



Raising Healthy Children

Love, Food and Kids

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Are you aware of the kind of food your children need in order to be healthy? Are you aware of the impact food has on your children's health, wellbeing and ability to learn?

Fifty years ago, I became very interested in health and nutrition. I had been a sickly child and had hated being sick. As a low-energy young adult, I decided to do something about my health, so after reading some wonderful books on nutrition, I proceeded to completely change what I ate. I started to shop at the only little health food store in Los Angeles - Whole Foods was years away! I threw out all packaged products and ate only natural, fresh, organic food - when I could get them. I made a decision that if people didn't eat something 100 years ago, I wasn't going to eat it now. I was extremely pleased with the improvement in my health and energy.

When I had children, I wanted them to be healthy, so I made sure that I had only healthy food in the house. However, by the time my children went to school, they were not happy with the food choices in their lunch boxes. Why couldn't they have Twinkies and fluffy white bread like the other kids? Why couldn't they have Oreos instead of the healthy cookies that I made for them? They didn't like being "weird." When we went to the market and they wanted junk, I told them they needed to buy it with their own money - that I was never going to spend money on junk food. It didn't take them long to know that I meant it and to stop asking.

No one else in my family was into nutrition in the way I was. I was considered a "health nut" and often ridiculed. Yet my children were calm most of the time and had no trouble learning and staying focused on tasks. I noticed that when they went to birthday parties and had lots of sugar, they came home bouncing off the walls. Whatever criticism and complaints I received, I knew it was loving to them for me to keep only healthy food in our home.

It's time we started to really pay attention to what love is, regarding food. Is it loving to reward a child for good behavior with sweets? The child may feel loved at the moment, just as we feel good for the moment when we reward ourselves with junk food, but in the long run

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it is not loving to indulge ourselves or our children in eating foods that erode rather than promote health and wellbeing.

There has been much research into health and nutrition since I learned about it so many years ago. I try to keep up by reading the latest books, but it tends to get confusing regarding what is healthy and what isn't. I have learned to tune in to my body so that I know which foods are good for me and which are not. I know how much protein I need, how much carbohydrates I need and in what form, and how much fat I need. When my children were growing up, I encouraged them to pay attention to how they felt in reaction to the foods they ate. Only by encouraging our children to turn inside and trust their inner experience will we help them learn what is right for them and what is wrong for them. It is easy to get swayed by the latest diet or the latest information regarding health. Yet each of our bodies are different, so we each need to learn what balance of proteins, fats and carbs we need to support our health.

This means that we can't impose on our children what works for us. We need to notice, and encourage our children to notice, what works and what doesn't work for them. But certain things don't work for anyone - processed foods, preserved foods, foods with pesticides, and sugar. Loving ourselves and our children means eating whole natural foods, even if your family complains.

Do not underestimate the effects of good or poor nutrition on the health of your children's minds and bodies. Is your priority to have control over how your children feel about you, by indulging them in unhealthy foods, or is it more important to be loving to them, by providing them with the opportunity to have strong and healthy bodies and minds?

If you really want to be loving to your children, learn about good nutrition and be solid in your convictions.

Feeding Ourselves, Feeding our Children

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Is your wounded self or your loving Adult in charge of what foods you feed yourself and your children?

What part of you is in charge of what you put into your body and your children's bodies - your loving Adult or your wounded self?

Our society has created a huge junk food industry to satisfy the addictions of the wounded self. Processed stuff, preserved stuff, sugar or corn syrup-filled stuff. Most of the "food" on the shelves of our markets has nothing to do with real food. Just read the labels and see how much nutrient-filled food is in the container you may be thinking of buying. How many of the listed ingredients can you pronounce? Do you really want to put stuff into your body that you can't even pronounce?

We had a very interesting experience with our dogs. Our Golden Retriever, Merlin, was six months old and was diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. He couldn't keep any food in his body. He was rapidly losing weight. He was dying. We fed him the very best, most expensive kibble and canned food and nothing was working.

Luckily, the puppy-school trainer recommended we feed him raw food, which she told us we could purchase from sitstay.com - and which we can now get at our local pet shop. We bought "Nature's Variety," and within TWO MEALS he was completely healthy! He has not had kibble or canned food since and he has been an extraordinarily healthy dog for nine years! Since then we have read that a dog's natural diet is raw - duh! I couldn't believe that with all my reading about nutrition, I hadn't considered that kibble is not a dog's natural diet!

We had another interesting experience. My daughter Sheryl, son-in-law Daev, and grandson Everest came to Durango to visit us. Daev has always been highly allergic to dogs, suffering from severe breathing problems and itchy eyes whenever he is near a dog, or even when exposed to dog hair on people's clothing. They didn't stay at our house due to this, and planned to stay outside when at our house. I had a gut feeling that Daev might not be allergic to our dogs, due to their raw diet - and I was right! For the first time in his life, Daev could play with dogs!

So what is the point here? The point is that people and animals need to eat their natural diet to be healthy. You cannot expect to be healthy and have healthy children if you serve processed and devitalized food.

It is likely that your children will learn to eat as you do. If you allow your addicted wounded self to do the shopping, you may be drawn in by the attractiveness of packaged, processed, sugar-laden,

preservative-laden, pesticide-laden non-food. You will then be role-modeling unloving, addictive behavior for your children.

Your children deserve to have a loving Adult doing the shopping, cooking and serving of food. Your own inner child also deserves to have you, as a loving Adult, learning about what foods create health and wellbeing, and being devoted to excellent health. It is your responsibility as a loving Adult to learn as much as you can about how you and your family need to eat for optimal health. You cannot leave this important area of personal responsibility up to doctors or the media.

Step One of Inner Bonding is tuning in to your feelings - both physical and emotional. With practice, you can learn to tune in to how different foods make you feel - especially an hour or two after eating. Do the foods you eat give you energy, or rob you of energy? Do they make you feel vital and alive, or tired? Do they create inner peace, or do they make you irritable? And how do they affect your children's physical and emotional wellbeing?

So, decide now. Who are you going to put in charge of this area of your life - your wounded self or your loving Adult?

What Should My Child Be Eating for Optimal Health?

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Most parents want their children to be healthy, yet have no idea what kind of nutrition creates optimal health. This article can put you on the right track in understanding how to support your children's health.

Understanding healthy eating has become a huge challenge in our society. Our ancestors living thousands of years ago did not have this challenge. They ate what grew and what they could catch. Before the advent of agriculture, people ate what was naturally supplied.

While I have been studying nutrition for 50 years, I am not an expert, since I am not a scientist and have not done my own research. What I share with you comes from my personal experience with my children and grandchildren.

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Rather than laying out a specific way of eating, I am going to write about what I have learned about what NOT to eat.

Below is a partial list of things not to feed your children:

- Sugar
- Corn syrup
- Glucose syrup
- Wheat syrup
- Rice syrup
- Potato starch
- Modified food starch
- White foods - white bread, white rice, rice milk, white pastas, white wheat flour
- Processed grains
- French fries
- Sodas
- Trans-fats
- Vegetable oils other than coconut and olive oil
- Preservatives and food colorings - or anything that you can't pronounce!

You might not think you are feeding your children many of these, but if you look at the labels, you will find many of these non-foods in packaged and refined products. In fact, most refined foods will contain one or more of these items.

For your children to be healthy, they have to be eating foods that are nutrient-dense. Not only do none of the above items have substantial nutrient value, they rob the body of nutrients, creating the weight and health problems that are endemic to our society.

What are the nutrient-dense foods? The most nutrient-dense foods are organically grown vegetables. Next are fruits, followed by beans, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds - in moderation. If you are not vegetarian, you can obtain highly nutritious forms of animal protein in organically fed grass-finished beef and lamb (grain-finishing beef and lamb changes the composition of the fat and causes many health problems), free-range organic poultry, and organic free-range eggs. Mercury-free fish is very healthy, as the oil provides important omega-3s.

Regarding dairy products: pasteurization kills the enzymes in dairy foods and can cause problems such as asthma and allergies.

Pasteurization also causes milk and other dairy products to become difficult to digest - also contributing to illness. Unless you can get very clean, raw organic milk and cheese from grass-finished cows, it is better to avoid dairy. Due to the difficulties in absorption of pasteurized dairy, it is not a good source of calcium - despite what the dairy industry claims. My children were brought up on raw Alta-Dena dairy products (before they were put out of business by the factory farms) and did very well on them.

The right kinds of fats are also important. Coconut oil is the best to cook with and olive oil is the best in salad dressings.

How do you get your children to eat like this? The only way I know of, which is what I did when my three children were growing up, is to eat this way yourself. I chose not to have anything in the house that I didn't want them to eat, so everything they ate at home was healthy. I never insisted that they eat. I just put the healthy food out and they ate as much or as little as they wanted.

It is also important to determine your own and your children's metabolic type, which you can do by reading William Wolcott's "The Metabolic Typing Diet." This will help you to know if your child does better on animal protein or vegetable protein. While it is important to have healthy choices in the house, it is equally important not to insist that your child eat the way you do. You might be a rapid metabolizer, who needs a lot of meat, while your child might be a slow metabolizer, who needs more vegetable protein.

If you want to be healthy and have healthy children, the very best thing to do is read as much as you can about healthy eating, and then decide for yourself what you want to do for your family.

Overweight Kids

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Is your child overweight or struggling with weight issues and addictive eating? Discover an underlying cause of weight issues and what you, the parent, can do about it.

When I was growing up there was rarely an overweight child. Occasionally someone would be plump, but I can't remember anyone in my class being fat. However, TV wasn't around until I was eight years old, and the streets were a safe place to play. We had plenty of P.E. in school and we played hard after school. Even as we grew older and had more homework, physical activity was a major part of our lives. And there wasn't so much junk food around yet.

Today, the combination of processed junk food and the lack of physical activity is a deadly combination regarding weight. This is quite obvious to everyone. What is not so obvious is the underlying factor that causes children to use food addictively.

The underlying cause of all addictive behavior is the avoidance of pain. Unfortunately, many children have a lot of pain to avoid. While this has always been true, what is also true is that the junk food, TV and video games, and the variety of drugs on the streets, were not available when I was growing up. Children today can easily turn to processed food, drugs and TV to avoid their pain.

The problem is that they don't know any other way of managing their pain. This is because their parents don't know healthy ways of managing their pain. Chances are that the parents of overweight children are not practicing Inner Bonding and learning to role-model healthy ways of dealing with pain.

Let's take 10-year-old Brittany as an example. Brittany is overweight and addicted to sweets and refined carbohydrates. Brittany's father, Samson, is very overweight. He doesn't exercise at all and sits in front of the TV all evening, drinking beer. While Brittany's mother, Paula, does not use food addictively, and does get some exercise, she is addicted to yelling as her way of handling her pain. And her yelling is mostly directed at her only child, Brittany. In addition, Paula's life is totally focused around Brittany. Having no real life of her own, her eyes are always on her daughter. In Paula's eyes, Brittany is a reflection of her, and so she has to be perfect. Her imperfections trigger Paula's anger, which creates much stress for Brittany.

Brittany feels invaded and controlled by her mother, and resists Paula's control in a way that drives Paula crazy - she overeats. Thinness is important to Paula, and she desperately wants Brittany to look the way she "should" look. But there is nothing Paula can do to control Brittany's eating, and the more she tries, the worse it gets.

Brittany has learned to use food to avoid the pain of feeling inadequate, unloved and controlled. She has learned to use food to fill the emptiness she feels when her mother yells at her and expects her to be perfect. Food is the friend she can count on to soothe and comfort her. Paula has tried to restrict the amount of food available in the house, but Samson just goes out and buys more to fulfill his food addiction. And there is always food available at Brittany's friends' houses. There is just no way that Paula can control Brittany's eating.

What Paula can do is take her eyes off Brittany and put them squarely on herself. If Paula wants to help Brittany, she first needs to help herself. She needs to learn healthy ways of handling her own feelings of inadequacy and stress so that she doesn't take her pain out on Brittany.

Paula needs to become a healthy role model for Brittany regarding taking personal responsibility for her own feelings and behavior. Rather than trying to control Brittany, Paula needs to show Brittany, by her own actions, how to take care of her pain in healthy ways. A good place for Paula to start helping herself and her daughter is to begin practicing Inner Bonding. By learning and practicing the Six Steps of Inner Bonding, Paula can gradually become the loving parent that Brittany needs.