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5 MYTHS AND 5 FACTS ABOUT TODDLER NUTRITION

Seeing your toddler take his first bite of his first food is a milestone worth capturing and remembering. Nothing can be more exciting than seeing your child eating solid foods, in addition to drinking the best milk for brain development.

However, you will still have your work cut out for you as you navigate the world of toddler feeding. Since your child's digestive system is still developing, you can't just give him any food you have in your fridge or pantry. Your toddler will also need certain nutrients for proper growth and development. So you will have to be careful about choosing which foods to give him.

Feeding Your Toddler the Healthy and Safe Way

To be sure you are on the right track to nourishing your child safely and well, here are five myths and facts about toddler nutrition you need to be aware of and integrate into their diet and feeding practices:

Myth #1: Getting your toddler to eat a few bites of healthy foods is enough

Fact: Various studies show that **a child's delight or dislike of eating will affect how well the nutrients will be absorbed in his body.** If your child loves eating veggies and fruits, your toddler will be able to get more nutrients – vitamins and minerals he needs for healthy growth and development.

However, **you shouldn't force feed your toddler** to ensure he eats his veggies and fruits. You can encourage your child to eat more healthy foods **by making them more presentable and appealing**. Serve these foods in fun and creative ways so that your toddler won't be able to say no to these dishes.

Myth #2: Toddlers should eat three square meals per day

Fact: Since your toddler's digestive system is still developing and his tummy is roughly about the size of his fist, **his stomach is not designed to handle three big meals.**

The best way to go about feeding your toddler is to **give him small meals throughout the day.** Give him light, healthy snacks in between meals such as carrot sticks or some banana and apple slices. You can then give him something that is not too heavy for lunch or dinner or allow him not to finish everything on his plate.

Myth #3: You should give your toddler something from each food group every day

Fact: The taste preferences of kids, especially toddlers, will constantly change. Your toddler might love eating soup today but won't even taste it tomorrow. He may even want to eat nothing but pizza all week long.

You can get your child to eat something from each group by being creative in adding them to his favorite dishes. However, you don't have to do this every day. The important thing is to **ensure his diet balances out over the course of a month, not a day, so that he is still on the right track to healthy eating.**

Myth #4: Toddlers should drink a vitamin-mineral supplement daily

Fact: Not all toddlers need to be given a supplement. This is especially true if they have a healthy, well-balanced diet. **If your toddler eats healthy snacks and meals every day, it is safe to say that he is getting the nutrients he needs daily.**

The big problem with giving your toddler supplements is that you are inadvertently teaching him to rely on a pill or syrup to get the nutrients he needs. **It is important that even at an early age, your child learns to eat well-balanced and varied meals or dishes regularly**. By doing so, you ensure he will get the essential vitamins, minerals, and nutrients crucial for healthy growth and development. This is also a great way to start the foundation for healthy eating which your toddler can carry into adulthood.

Myth #5: Sugar causes hyperactivity in kids

Fact: Kids love eating foods high in sugar such as candies, donuts, cupcakes, brownies, or cakes. When they fill up on these foods at parties, they tend to feel more excited and act hyper.

However, contrary to popular thinking, simple sugars may not lead to hyperactivity. **Kids often become hyper and easily distracted after eating too many sweet treats because they digest these foods too quickly, which causes an immediate blood sugar drop.**

In addition, **the environment your child is in will also define how energetic he is.** Children's parties, for instance, are always lively and loud and as such, your child will be a bit more hyper than usual.

There is nothing wrong with giving your toddler sweet, sugary treats from time to time. Just make sure your child has a balanced diet and gets enough sleep and regular exercise in the form of outdoor playtime so that he remains active and full of energy.

You can also ensure your toddler gets all the nutrients he needs by supplementing his daily diet with breastmilk or Similac 3 – a complete, nutritious, milk product that your little one will love.

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