

HEALTHY FOOD FOR KIDS

HOW TO CHOOSE THE MOST BENEFICIAL FOOD
AND ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS TO LOVE IT!



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How to Choose the Most Beneficial Food and Encourage Your Kids to Love It!

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www.HealthyChild.com

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Introduction

Providing healthy food is one of the most important things you can do for your family's overall wellness. What your children eat on a regular basis will impact their physical and mental health. It's true that food is medicine. Healthy food can prevent disease, and it also can contribute to the healing of chronic illness.

In this eBook, I will attempt to simplify the do's and don'ts regarding food. Although I will tell you what specific foods you may

want to avoid and provide a short summary of the reasons why, this book will focus on all the wonderful, delicious healthy food that's available! I'll also discuss where to find it, how to prepare it, and how to increase the chances that your kids will love it.

If you're just beginning to learn about healthy whole foods and it seems that much of the food your family is eating falls into the "don't eat" category, don't stress about it. You can begin right where you are. What I'm presenting in this e-book is the ideal, most healthy way to eat. You can begin to slowly incorporate new healthy foods while phasing out the processed foods. Think of it as a process, and don't worry if your children are not eating a "perfect" diet. The number one thing to strive for is to provide plenty of organic whole foods in their most natural state and avoid processed, packaged foods with a lot of ingredients.

I am here to help! Please let me know how I can support you in having more ease in parenting and in helping your kids grow up healthy and happy.

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Foods to Avoid

Here are foods you may want to avoid, along with a short explanation of why they are not the best foods for your family to eat on a regular basis. Rest assured there are plenty of foods that are healthy and delicious, and we'll go into healthy foods in the next chapter.

Processed Foods

Processed foods are foods that have been artificially altered (refined, hydrogenated, hydrolyzed, homogenized, pasteurized, etc.) and produced with chemical additives such as artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives.



Processed foods are virtually everywhere - in grocery stores, at schools, in fast food restaurants, and in many homes. They are marketed in fancy, colorful wrappings that are very appealing to kids. Pre-packaged, processed foods are convenient, quick, and ready-to-eat, which can be helpful in our busy lives. But what's done to the food to make it convenient and tasty makes it no longer healthy to eat. With processed food, you get a lot of calories and toxins, but not much nutrition.

When foods are heavily processed, they are missing the enzymes, vitamins, minerals, healthy fats and proteins that your children need to function well and be healthy. In addition to being depleted of nutrients, many processed foods have genetically modified food ingredients and contain chemical additives and artificial flavorings. The additives give them longer shelf life and the flavorings make them more sensually appealing so you will crave and eat more. This increases profits for the food companies and may make your life a little easier in the short-term, but can wreak havoc on your family's health. Many processed foods are addictive and are among the main causes of obesity and chronic disease.

Since important vitamins and minerals are removed during processing, the manufacturers will sometimes attempt to add the nutrients back in so they can market the foods as healthy. You might see this on boxes of breakfast cereals - they are "fortified" with essential vitamins. However, when vitamins are added to cereals and other processed food, it's usually in a synthetic form, which does not have the same nutritional effect on the body as natural vitamins from whole food compounds.

If you read the labels on most packaged foods, you'll see a long list of ingredients. Along with a lot of additives, there is likely to be some vegetable oil included in the list. This can be corn oil, cottonseed oil, soybean oil, canola oil or safflower oil. In packaged foods, these oils go through a lot of processing, including chemical extraction, bleaching, and deodorizing, which damages the oils. These oils can also become rancid sitting on shelves for a long time. Furthermore, when vegetable oils are hydrogenated, they become trans-fats. Eating processed foods with damaged,

rancid vegetable oils or trans-fats can cause nutritional imbalances and can be detrimental to health in many ways.

If you buy packaged foods, read the labels and avoid these ingredients:

- Artificial Colors/Dyes
- Artificial Flavors
- Artificial Sweeteners (Aspartame, Equal, NutraSweet, Acesulfame potassium, ace-K, Sunett, Sweet One, Neotame, Saccharin, Sweet'N Low, Sucralose, Splenda)
- High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) (Look for [hidden sources of MSG](#))
- Hydrolyzed wheat protein or hydrolyzed soy protein
- Preservatives and Additives (BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole), BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), Polysorbate 60, 65 and 80, Sodium benzoate, Sulfites, TBHQ (tertiary butylhydroquinone), Potassium Sorbate, Nitrates)
- Trans Fats (partially hydrogenated oils, hydrogenated oils, shortening, margarine)
- Corn oil, cottonseed oil, soybean oil, canola oil
- Brominated vegetable oil (derived from bromine)
- Potassium bromate or bromated flour (derived from bromine)
- Olestra (Olean)
- Azodicarbonamide (used to bleach flour)
- Synthetic Growth Hormones (rBGH and rBST)

Sugar

Most sugar is processed, refined evaporated cane juice. The original plant nutrients are removed when refined, making it nutritionally depleted.

Sugar provides a lot of empty calories, puts a big demand on the digestive system, and interferes with the absorption of vitamins and minerals. Sugar also suppresses the immune system, causes tooth decay, and may exacerbate hyperactivity. Since sugar causes blood sugar to spike and then crash, it makes it difficult for your child to focus and learn well, and it also can make her feel anxious, confused, tired or depressed.

One of the worst types of sugar is high fructose corn syrup, which is contained in many processed foods. It's also vitally important to avoid artificial chemical sweeteners like aspartame, NutraSweet, Sweet'N Low, and Splenda.

Sugar can be pleasurable, tempting and addictive and most kids love it. Later on we'll get into all the different types of sugar, including some healthier alternatives to refined, processed sugar.

Grains

You've probably been told that grains are an essential part of a healthy diet. Whole grains can be good sources of nutrients, and can be healthy if eaten in reasonable amounts. But most children are eating way too many grains, especially wheat and corn. Wheat that is not organic contains high levels of glyphosate, which is known to cause cancer and many other chronic illnesses.

It's typical for a child's diet to include a lot of cereal, bread, rice, pasta, corn, crackers, cookies, pastries, bagels, muffins, tortillas, and tortilla or corn chips. Continually filling up on these foods can increase insulin levels, add to weight gain, and cause nutritional imbalances. Even whole grains, when eaten in excess, can cause problems if they take the place of adequate amounts of fruits, vegetables and proteins. It's important to read labels on whole wheat breads and baked goods, since many contain corn syrup and other sugars, GMOs, and toxic chemical ingredients as dough conditioners and preservatives.

Gluten

A study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology estimated that 1.8 million Americans have celiac disease and 83 percent remain undiagnosed. Many doctors do not recognize celiac disease, and inadequate testing may be missing a lot of cases. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease that involves an immune reaction to gluten, a protein complex in wheat, barley, rye, triticale, kamut and spelt. Some people can have celiac disease without any obvious symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they are often vague and can be missed by doctors and attributed to other illnesses. Classic symptoms include digestive problems, pain and fatigue, and celiac disease can cause failure to thrive in some children. There are other symptoms that can manifest, such as itchy skin, unexplained congestion, or post nasal drip.

It's also common for children to have a non-celiac gluten sensitivity, which can cause a wide range of problems. If your child has digestive problems, learning problems, intestinal issues, neurological conditions, allergies, chronic pain, or other chronic health issues, it might be good to get your child tested to rule out celiac disease, or it may be worth considering gluten sensitivity as a contributing factor.

Avoiding gluten is now much easier than it has been in the past since there is increasing awareness and a larger variety of gluten-free products available. In the next chapter, we'll go further into a gluten-free diet.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are living organisms whose genetic material has been artificially manipulated in a lab through genetic engineering. A GMO food has had foreign genes forced into its DNA. This new science creates unstable combinations of genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods. There are health risks from eating GMO food, including immune problems, allergies, reproductive and gastrointestinal issues.

The four major genetically modified food crops are currently soy, corn, canola, and sugar beets. The GMO food crops you are likely to find in the produce aisle of your grocery store are

zucchini, Hawaiian papaya and some varieties of sweet corn. Most processed foods contain GMOs since they usually contain soy, corn, or canola ingredients. The best way to avoid GMOs is to always buy organic. Current USDA organic regulations prohibit GMOs in organic production.

You may have seen a “Non-GMO Project Verified” seal on certain foods while shopping. A product that contains this seal means that it has been produced according to rigorous best practices for GMO avoidance, including testing of risk ingredients.

The [Non-GMO Shopping Guide](#) provides information on how to avoid GMOs.



Soy Foods

Many people are under the impression that soy is a health food. Unfortunately, this has more to do with marketing than reality. Eating a lot of soy can cause reduced thyroid function and adverse hormonal effects. Soy foods contain enzyme inhibitors that interfere with calcium, magnesium, zinc, and iron absorption, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies. In addition, many people are allergic to soy. Whether organic or not, processed soy is not a health food and should be avoided. This includes tofu, soy milk, soy burgers, soy hot dogs, soy cheese, soy oil, and especially partially hydrogenated soybean oil and soy protein powders. Above all, it's important to know that soy infant formula is not safe for babies and should be avoided.

An occasional, small amount of organic soy (GMO-free) is probably not an issue, unless of course, there's an allergy to soy. But if your children are eating a lot of tofu or drinking soy milk every day, you may want to begin switching to healthier foods.

The exception is soy that has been fermented. Fermented soy does not have the negative effects, and it is much healthier. Here are healthy fermented soy foods:

- Natto - fermented soybeans found in Asian stores (high in vitamin K, probiotics, and other nutrients)
- Miso - fermented soybean paste, commonly made into miso soup
- Tempeh - fermented soybean cake
- Soy sauces - traditionally made by fermenting soybeans, salt and enzymes, but many are artificially and chemically made so it's good to read labels.

Pasteurized Milk and Dairy Products

Most dairy milk is pasteurized to kill germs and prevent souring. This is done by heating the milk at a high temperature. Unfortunately, pasteurization also kills beneficial bacteria, destroys enzymes, vitamins and other nutrients, and alters milk proteins. Pasteurized milk is highly allergenic, and associated with many chronic diseases.

In addition, recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) is a genetically engineered hormone that is injected into commercial dairy cows to boost milk production. Many health problems are associated with rBGH, including an increased risk of udder infections in cows, so more antibiotics are used to treat the cows. This means higher antibiotic residues in milk, which could lead to the evolution of drug-resistant bacteria in human bodies.

After weaning from breast milk, the best drink is pure, filtered water. Children don't need fruit juice or cow's milk.

You may want to avoid giving your children pasteurized milk, including low fat, skim, and powdered milk. Soy and rice milks are not healthy alternatives. Rice milk is a highly processed, simple carbohydrate drink, containing unhealthy vegetable oils, and I already mentioned the problems with soy milk. The non-dairy milks currently being promoted as healthy are not really all that healthy, are not necessary, and should be avoided.

Be cautious when the label says it has plenty of calcium. Non-dairy milks do not contain the natural co-factors the body needs to assimilate and absorb the calcium, and the synthetic vitamins A and D that are added. The form of vitamin D added to these milks is usually D2, which is not recommended. These milks are not healthy ways to get these vitamins and minerals. Even the boxed/packaged hemp and almond milks can contain questionable ingredients, so it's better to make your own. See the next chapter for info about healthy milk.

Milk allergies or sensitivities are very common in children. The symptoms can be subtle in some children. Abdominal pain, bloating, and chronic diarrhea are common signs of an allergy or sensitivity to milk. Other symptoms include eczema or other skin rashes, asthma, chronic nasal congestion, fatigue, learning disabilities, recurrent bronchitis, and chronic ear infections. If your child experiences any of these symptoms, try eliminating all milk and dairy products from the diet for at least a month. Then if symptoms improve, try re-introducing milk and see what happens.

Children do not need any type of milk after they are weaned from breast milk. After weaning, the best drink is pure, filtered water. Children don't need milk, they need protein, fats, enzymes, vitamins, calcium and other minerals - and all these nutrients can be found in other foods. The best sources of calcium are dark green vegetables and sesame seeds (tahini). If you are concerned about calcium since your child is not eating enough of these calcium-rich foods, then a chewable or liquid form of calcium is a good idea. You can supplement with calcium malate or calcium citrate. Calcium carbonate is not readily absorbed, and it is produced from oyster shells, which

can be contaminated with heavy metals. Magnesium and other minerals are important to assist calcium absorption.

Factory-Farmed Meat

There is a lot of conflicting information when it comes to meat vs. vegetarian diets. A lot of the confusion happens because meat can be unhealthy or healthy, depending on how the animals are raised and what they eat.



Most meat – the kind you find everywhere in most grocery stores and restaurants - comes from factory farms where the animals are confined under terrible conditions, eat an unnatural diet of grains, soy and corn, and are managed with antibiotics and/or growth hormones and other damaging practices.

It's particularly important to stay away from highly processed meats since they contain chemicals that can cause cancer. Highly processed meats include hot dogs, bologna, sausage, and packaged lunch meats.

The meat that is considered healthy comes from grass-fed animals raised naturally, without hormones and antibiotics. The nutritional value of this meat is far different than the factory-farmed meat that you find in a regular grocery store. The next chapter will provide a lot more info on grass-fed meat.

Healthy Whole Foods

Whole foods are foods that have not been refined or processed and are free from additives or artificial ingredients. Foods in their whole, natural state contain synergistic nutritional benefits. Synergistic means that nutrients rely on other nutrients within the food to work together to bring out the full nutritional effect. This is why stripping the grain of the germ and bran and leaving only the endosperm leaves cereals and white bread nutritionally depleted.

"Fortifying" the foods with synthetic vitamins, as in cereals and breads, does not make these foods nutritious because the nutritional compounds from the whole food are still missing. Adding in synthetic vitamins does not have the same nutritional effect as providing the complete whole food. The body does not absorb synthetic vitamins as well, or use them the same way as the complete vitamin complexes in whole foods. This is an important distinction to understand.

Healthy foods include fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, natural, grass-fed meats, and some whole grains. A variety of these foods will supply vitamins, minerals, fiber, essential fats, proteins, complex carbohydrates, plus important enzymes, antioxidant compounds, and phytonutrients. It's important to buy organic foods to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals.



Your child's mind and body, which is constantly growing and developing, relies on the nutrients from whole foods. Whole foods provide a wealth of protective compounds that can help prevent disease. Eating a regular, daily diet of whole foods will help your child feel better and think better. It will help support and build her immune system, brain function and energy.

The best foods to support your child's growth and development are:

- Organically grown - without pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and chemical herbicides
- Contain no growth hormones, antibiotics, or other drugs.
- Non-GMO
- Fresh and locally grown
- From animals fed their natural diets, free to roam on green pastures
- Contain no artificial ingredients or chemical preservatives

Fruits and Vegetables

Children need plenty of fruits and vegetables to get the necessary vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals that protect their cells from disease and keep them healthy. Fruits and vegetables also supply important fiber and are hydrating.

Phytochemicals (i.e., antioxidants, flavanoids, carotenoids, and lycopenes) are nutritious compounds in plant foods that boost immunity and protect the cells of the body from many diseases, including cancer. In addition to getting plenty of these foods (the more the better), it's

important to eat a lot of different colored fruits and vegetables because the pigments in different colors contain different types of phytochemicals.

Providing a variety of colors will give your child a greater array of all the different protective and healthy compounds of fruits and vegetables. Include a lot of leafy greens, such as dark green lettuce, kale, spinach and chard, and plenty of yellow, orange, red, and purple fruits and vegetables. A fun game for kids is to try to eat all the colors of a rainbow in a day. Let them choose their fruits and vegetables so that they can say at the end of the day they "ate a rainbow".

Here is a comprehensive guide to phytonutrients with ideas and tips on how to incorporate them into the diet:

[Phytonutrient Spectrum Comprehensive Guide](#)

A food list for each color and 6 steps to getting more phytonutrients:

[Phytonutrient Spectrum Foods](#)

A fun checklist for kids to eat their rainbow:

[Phytonutrient Spectrum Foods Kids](#)

Choosing and Preparing Vegetables

It's great to incorporate plenty of raw salads into your family's diet. Over-cooking can reduce the vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, amino acids, and the natural enzymes of many foods, so it's good to eat some vegetables raw, lightly steamed or sautéed vs. boiling them for a long time. Some foods are better eaten cooked than raw. This includes cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, kale) and nightshades (tomatoes, eggplants). In these cases, cooking makes these foods more digestible and nutritious. The phytonutrients in broccoli and tomatoes (indoles and lycopene) can be released and absorbed a lot more efficiently when they are cooked. Lycopene, a potent cancer prevention compound, is abundant in cooked tomato sauces.

Fresh vegetables right out of your garden are the most nutritious, followed by fresh produce purchased from a local organic farm or a farmers' market. The next best thing is organic produce purchased from the grocery store. Frozen organic vegetables are next, if you can't find fresh.

Buy Organic

As I mentioned before it's important to buy organic produce to avoid toxic pesticides, chemical fertilizers and herbicides. As more people switch to organic, the prices will get lower.

If you can't afford to buy all your produce organic, the [Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce](#) will help you determine which fruits and vegetables have the most pesticide residues and are the most important to buy organic. You can lower your pesticide intake by avoiding the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables and choosing the least contaminated produce.

Fiber Foods

Fiber is an essential part of your child's daily diet. It is necessary for proper digestion, to keep the intestines healthy, and to prevent constipation. Fiber also increases the feeling of being full after eating, so it can prevent over-eating and weight gain.

The best sources of fiber are fruits (especially the skins) and vegetables. Whole grains, beans and seeds are also fiber sources.

Healthy Eggs



Eggs are an exceptionally healthy, nutrient-dense food when they come from chickens that are raised and fed properly. Yes, eggs contain cholesterol and this is good. It's been ingrained in our minds that cholesterol is bad and causes heart disease. This long-standing myth helps to sell drugs that lower cholesterol, but it has been discredited. Children need cholesterol; it's a vital component of cell membranes. You can't make vitamin D or other vital hormones without it. Children especially need cholesterol for brain development.

In addition to cholesterol, eggs contain essential proteins, healthy fats, vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrients. Most of the nutrition is in the yolk, so substituting whole eggs with egg whites is not a good idea. It's important to know that conventional eggs, the inexpensive brands that you find in most grocery stores, are nutritionally inferior to pastured eggs. It all has to do with what the chickens eat and how they are raised.

Healthy eggs come from pastured chickens that get plenty of sunlight and fresh air. Pastured chickens eat their natural diet of grasses, weeds, bugs, and worms, which makes their eggs very nutritious. Conventional eggs come from chickens raised in factory farms. These farms house tens of thousands of chickens cramped in cages and fed a diet of GMO corn and soy, cottonseed meal and synthetic additives, including antibiotics. This unnatural diet creates eggs that are not healthy.

It's important to know what to look for when shopping for eggs. You'll see terms on egg cartons that make them more expensive, but what do these terms really mean?

Cage-Free

Even though the chickens are not crammed into a cage, they can still be confined indoors for their entire lives and never get outside into sunshine or eat a natural diet. This is a meaningless label and not worth the extra money.

Free-Range

This label means that the chickens have "access" to the outside for a minimum five minutes a day. Some eggs with this label are actually pasture-raised and allowed to roam free on pasture most of the day eating their natural diet. But most eggs that are labeled "free-range" come from chickens that are only allowed access to an outdoor concrete slab and this could be only for 5 minutes. They eat the same feed that conventional chickens eat, which is not a normal natural diet. Most "free-range" eggs are not much healthier than conventional eggs.

Organic

An organic label means that the eggs are produced without the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers; the chickens are fed a certified organic diet free of animal by-products and antibiotics, and are required to have outdoor access. Organic standards also prohibit the use of GMOs. This is all very important; however, organic eggs are not necessarily more nutritious than conventional eggs. They could still have limited access to the outside, and unless the carton also says "pastured", these chickens do not eat their natural diet.

Pasture-Raised or Pastured

These eggs are the healthiest eggs you can get, and definitely worth the extra cost since they are far more nutrient dense. Chickens that are pasture-raised roam freely outdoors and forage for their natural diet of grasses, bugs, and worms. This provides their eggs with healthy omega-3 essential fatty acids, and their yolks are much higher in vitamins A, D and E, selenium, zinc, and choline. Chickens need to get plenty of sunlight to produce eggs with vitamin D, so conventional eggs are vitamin D depleted.

You can tell the eggs are from pastured chickens by the color of the egg yolk. Pastured eggs have a darker orange color compared to the pale yellow yolks of conventional eggs.

Compared to conventional eggs, the eggs from pastured chickens usually contain:

- 2/3 more vitamin A
- 2 times more omega-3 fatty acids
- 3 times more vitamin E
- 7 times more beta carotene
- 4 to 6 times more vitamin D

You can get pastured eggs from farmers' markets or someone local raising their own chickens. You can also find them in natural foods stores. The farms that practice the highest standards for pastured eggs are small to medium sized farms who market their eggs locally via farmers markets, food cooperatives and/or independently owned natural grocery stores.

Sadly, many of the large organic egg producers are merely doing the bare minimum to achieve certification and producing eggs that are no better nutritionally than conventional eggs. The

Cornucopia Institute has put together a report on name-brand and private-label organic egg producers to help inform consumers:

[Organic Egg Brand Scorecard](#)

You can find local pastured egg suppliers and pastured meats on these sites:

www.eatwild.com and www.localharvest.org

Healthy Milk

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, children do not need any milk after weaning from breastmilk, and it's best to stay away from pasteurized milk and the so-called "healthy" packaged/boxed soy, rice or almond milks. However, cow's milk is another food product in which the health benefits depend on the way it's produced. The nutritional value of raw milk from grass-fed cows is far different from the commercially processed pasteurized milk you find in most grocery stores. For more information about raw milk, visit www.realmilk.com.

If you want to use a nut or a seed milk, such as hemp or almond milk, it's best to make your own, rather than purchasing the boxed milks with questionable ingredients. You can simply blend the previous soaked nuts/seeds with filtered water and strain it through a nut milk bag. There are many recipes on the internet.

Coconut milk can be a healthy addition to smoothies and recipes. The boxed coconut milks have questionable ingredients. Here is a recipe for making coconut milk: [How To Make Coconut Milk](#)

Whole Grains

It may be difficult to determine what is whole grain and what is refined. Some food companies will try to make you think you are buying something that is whole grain when, in fact, it is refined. If a whole grain is listed first, the bread is mostly whole grain. Whole wheat, quinoa, oats, amaranth, barley, buckwheat, millet and popcorn are whole grains. Wheat flour, unbleached wheat flour or enriched flour are refined. If the label says "made with whole wheat", the product is often refined. If you find labels that say cracked wheat, multi-grain, oat bran, seven or nine-grain, stoned wheat, wheat, rye bread, wheatberry or whole bran, you are looking at mostly refined grains.

Most importantly, whole grains should be organic to avoid glyphosate, especially wheat.

Gluten-Free Foods

Amaranth, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, non-GMO (organic) corn, potatoes and rice are acceptable for a gluten-free diet. Nut flours, coconut flour, and rice flour are also used in gluten-free products. Oats and oatmeal are naturally gluten-free, but unless the oats are manufactured in a dedicated facility under gluten-free practices, oats and other cereal grains can be cross-contaminated with gluten. This happens by sharing the same farm, truck, mill, or bagging facility as wheat. If you are trying to eliminate all gluten, you can buy oats that are certified gluten-free.

Many grocery stores are beginning to offer a variety of gluten-free foods. There are gluten-free breads now available, and pastas made from amaranth, buckwheat, quinoa and other grains that can be delicious. Look for the Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) Certified Gluten-Free seal that indicates that the manufacturing facility was inspected and the product contains less than 10 ppm of gluten. If it doesn't have the seal, check the labels. Additives like food starch, caramel coloring, malt vinegar and hydrolyzed plant or vegetable protein are not likely to

be gluten-free. You can also call the manufacturer's customer service number to ask about ingredients. Here are websites with more information about gluten-free diets:

<http://glutenfreegoddess.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.glutenfreedomproject.com/>

<https://www.glutenfree.com>

<http://www.glutenfreeliving.com>

Grassfed Meat

We've been told that animal products are unhealthy and cause a lot of disease. This is both true and false. It's true that the meat and dairy products found in most grocery stores and restaurants can lead to many diseases. This is because of the way it is commercially farmed and raised. Most meat comes from factory farms, where the animals are raised with appalling and cruel practices and fed an unnatural diet. Antibiotics and synthetic growth hormones are routinely added to the feed, which ends up in the meat. The phrase "you are what you eat" applies to animals as well as humans. Furthermore, these farming practices place a substantial burden on our natural resources and environment.



When animals are raised naturally and eat the foods they are meant to eat, their meat is healthy, too. Cows are supposed to eat grasses and clover found in pasture. This is their natural diet, which provides them with the nutrients they need to be healthy. The meat from grass-fed cows is higher in nutrients, including beta-carotene, vitamin E, omega-3s, conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), calcium, magnesium, and potassium.

Corn, soy and grain is an unnatural diet for cattle. Cows that are corn-fed or grain-fed are more likely to be unhealthy and diseased, and therefore receive more antibiotics. This unnatural diet lowers the nutritional content of the meat, especially depleting omega-3 fats, and creates a fatty acid imbalance, which can cause health problems. The food these cows are eating are GMO foods so eating these meats exposes you to GMOs and other toxins, as well as antibiotics.

A comprehensive study conducted by the USDA shows that grass-fed or pasture-raised beef is lower in total fat than regular beef, but contains higher amounts of healthy, essential fats, including omega-3 fatty acids ALA, EPA, and DHA and "conjugated linoleic acid," or CLA. CLA helps to boost immunity and prevent cancer and other diseases. Grassfed beef also contains lower amounts of the inflammatory omega 6 fatty acids giving the grassfed meat a healthier balance of omega fats. Grassfed also contains more vitamin E, beta-carotene, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium and potassium.

Keep in mind that unless the label says grassfed or pasture-raised, most organic meat comes from cows fed organic grains and not their natural diet.

Directory of pastured farms

<http://www.eatwild.com/products/index.html>

Pastured Chickens

Most of the chickens you find in grocery stores are raised in cages indoors and don't eat their natural diet. Tightly packed in cages, they are more prone to pathogenic bacteria and unable to do their normal behaviors such as rooting, grazing, and roosting. These chickens are likely stressed and prone to disease so there's a high chance they've been given antibiotics, which shows up in their meat. In addition, many chickens are fed small amounts of arsenic to speed their growth, make their breast meat pinker, and kill bacteria. Another standard practice in the US poultry industry is to wash the chickens in highly chlorinated water to kill bacteria. The European Union has banned the import of all US poultry since 1997 because of this practice.

We talked about the eggs from factory farmed chickens being nutritionally inferior to pastured eggs, and the same goes for the meat. Look for chickens that are free to roam on green pasture since they produce the healthiest meat, with a healthy balance of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.

Healthy Fats

Ignore the hype about low-fat diets - children must have fat in their diets. Fats are necessary for growth and provide the building blocks for cell membranes and hormones. Fats are also needed for transporting the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. Without dietary fats, carotenes do not convert to vitamin A and minerals are not absorbed properly. Both cholesterol and saturated fat are essential for many body functions and growth in babies and children, especially for brain development. In fact, mother's milk contains over 50% of its calories as fat, and most of it is saturated and vital to babies. **Avoid foods that have low-fat or reduced-fat labels.** These foods may contain harmful ingredients.

You're probably aware of trans-fats as unhealthy fats to be avoided. Trans-fats are hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils that can be found in margarine, shortening, commercial baked goods, fried chicken nuggets, fish sticks, French fries, chips, and other processed foods. The good news is that trans-fats are beginning to disappear from these foods due to label requirements and consumer demand. But you may want to check labels on processed foods to see what types of fats are used for trans-fat replacements. None of the processed foods mentioned above contain fats that are healthy.

Essential Fatty Acids

Omega-6 and omega-3 fats are critical to health. These fatty acids must be provided in the diet or by supplementation, since the body can't synthesize them. Back when processed foods did not

exist and meat and dairy came from animals that consumed their natural diets, people were able to get omega-6 and omega-3 fats in roughly equal amounts; a good balance to maintain health. But now the typical American diet provides about 10 - 25 times more omega-6 fats than omega-3 fats, leaving people with a fatty acid imbalance that can be pro-inflammatory and can contribute to allergies, infections, and attention problems.

Vegetable oils, like sunflower, corn, soybean, and cottonseed oils, are very high in omega-6, and most people get way too much of these oils in their diets. They are found in a lot of commercial salad dressings and processed foods. Soybean oil is one of the biggest sources of omega-6 fats since its inexpensive and added to many dressings, processed snack foods, cookies and other sweets. If you check labels, you'll find soy and corn oil in a lot of foods.

To get closer to a more balanced ratio of essential fatty acids, cut down or eliminate vegetable oils that have a high level of omega-6, as well as the processed foods that contain them. Also reduce or eliminate meat that is soy or grain-fed since it is high in omega-6 and deficient in omega-3. You can get plenty of the necessary omega-6 fats from whole nuts and seeds, which are much healthier than processed vegetable oils.

Another problem with vegetable oils is that they are unstable at room temperature, and sensitive to light, heat and oxygen. This means they can go rancid quickly and create free radicals that can cause cancer and other diseases. Vegetable oils should always be refrigerated and should not be used for cooking – with the exception of olive oil.

Omega-3 essential fatty acids are extremely important to children's health and more difficult to get in the diet. Omega-3s are found in grassfed meats, pastured eggs, salmon and other fatty fish. Walnuts, flax seeds, and chia seeds contain alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a precursor to omega-3, which may be converted to omega-3 by the body. However, ALA is said to be poorly converted to the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. So walnuts, flax seeds and chia seeds may not be a great way to get the EPA and DHA omega-3s that are vital to children's immune system and brain function. It may be important to supplement the diet with EPA and DHA from fish oil or cod liver oil.

Avocados

Avocados contain some omega-6 fats and only a tiny amount of omega-3 fats. However, they contain other types of healthy fats that have anti-inflammatory benefits as well as plenty of carotenoids that prevent disease, including cancer. Avocados are great added to salads and many other recipes.

Fats for Cooking and Baking

Coconut oil is a saturated fat that provides a lot of great health benefits. Coconut oil contains about 50 percent lauric acid, which is converted to monolaurin in the body, a compound with antiviral, antimicrobial, and antifungal properties. Since it can withstand high temperatures and does not go rancid, coconut oil is the perfect oil for cooking, stir frying, pan frying, baking and sauces. Coconut oil should be extra-virgin and cold-pressed. Other healthy fats for cooking are extra-virgin, cold-pressed olive oil, real butter from pastured cows, or ghee.

Encourage Your Child to Love Healthy Food

Is your child super-selective in what she will eat? Many kids are picky about what they eat, and a common eating pattern is to choose only certain foods and refuse everything else. At various stages of development, children may choose very little food or nothing at all, and they may not be willing to try new foods. It's also common for children to have certain fixations about food, like the bread must be cut a certain way or the foods can't be touching each other, or some other thing that can drive you crazy.

Some super-selective eaters may have an underlying health condition or cravings for certain foods due to nutritional imbalances. But most children are simply going through a normal process of experimenting with food. Eating preferences and habits change as children move through the developmental years.

Young children have inconsistent eating habits, eating well one day and practically nothing the next day. Toddlers typically like to snack their way through the day and are not likely to sit down and eat full meals. If they do, most of it will end up on the floor! Toddlers may prefer to explore or play with food rather than eat it.



Try to refrain from using a label like "picky eater", since labels can keep children stuck in the pattern. Instead of making food into a power struggle, help them to love organic healthy food so they will choose it on their own. Think of it this way. You can provide a variety of healthy foods in a creative, fun way, and leave it up to your child to choose how much he eats, when he eats, or even if he eats. If you give children the power of choice, they are less likely to struggle against healthy food.

It's important to have an ongoing, open dialogue with your child about food, beginning at an early age. Children can learn about all the different types of food, what it does in their bodies, and how it helps them to feel better and to do better in sports and in school. This can all be taught in fun and imaginative ways. If you teach your children about healthy food and model healthy eating yourself, it's likely that there will come a time when they will choose to eat mostly healthy foods.

There are many ways to get kids to love good food. Let's look at some positive approaches to encourage children to eat healthy. Find what works for you, and don't try to do too much too soon. Think about the easiest approach for you and give it a go.

First of all, relax

Of course, it's frustrating when you spend time and money providing healthy food and your kids won't eat it. But rather than stress about it, acknowledge that you are doing the best you can to provide healthy choices for them and then let go of needing them to have a perfect diet all the time. Above all, eating should be enjoyable and not stressful.

Know what works best with your unique child

You know your child better than anyone else. Do what's most effective for your family and do your best to ignore feedback that doesn't feel right. Some of us have family and friends with good intentions that may not be helpful and can create more stress. Follow your intuition and take a lot of deep breaths.

Here are some more tips:

- Be supportive but not too attached. If your child knows you're attached to him liking a particular food, it might create more resistance. Again, eating should be enjoyable and not stressful.
- Allow your toddler to play with food. Provide a small variety of healthy options and allow her to explore. Toddlers are very interested in textures, smells, tastes and putting things in their mouths to see what happens.
- Join your child in playing with food! There are many creative things to do with vegetables - cauliflower sheep, cucumber frogs, tomato lady bugs, carrot flowers. These foods won't seem as scary if they are in a fun form.
- Keep a variety of healthy foods on a shelf within your child's reach so when he wants a snack, he can open the refrigerator or cabinet door and choose one. Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the front of refrigerator. This allows him to eat when he is hungry, which is a good way to think about food.
- Keep whole fruits, like apples and pears, out on the counter where they can be seen.



- Offer a snack tray of finger foods so your toddler can graze while playing. Snacking on healthy foods throughout the day minimizes blood sugar swings and can prevent those outbursts of that come from lack of eating. Put a variety of colorful, bite-sized veggies into a cupcake tin, an ice-cube tray, or a compartmentalized dish. Name these finger foods with fun names so he will want to gobble them up while playing.
- Put this snack tray out so that it's easy to reach while your toddler is roaming around. This way she can stop and nibble, then move on to the next fun thing, then come back and nibble some more.
- Be a great example of a healthy eater. Show your child you enjoy your salad or your broccoli and talk about how good you feel after eating something healthy. Show your own excitement around trying new foods.
- Do your best to refrain from negative statements about food. Ask your partner and others to join you in this. If your child hears that Daddy dislikes chard, the chances of them eating it again is slim to none.
- Explain that you're putting good food into your body so you can play, dance, think, work, learn and sleep well. Help your children understand that our bodies feel good when we eat certain things and not so good when we eat others.
- If your child has eaten some processed junk foods, ask him later if he noticed anything different in his body. Help him get into a habit of noticing how he feels after eating.
- Focus on the foods they CAN eat rather than what they can't have. Try the empowering approach: "Yes! You can have a snack. Would you like apples or carrots?" "Would you like your salad now while you're waiting for dinner to be ready?"
- Ask your older children to choose and pack the healthy foods for their lunches. Let them be part of the decision process so they feel empowered.
- Make your own healthy sweet treats together. You can control what ingredients go into them, and kids are more likely to eat something they made themselves. This can inspire some great things in the kitchen.
- Teach your kids to make fermented vegetables. This can be a fun science project.
- Create a menu together. Let your child be involved in the family meal planning. This way there will be no surprises about what's for dinner.



- Invite your child to draw and color healthy meals on a paper plate. Create guidelines about what they need to have, for example, 1 protein and 2 veggies, etc.
- Find a task that is age appropriate for your children to help in the kitchen. Your two-year-old can gather the vegetables from the fridge and stir the pot, and your 10-year-old can be in charge of a side dish or even a whole meal.
- Go on a scavenger hunt in the grocery store. Beforehand have a list of things your children are in charge of finding and give them label-reading responsibilities so they can begin to learn what is in their food.
- Find a story, or make up a story, about a character they can relate to that enjoys eating healthy food.
- Children love to dip food into things, so put dips out with cut-up vegetables or fruits. You can even mix veggies into the dips (spinach or other veggies)
- Children love spreading or smearing, so let them spread their veggies with cashew butter, yogurt, fruit jams, guacamole, or cheeses.
- Kids love toppings. Put a favorite topping on a new food to make it more appealing and familiar.
- Make a healthy smoothie with your child.
- Cut foods into various shapes to make them more fun
- Serve foods on whimsical play dishes, or something that is out of the ordinary, like a plastic measuring cup, or a muffin tin.
- Kids have small tummies so keep servings small. Frequent small portions are better and less intimidating than large portions. Small amounts of food served frequently also helps to stabilize blood-sugar levels.
- Offer at least 3-5 servings of vegetables a day, but realize that for kids under age 5, a serving is very small - a tablespoon for each year of age. So a two-year-old ideally will be eating two tablespoons of vegetables 3-5 times a day.
- Encourage your child to play this game: try to eat all the colors of a rainbow in a day. Let them choose their fruits and vegetables so that they can say at the end of the day they "ate a rainbow". See my full Healthy Food for Kids e-book for phytonutrient spectrum guide, checklist and chart for kids.



- Create an organic garden with your child and let her plant, water, harvest and prepare the vegetables.
- Let other kids set an example. Invite another child to lunch or dinner, one whom you know loves to eat a variety of healthy foods. Children like to model their peers, and this may help your child catch on to how great it is to eat healthy.
- Kids don't really care what is supposed to be breakfast food or lunch food. If your child wants "breakfast" food at dinner or "dinner" food at breakfast, does it really matter as long as it's healthy?
- Make veggie stir-frys and try new recipes that use lots of vegetables.
- Try to include a salad with every meal or at least with every dinner. Avoid iceberg lettuce (low nutrition) and use dark green lettuces instead. Add more color to your salads by adding carrots, tomatoes, shredded beets or red cabbage.
- Have fun exploring the produce section in the store. At farmers markets, ask the farmers to explain to your child what they have grown and how to prepare it. Ask your child to pick out a new fruit or veggie he hasn't tried before and think of fun ways to eat it.
- Stir veggies into your child's favorite dishes. See if your child can find a way to add at least 3 veggies to their favorite meal. For instance, if it's macaroni and cheese, then add chopped broccoli and carrots, or maybe some sautéed spinach. Or add avocado slices, sprouts, roasted red pepper, or tomatoes to a favorite sandwich. Let her experiment with all her favorites.
- Add chopped or pureed vegetables to soups.
- Grate carrots or zucchini into meatloaf and casseroles.
- You can even mix zucchini into brownies or muffins and add beets to chocolate cake.
- If you eat pizza, top it with lots of veggies.
- Include chopped, sautéed, or pureed vegetables in pasta sauce and lasagna
- Grill vegetable kabobs, using your child's favorites.
- Puree whole fruits and freeze into popsicle molds.



A Note about the Cost of Healthy Food

It's tragic that most of the food in our grocery stores has been processed to the extent that it is no longer healthy. Not only the packaged foods, but the meat and dairy, too. There are critical differences between the way foods are raised/grown, and it's important to know what the labels mean and what to look for so you can make informed choices for feeding your family.

You are likely to find in most stores that the healthiest foods are currently the most expensive. This is because these foods cost a lot more to produce. Usually, the cheapest foods are the unhealthiest. The reason for this is because of what needs to be done to the food to mass produce it and yield more profits.

Food is big business, and since most people are supporting large corporate factory farms by buying low-quality, nutrition-depleted food, this industry will keep on producing it. The public's demand for cheap, factory-farmed meat and dairy and conventionally-grown vegetables will keep it going. This is great for agribusiness and it also provides the medical industry with a steady stream of patients with chronic diseases. This type of farming wreaks havoc on our health and the health of our planet. If enough people simply stop buying factory-farmed foods, the producers will need to change their practices.

When you make a choice to provide organic food for your family, you are making a values statement. You are choosing health and providing your family with what they need to stay free from chronic disease; the best health insurance you can get. You are also helping to sustain our planet.

There are other ways to make healthy food less expensive. Here are some ideas:

- Buy directly from your local farmers. It's usually less expensive than stores, and you will know more about how the food is produced.
- Buy foods from farmers' markets, since this can also be less expensive.
- Grow your own fruits and vegetables. If you don't have the time and space to do a full garden, you can plant some things in pots or create small window gardens.
- If you have the time and space, you could raise your own chickens. More people are doing this now and there is a lot of info online about how to get started.
- Tap into your local community and find ways to share the expense by creating community gardens, buying clubs, etc.
- You can save money on food when you plan your meals ahead of time, and stick to the list of exactly what you need. You can also check for coupons or sales at your local market.
- Check the Environmental Working Group's [Shoppers' Guide to Pesticides in Produce](#) to learn which fruits and vegetables have the most pesticide residues and are the most important to buy organic.
- You don't have to eat meat with every meal. You may want to buy more budget-friendly plant-based proteins, such as beans, lentils or tempeh, as an alternative to meat for many of your meals and buy the more expensive grassfed meats or pastured chickens for other meals.

- Eggs are a high-quality protein packed with nutrition. Sometimes it's important to put the costs into perspective. The pastured eggs will cost .50 to .83 per egg, depending on where you get them, so you can get a lot of nutrition for less than \$1.00. The so-called nutrition or protein bars with all those processed ingredients cost a lot more than a pastured egg!
- You can buy foods in bulk at health food stores to store for future use. Organic whole wheat flours and gluten-free grains like quinoa, millet, amaranth, buckwheat, and rice, and many other healthy foods can be purchased in bulk.
- You can save and freeze leftovers for future meals to save time and money.
- If you are eating gluten-free, there are some online stores, like glutenfreesaver.com, where you can buy gluten-free food at special deals. However, keep in mind that a lot of these foods can be quite processed with questionable ingredients.
- There may be a tax deduction for purchases of gluten-free food for people with diagnosed celiac disease. Check with an accountant about this.

I hope you found this information helpful and you are able to incorporate some of these suggestions into your family's lifestyle. I know it can feel overwhelming at first and I am here to help. I am happy to support you in making the changes you desire for your unique family situation.

[About Jane Sheppard](#)

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