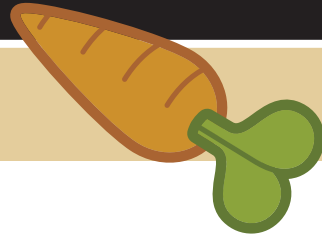
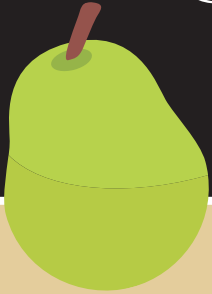


DR. SUSAN'S

8 Food Pillars for

Brave Parents RAISING HEALTHY, HAPPY KIDS



1 Never force or restrict food

Children can have quite a range in hunger. The need for calories varies every day, depending on their growth and development and activity level. The brain's ability to naturally regulate intake according to energy needs is a gift. When we override the brain's sensitivity to feeling satisfied by forcing food when we're not hungry or restricting food when we are. To avoid that, pay attention to real hunger. Our job is to provide healthy food options and your kiddo's job is to eat when they're hungry.

2 Don't use food as a reward or punishment

Most of us look for extrinsic ways to reward good behavior and penalize bad behavior. But using food for this purpose can create a positive association with junk foods, as we tend to offer the most tantalizing (and usually unhealthy) foods for reward. Get creative – try offering non-food rewards such as extra story time, a game of charades or a time playing catch. Keep foods as healthful nourishment, not a bargaining chip.

3 Enforce the "polite bite"

Ultimately, we aim for a child to enjoy a broad variety of whole foods that taste great. But it takes an average of 7 tastes of a new food for the brain to recognize it as palatable, let alone pleasing. By asking a child to continue to taste one bite of each food on his or her taste at every meal, means we will broaden his/her spectrum of food preferences over time. We call it the "polite bite" because in tasting we are also showing respect to whomever prepared the meal. This works best if everyone in the family plays by the same rules ... even the parents.

**Note that for supertasters or gaggers, this is can be even more challenging, but equally important, so they can taste the food and spit it out. If that is unacceptable at the table, they can even go to the sink to try their polite bite.*

4 One-finger rule

When children sit in the front seat of the grocery cart and participate in shopping, it's a great time to get them engaged in choosing healthy foods to nourishing their bodies and not cause them harm. Even before they can read, if we start by rejecting any processed food for which the width of the child's finger can't cover the ingredient list. When they start to count, reject any foods with more than five ingredients. When they start to spell, reject any foods that contain any ingredients that aren't real foods. Try googling together each food additive you don't recognize. Remind your kiddo that our bodies have to work very hard to get rid of unwanted toxins and, over time, they can make us sick.



5 Eliminate ALL sugary beverages from your house

Not only is tooth decay the most common disease among children, but obesity, diabetes and heart disease are all powered by excess sugar. So, the World Health Organization and American Heart Association warn that we need to cut our sugar consumption to 5% of our daily calorie allotment. That represents a 75% reduction across the U.S. The easiest way to do that is to cut the massive amount of sugar (and calories) we consume in juice, sports drinks, soda, and energy drinks. Instead of juice, encourage whole fruits, which are loaded with healthy fiber and phytonutrients that give health-power to our cells.



6 Keep sweetened breakfast foods in the grocery store

That includes most boxed cereals, sweetened instant oatmeal and pop tarts. These will leave your child hungrier, hooked and in line for metabolic disturbances such as insulin resistance. Unsweetened cereals such as Cheerios, Corn Flakes and Rice Krispies are delicious – especially with added fruit. Even if you allow your kiddos to add sugar by the spoonful, it would be virtually impossible for them to add the amount of sugar that is infused into sugared-up commercial cereals. Remember 4.5 grams makes a teaspoon. If you do the math, you'll see that most cereals belong in the candy aisle instead of the breakfast food aisle.

7 Eat WHOLE foods

That means as close to the way they grew on the land. Avoiding commercial processed foods is hard to do but there is a plethora of scientific evidence to support this idea. The more you can cultivate tastes and preferences around whole foods (and believe me, they will) the healthier your children will be... forever. To reduce your child's consumption of herbicides and pesticides, google the shopping guide called The Dirty Dozen and The Clean Fifteen.

8 More Plants than Animals, especially plants with color

The plant-based diet is considered the healthiest by most health experts. Fiber is considered our number one nutrient deficiency and you get it in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains. Fiber is important for digestion, elimination, and weight control. Plants also contain phytonutrients, the building blocks for cell health. Meanwhile, processed meat and farm raised animal protein should be the garnish on the plate, not the mainstay. Farm raised animals accumulate toxins from their diet and pass it to us through their fat.

Processed meat, such as prepared lunch meat is treated with food additives and preservatives that should be consumed very cautiously, in small quantities, and only on occasion. For the list of plants that are safe to eat without being "organically grown" google *The Clean Fifteen*. For the list of the should-be-organically-grown, search *The Dirty Dozen*.

