fruit cut up into appetizing bite size pieces. Can include dried apricots, prunes and raisins (these can be soaked to make them less tough to eat). <i>As a treat dip fruits skewered with a cocktail stick in melted chocolate and hardened in the fridge.</i> Plus a muffin or fruit loaf	
	Vegetable platters – seasonal raw vegetables cut into appetising bite size pieces – carrots, celery, broccoli, cabbage... Serve with dips: hummus (chick pea dip) cream cheese mixed with a little sour cream and chives. <i>For those kids that don't like their veggies try grating carrots and cabbage mixed with a little mayonnaise or yogurt and raisins piled onto lettuce leaves</i>	Omit cream cheese and sour cream. Tahini or guacamole as a dip
	Pikelets with low fat cheese / a little cream cheese and pineapple Or pikelets with yogurt, honey and berries	Millet pancakes or use healthier gluten free pancake mix, with berries and honey or hummus and pineapple/raisins Soy yogurt Use soy cheese
	Pizza slice <i>For fun buy tiny pizza bases add tomato puree and get kids to add own toppings – pineapple, cheese, ham, mushrooms, tomato... steer away from high fat salami, sausage and lots of cheese</i>	Gluten free base
	Individual pottles of diced fruit and a wholemeal muffin	Use gluten free flour to make muffins
	Mini bagels with chocolate hazelnut spread	Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread.
	Rice crackers and hummus Little boxes of raisins	
	Cold toasted sandwiches Savoury – cheese and tomato Sweet – stewed apple and	Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread. Soy cheese

MEAL	MENU	SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE WITH WHEAT/GLUTEN DAIRY INTOLERANCE
	cinnamon	
	Fruit smoothies (as per breakfast)	
	Try Healthieries Rice Wheels instead of potato or corn chips	
LUNCH (PACKED LUNCH)		
	Bread, Pita bread, flat bread (wraps) or burritos with a protein filling – tuna, egg mayonnaise, cheese, cream cheese, chicken, beef, tofu, hummus Pottle of yogurt Piece of fruit.	Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread. Soy cheese, hummus or tofu Soy yogurt
	Jacket potatoes with creamed sweetcorn and tuna or cheese and ham Fruit jelly Piece of fruit	Soy cheese
	Pizza slices with protein and vegetable toppings.	
	Rice salad with kidney beans, raisins and red pepper, mixed in mayonnaise Piece of fruit	
	Cold toasted sandwiches (see snack ideas)	
LUNCH (AT HOME)	See dinner ideas	
DINNER/TEA		
	Chicken/meat/fish/tofu and vegetable stirfry with noodles	
	Baked beans (low salt) or tinned spaghetti on toast	
	Fish: Tuna pasta bake Fish pie White fish poached in milk, in a cheese or tomato based sauce with poached cherry tomatoes Crumbed fish and oven baked chips Serve all with favourite vegetables	
	Homemade hamburgers with patties, pineapple, cheese, tomato, avocado...let the child put their own burger together	Homemade burgers (wheat free), or vege burgers or soy burgers – check packages to ensure they are wheat free.
	Sausages, mashed potatoes and peas/vegetables	Soy sausages or wheat free sausages
	Felafels with hummus and stir fry veges	Check bought falafels are wheat free.
	Chicken/lamb/beef hot pot	

MEAL	MENU	SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE WITH WHEAT/GLUTEN DAIRY INTOLERANCE
	cooked with veges	
	Stir fried eggy rice with vegetables and meat/tofu	
	Lasagne	Rice pasta
	Pasta ribbons with tomato or meat based sauce with broccoli	Rice pasta
	Macaroni cheese with ham (can use cottage cheese instead of hard cheese). Include veges such as mushrooms, corn and peppers in this dish.	Rice pasta
	Cottage pie – mince with mashed potato on top	
	Marinated chicken or salmon kebabs. Ratatouille	
DESSERTS	Frozen fruit yogurt	
	Carrot cake	Gluten free flour
	Fruit platter	
	Fruit crumble	
	Custard (seameal)	Use rice/soy/almond milk
	Fruity jelly	
	Tinned fruit and little biscuits	Gluten free biscuits
	Ice-cream and fruit	Soy icecream
	Bread and butter pudding	Use rice/soy/almond milk Spelt/ rye or gluten free bread.

Healthy Eating Shopping List

This shopping list provides an idea of what basics you may want to have in your cupboard.

Fruit and vegetables

Choose seasonal fruits and vegetables where possible

Fresh lemons for morning drinks

Broccoli, cabbage, onions, green leafy vegetables, potatoes, carrots

Salad vegetables

Frozen berries (for smoothies)

Dried apricots

Raisins

Oils and fats

Flax oil

Virgin olive oil

Eggs

Organic if you can

Meats, poultry and fish

Salmon, tuna or any other fish

Lean red meats, poultry (skin off)

Grains and pulses

Wholemeal bread

Spelt or potato bread (found in specialty bread shops or specialty bread section of your supermarket)

Millet (great for porridge)

Linseed or LSA (ground linseed/sunflower/almond) – to add to porridge, smoothies, fruit or muesli (high omega 3 /good oils content).

Porridge oats

All Bran

Brown rice

Noodles

Lentils, kidney beans

Tinned or dried beans – such as kidney, butter... beans

Hummus (*found in dips section at supermarket*)

Rice crackers

Nuts and seeds

Sunflower, pumpkin seeds

Walnuts, almond and brazil nuts

Tahini paste

Beverages

Green or light blue top milk

Mineral water

Herbal teas

Rice, almond or soymilk (enriched varieties)

Vegetable juice

Apple juice (unsweetened)

Others

Powdered dried ginger

Herbs and spices (fresh or dried) – garlic, ginger, coriander etc (*great for flavouring foods*)

Lemon pepper – use to flavour food

Tofu (made from soy and a great protein alternative)

Vegemite – great spread and can be added to foods for taste

Soy sauce for cooking (use in moderation)