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I am really passionate about helping everyday families think about the many ways they can grow happy healthy kids which is why my strap line on my nutrition and wellbeing business is 'nourishing families sustains wellbeing'. I have also been in Social work for 32 years and worked hard to support troubled children and families who have unfortunately neglected themselves due to poor parenting. I see the difference intervention makes to these families and have many success stories that keep me motivated to stay involved.

As I am a mother of 3 children 2 teenagers (a daughter 17 and son 15) and a daughter who is 10 years, just like other parents I too face the challenges of providing good nutritious and satisfying meals that can be enjoyed by everyone.

I trained as a Nutritionist when my children were 4 and 6 to be better informed on the essentials of good nutrition.

I am a great advocate that everyone should eat the same meal as I grew up in a house that had different preferences and food intolerance's and my brother was gluten intolerant. My mum always catered for him in the meal which taught me to be inclusive and mindful of every one's food tolerances. This is a really great way of offering food and I have taught my children that there is something on the plate for everyone and we should all try to be sensitive to each other's likes and dislikes. This helps build mutual respect, regardless of different children's taste buds as they develop as they grow as a key stage of their child development

### Different Foods

Try introducing different foods as this increases their experience of the world and what is available and so as their bodies develop, so do their taste buds.

Providing children with nutritious food can be easier than many people think and educating children to understand how to make healthy food choices is essential. Children need more Carbohydrates, protein and fats in their diets and children's nutritional needs are different from adults, who in contrast do not need fat unless highly active. Children should be active and need protein as this is a building blocks of life and cell regeneration.

### Eating Healthily

Eating healthy does not need to be unattractive. Replacing shop bought cakes or biscuits with home cooked ones using healthy whole grain flour or organic protein flour such as buckwheat or pea rather than white bleached flour which

## CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

contains empty calories, is a good way of raising happy, healthy children.

Baking at home can be a great bonding time for children and an ideal choice if budgets are tight. Replace cane or refined sugars with natural sugar such as maple, raw honey and sugar cane or stevia to sweeten. Or try adding natural fruit, as these are all healthier alternatives. Other Carbohydrate-rich foods such as whole grains, fruit, nuts, lentils, seeds, eggs or milk are key sources of these nutrients and provide suitable protein sources that could be made available to hungry children who will benefit from these in the long run.

Try arranging a finger salad or vegetables that can be eaten raw on a large plate. Fruit is rich in fibre, calcium and vitamin D which are three important nutrients many children often lack. Cut them up large or small or in imaginative ways using cutters to make them look more interesting.

Providing alternative protein sources like these will help build children's confidence with food and increase their desire to eat new foods that are offered.

### Serve Themselves

Children in my experience enjoy serving themselves and this helps all ages build their confidence and self-esteem.

Add different soft or hard cheeses to the salad for your child to try with the meal or add other protein sources if you're worried about them eating enough.

There are many challenges facing Families wanting to provide a balanced

diet that offers things children like to eat, rather than what they want to eat. Fussy kids may play with food, so indulge their curiosity and cultivate their interest.

### Parents

Children need clear and consistent parenting and to be helped to understand how to make good food choices. Parents can be good role models by helping their children understand how to eat well .

It is important that children are given what they need rather than what they want to reduce their risks to obesity and other later life health issues. Reducing portion sizes can be instrumental for children who are overweight or overeat.

Find a quiet time to talk through any potential anxiety that may be causing this behaviour.

Providing them with regular exercise or play opportunities to burn off calories is also vital to their well-being.

The World Health Organisation states **sugar** should make up no more than 5% of our **daily** diet. In the UK, that figure is 11.6% for adults and 15.2% for **children**. All food has natural sugar and salt and using less is best or none at all. Surprisingly our pallets get used to this. Give it a try and see for yourself. Otherwise replace with a natural mineralised salt such as Celtic or Himalayan salt.

Having clear boundaries in place is important to support emotional resilience and well-being and should include monitoring oral hygiene to prevent oral decay. Children need guidance to brush properly and understand that sweets and

and fruit juice cause tooth decay and that therefore replacing juice with water is a safe alternative. Juicing at home is better than shop bought juices but still requires monitoring. Having these with meals is much better, and research has reinforced this through clinical trials.

### Role Models

The adults in children's lives are instrumental in being positive role models for their children and putting this into practice by showing their children they make sensible choices and eat a balanced diet is essential to the family's norms.

Visual impact will be seen clearly by the children and reinforces the consistent message that health is important. Adults taking exercise is also a great message for children and experimenting with different forms of exercise, so children see adults can be active.

Consulting a Qualified Nutritionist is a great way of learning about the food that is right for you and loved ones and having a bespoke programme that you can follow is highly supportive as this helps families make sustainable changes for long term benefits and is money well spent.



## IDEAS FROM NIPPERS NUTRITION

### Fast fussy eating facts

It's not uncommon for children to refuse (or be reluctant to try) an unfamiliar food simply because it's touching, or served on the same plate as, their favoured and accepted food/s - this is often perceived as a form of 'contamination' i.e. their desired food/s is deemed inedible due to touching a strange source of nutrition, and can be prevented by serving the new food on a separate plate.

The texture of a new (or familiar!) food can be equally as tough to adjust to as the taste. This can stem from factors such as sensory over sensitivity (a problem that's particularly prevalent in autistic children), a lack of chewing skills and/or caution. Introduce troublesome textures in small stages - think puréeing problematic foods prior to progressing to their original texture and/or encourage them to touch and play with the food at their own pace.