

Nutrition: What Every Parent Needs to Know, 2nd Edition

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Family mealtimes can be relaxing and enjoyable, but they can also be virtual battlefields. Parents, concerned that their children grow up healthy and strong, want to provide the wholesome food to make this happen. Yet, many children don't want what their parents put in front of them. This can often lead to years of perplexing and stressful mealtimes.

Here's a guide to developing healthy eating habits and peace at the table. Beginning with newborns and extending up through the teen years, parents are given support and encouragement about food and eating, and in combating problems that can arise when family members express different desires in taste, texture, and portion size. Readers learn how to avoid being the "food police" while providing healthy food choices.

Written by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), *Nutrition* posits that as parents nurture their children, they often allow food to become an indicator of how well they are doing their job: "Food turns into a measure of how much our children love and obey us, rather than a source of energy and nutrients." This practice leads to food becoming an emotionally charged issue.

The consensus of the 60,000 children's health care providers in the AAP is this: "As parents and care providers, you are responsible for offering a healthful variety of foods. Your children are responsible for deciding what and how much they want to eat from what they are offered."

Chapter 8, Nutrition Basics, emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products. The next most important tier includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts. Parents should minimize foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars. The section suggests "portions, not platefuls" as a way to present healthy-sized meals. Questions such as "Is my child overweight?" and, "How do we counteract outside influences?" are addressed, as are eating disorders and food safety, diets, supplements, and allergies.

Numerous charts, lists, and sidebars are helpful additions. Appendices include What Caregivers need to Know: A Checklist, Standard Growth Charts, Choking/CPR, and Health and Nutritional Resources. Well written and interesting, this guide to healthy eating and creating peace at the table belongs on every parent's bookshelves.

PENNY HASTINGS (Winter 2012)

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