

Nutritious and healthy food for kids

TODDLER

ARTICLE

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Healthy eating habits should be instilled from the very beginning as children are more likely to continue this habit. Sufficient and complete nutrition is vital to support their growth and immunity.

Feeding children the right types of food keeps them healthy and growing at a pace suitable for their age.

It starts when they're young. If your child develops healthy eating habits from the very beginning, they are more likely to continue having healthy food preferences when they are older too.

Feeding children the right types of food also keeps them healthy and growing at a pace suitable for their age.

A child's diet should give them the nutrition they need for their age group. In Singapore, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) has developed My Healthy Plate, which works as a guide to what we should put on our plates for each meal. It's easy to understand, and is a simple way to prepare balanced meals for your family.

Children need certain types of nutrients for their growing needs. So it's important to give them foods rich in these whenever possible. Here's a list of healthy food for kids.

The Building Blocks: Protein and Calcium

Your child needs protein to build tissues and muscles, as well as convert food to energy. Eggs are the easiest source of protein for kids – they're affordable, easy to prepare and can be served in various ways. They also have the added benefit of containing iron and vitamins D and B12.

Other good sources of protein are beans, soy products, poultry, fish, nuts and seeds.

Young children need calcium to build strong bones and teeth. They'll get a good dose of calcium from dairy products, fish with edible bones (like sardines), and dark green leafy vegetables.

The Broom of the System: Fibre

Fibre is an essential nutrient for a healthy digestive system and will help your child have more regular bowel movements. Wholegrain foods are packed with fibre, so choose this instead of the refined versions, like white bread, pasta or rice.

What other options are considered healthy food for kids? Give your child brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, whole-wheat bread and oatmeal. And use whole-wheat flour when you're making pancakes or baking treats like cookies.

The Nutrient Boost: Fruits & Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are recommended healthy food for kids, as your child will get a range of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Give them fresh, frozen or dried fruits instead of juice as they are healthier options. If they ask for juice, choose one that's 100 per cent juice, without any added sugars.

Canned fruits are good choices too, as long as they're not in syrup.

Berries are especially recommended as they're rich in vitamin C, fibre and antioxidants. Plus, they're lower in sugar than many other fruits. Let your child snack on fresh berries or serve them on snacks like yoghurt. If you're buying the frozen version, make sure they're unsweetened.

Greens may not be popular amongst children, but as long as they're eating any quantity of veggies, that's a good thing. Try to get them to eat a variety, from dark leafy greens like spinach and kale to brightly coloured veggies like carrots and capsicums, to cruciferous ones like broccoli and cauliflower.

Quench Their Thirst: Fluids

Our bodies need water to function properly. It regulates our temperature and is vital for our immune system too. Water is also in blood, which carries oxygen to all the cells in our body. We lose water through sweat and, with Singapore's tropical climate, sweating is, unfortunately, something we often do.

It's not just water though, any fluids your child drinks will benefit them – but this is

no excuse to load up on soft or sweetened drinks. Water and milk are the best choices. Plus, many juicy fruits and vegetables contain water too.

Supplement what's missing

If your child is fussy with food, they may not be able to ingest all the nutrients from the list of healthy food for kids. Formula milk can serve as a backup, in the form of Ascenda Milk Formula, which provides complete, balanced nutrition for a child's growth. This supplement contains 38 ingredients of the highest quality to support physical growth and immunity.

