

Tips and Tricks for Integrating Healthy Eating with Kids

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With childhood obesity, autism and other childhood disorders on the rise, everyone from doctors to teachers and parents are seeking solutions for better health. At the most basic level, everyone can agree that kids benefit from healthier whole foods eating.

Truth is, with all the glitzy candy and processed foods competing for your kids' attention how do you get them to eat healthy natural meals?

Over the years, we've all heard various solutions, but I'd like to share several creative tips I've explored for making healthy food for kids.

Here are 7 powerful ways to get your kids to eat healthy:

1. **Make new twists on old favorites.** Think about the foods your kids love and make something that looks and tastes similar, but upgrade the ingredients. For example... when making your kids favorite baked treats try using coconut oil instead of industrially-refined vegetable oil, quinoa flour instead of wheat flour or pureed dates instead of white sugar.

With a little practice, you might find it easier than you think to make yummy, healthy foods for kids.

2. **Be creative.** Use some of those "tricks" being used by advertisers to make things sound exciting to kids and creating fun shapes. A couple of ingenious methods, that utilize fun kitchen gadgets, are to make pasta out of zucchini by using a spiraler (turning vegetable slicer) or a mandolin to make veggie chips and then bake them vs. deep frying.

Let's face it, kids tend to gravitate towards the fun wrappings and cool names on packaged foods, so if you are making sweet pea humus, you might call it "lucky dip" or "Popeye spread".

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Who knows, your kids just might find excitement in eating vegetables again.

3. **Take your time integrating the changes.** If your kids are used to eating candy and chips, it may take time to get their taste buds to adjust to the healthier foods... especially those foods with a sour taste... like fermented foods. Instead of rushing it, keep it simple and consider taking it slowly, building over time. Trust that every small step you take toward healthy whole foods eating will have big rewards over a lifetime.

Add some new foods into those “old favorites” a little at a time and see what happens. One clever idea is to add organic coconut milk to your kids milk one tablespoon at a time and continue to increase the amount until you are able to substitute entirely with a wholesome non-dairy source. This is an extremely nourishing alternative for kids who are lactose intolerant.

4. **Arm yourself with fresh recipes.** Gather up some healthy recipes and experiment until you find the ones your kids take a liking too. Make small amounts and have “taste tests” with your kids and invite their friends!
5. **Practice the art of camouflage.** Sometimes kids won’t eat a food because of how it looks or sounds, but they are actually fine with the taste. Fermented foods and greens are full of healthy benefits... but they may seem difficult to add to a child’s diet. The good news is that many parents have had success with the art of camouflage. But make sure once they have taken a liking to the new foods you fill them in on the details.

One idea for getting your kids to eat Probiotic-rich Cultured Vegetables, such as naturally fermented/unpasteurized sauerkraut, is to blend them into salad dressings or use in a burrito instead of salsa.

As for sneaking greens into your kids’ meals, try adding Spirulina powder to a fruit or vegetable smoothie as a fun food upgrade.

Probiotic Foods (rich in beneficial bacteria) and Greens Powders (nature’s multi-vitamin) are getting a lot of attention these days because they help boost immunity, aid digestion, build energy and balance blood sugar – all things that today’s kids need to stay slim and healthy!

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6. **Include your kids.** Encourage your kids to become involved in choosing and making healthy meals. Conscious parents can support kids in healthy habits and it can help build self-esteem for a lifetime.

7. **Keep it simple and have fun!** Changing habits and making meals can feel daunting when they are complicated and full of too many ingredients or steps. Focus on keeping it simple. Learn slowly, at your own pace. Focus on picking the easiest step, the easiest meal and maybe just one meal per day to begin. Above all, enjoy the journey.

When you take a playful, kid-like approach to helping your kids eat healthy, it can be as good for you as it is for them!

You can learn more about delicious, creative and inspiring recipes for transitioning kids to a healthy whole foods way of life through MaxFit's "Fun-damentals of Healthy Cooking for Kids" workshop featuring Registered Nutritionist Judy Chambers

Date: Thursday, October 15

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Location:

Eden West Fine Foods

2500 St. Johns St.

Port Moody

Cost: \$10 per person (*space is limited so registration is required)

To Register:

Call Maxfit Movement Institute: (604) 461-6888

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