

Food For Kids - A Practical Guide



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Making Choices

We all want healthy kids right. After all they are the future and they represent a chance to help make the world a better place and because we care, we do not want to think of them getting older and having problems with their health.

Sometimes though it can be difficult knowing what to do for the best, but by understanding some of the rights and wrongs, regarding nutrition, there are things many of us can do, to help improve their chances of a long, healthy life.

The first thing to understand is what you should not really give them. Obviously there are certain foods like the ones pictured below that are not ideal and pose a risk to kids of all ages.



Sometimes these foods do not even appear to be causing a problem, because you cannot see all the things they can do to harm kids. Some kids have bodies that do not get fat, even when they eat plenty of bad foods like the ones on the left.



However these foods can shorten or seriously hurt a child's life, by increasing the risk of things like Strokes, Heart Disease and Type II Diabetes, as they can often be very fatty and salty.



Do not worry though, because you can do plenty to help a child, by making sure where possible, they get a good balance of foods they should have Foods that will be discussed on the next page.

Making Choices

Good food does not have to become a difficult choice for anyone. It's simply a case of knowing what sort of things are okay to give kids.

The foods pictured below are some typical examples of what you can give to kids, that can give them a good chance of building and maintaining a good quality of life.

Such foods include things like fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, mushrooms, dairy, nuts, peanuts grains and legumes. These foods help to give kids a good balance of vitamins and minerals that they need, to grow up healthy and well.



Trying to give the right portion sizes to kids can sometimes seem like a riddle. You might feel as if you are giving them not enough or sometimes too much and too much of even good food, can lead to some kids becoming a bit overweight.



One way to help make sure kids get a good amount is use portion sizes equivalent to the palm of your hand. Now I know hand sizes vary from person to person, but for those with small hands, just use up to the base of the thumb and fingers, as a guide for children under 12 years of age and then around 10-20% more for the over 12's.



This method helps to give kids, a sensibly sized portion of meat, poultry or fish and one for fruit vegetables, grains, mushrooms and legumes.

Dairy, nuts and peanuts can make good snack choices too.

Buying On A Budget

We all know that in these hard economic times, sometimes it can be daunting, trying to feed you and your kids and trying not to overspend on the family finances. However fortunately you can do things to make it a little easier.

One way to save money is something called **downshifting**. It means buying own brand products not branded ones. Sometimes you may not like the taste, other times you might, but you may find it a good way to save money.

Other methods include discounts. These can be percentages. 3 for 2's, 2 for 1's and Buy One Get One Free, (BOGOF). You can find things like **Loss Leader** deals where a product or products are reduced, for around 3-4 weeks, to entice the shopper. You sometimes get bargain bin items and even try haggling. Do not necessarily be afraid to try, the seller may say no, but if you ask nicely, you might get somewhere.

Some foods are good to buy in bulk. Large boxes of cereal are often cheaper than smaller ones. I recommend big biscuit type, as their use is easy to monitor. You can also bulk buy eggs and you may find a Butcher who will give discounted bulk buy meat and poultry, if you have the storage and you may also find good deals at Farmers markets too.

Another thing you can possibly do is use comparison web sites, or if there are shops within walking distance of one another, you could shop around for the best prices and get some exercise into the bargain.

These ideas can help to save money on your food shopping.

Making Food For Kids

We know kids can sometimes be fussy, but good choices can help keep things interesting for them. Meals like eggs on toast and beans on toast are often winners.

Ham sandwiches usually work and are good simple fayre, but you can also make homemade pizzas, simply by putting some low fat cheese on whole-grain bread, with sliced mushroom and tomato and grilling them. The cost of the ingredients are normally less than store bought ones and they take about as much or less time to be ready to eat, than store bought ones and make almost no waste, as well as the reduced saturates and calories, with a taste kids should really like. All good plus points.

Sometimes food can be made fun, like having poached egg eyes, with a carrot nose and mashed potato mouth, or making the food look like different shapes or designs on the plate; imagery that might engage a child's quirky side.

Alternatively you could say you will let them do fun stuff they like, if they eat the food, that way they might think of healthy meals as fun and connect them to positive feelings.

So healthy food doesn't have to necessarily be expensive, or provide boring food kids might not like, but with some careful planning and a bit of creativity, you can afford healthy food and teach kids that meal times don't need bad, but often tempting food, to be enjoyable and you can give your kids what they need, in a way they might like having it.

So what are you waiting for? Get your kids eating healthy and yourself for that matter. Good luck.