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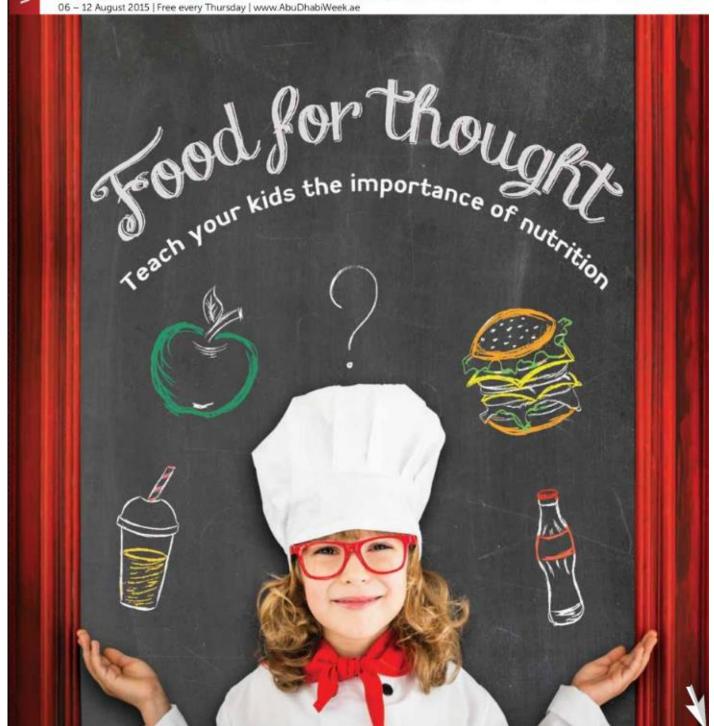


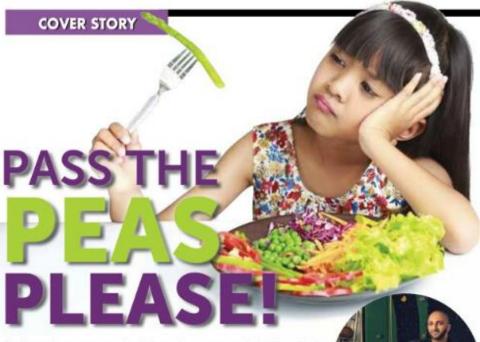




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Introduce vegetables to your child's diet

besity is a problem that affects children and adults alike - and bad habits start young.

In 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) ranked the UAE 22nd in its list of countries with a high obesity rate. According to the report, 66 percent of men and 60 percent of women living in

Fitness coach, nutritionist and Yas Marina Circuit Health X 2015

the country are overweight.

speaker Omar Al Duri says frankly, "Kids in the UAE are on the road to obesity."

Omar, who used to be a trainer, football coach and physical education teacher, is on a mission to promote the benefits of healthy eating through school talks.

"Childhood is a time when people learn habits about eating and physical activity. So intervening in those crucial years could help a great deal in getting kids to

understand the value of making wise choices."

He draws from his own experience: "I made the wrong choices when I was young and was extremely overweight."

Omar adds that his busy lifestyle

only made the situation worse as he resorted to fast food for convenience.

"Any type of food can be delivered to your doorstep in minutes," he says. "Having worked at a university here, I had the chance to talk to students and most of them said the same thing: 'We don't cook; its easy and cheap to get a takeaway'."

So what can parents do to encourage their children to eat right?

Children require variety because they get bored very quickly; and presentation can make a huge difference. Colour can be very appealing to kids - add bell peppers, oranges, leafy greens, sweet potatoes and grapefruit to their lunchboxes," suggests Omar.

Indeed creativity plays a big part in enticing little ones to eat healthier.

Bec Mclean, an Abu Dhabi-based mum who started the group Paleo Baby-led Weaning, advises, "You should always consider if there's a healthier alternative ingredient that can be used. Trying to omit refined sugars and oils, processed foods and preservatives is integral in ensuring a healthy lifestyle.

You can be creative by preparing bunless burgers with homemade tomato sauce, Bolognese with pasta made from zucchini or spaghetti squash or curry made with cauliflower rice."



STARTING YOUNG

Dr Anita Das Gupta, a clinical dietician at Burjeel Hospital, shares tips on how parents can get their kids to eat veggies.

- From the age of six months, feed them vegetables in mashed form so they get used to the taste.
- · Let them help with the shopping,
- washing and storing of vegetables.
- · Serve vegetables in different sizes, cut up together with their favourite dish.
- · Chop vegetables and keep them handy so your child can reach for them as a snack.
- · Parents should eat vegetables
- in front of their child and talk to them about the importance of vegetables in meals.
- Teach them different colours through the use of vegetables.
- Serve vegetables in attractive ways - make faces on their plate, for example.

BEC MCLEAN OF PALEO BABY-LED WEANING SHARES HER GUILT-FREE RECIPES



Ingredients:

- 3 eggs, beaten 1/4 cup almond milk (or coconut milk) 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- 1/3 cup almond flour
 2 tablespoons tapioca flour (or

- Mix the dry ingredients together in a
- Pour the wet mix into the dry and mix
- Heat some oil in a frying pan on medium/low heat.

Serve your pancakes with sliced banan.

DROP THE JUNK

For most kids, the sight of a towering double patty burger or a mob of fries dressed with thick cheese makes their mouths water. But while the taste can be pure heaven, the lingering effect can be damaging to our health.

Hala Abu Taha Hala Abu Taha, a nutritionist at The American Surgecenter, says, "The problem with junk food is that it's loaded with preservatives to lengthen its shelf life. Another thing is the high sodium level and high fat content - both are very harmful to the body."

There's a deeper explanation of why people, and children in particular, get excited by junk food. As medical studies suggest, the body adapts to the excessive sodium level and triggers secretion of enzymes that enhance cravings.

"These will affect your body - from hormonal changes to high cholesterol and manifestation of obesity-related diseases" warns Hala.

It will take time for children to totally understand the perils of that super-sized fast food meal but it's necessary for parents to educate their little ones on the subject.

"Awareness is very important," says Hala. "Parents should not stop reminding their kids about the food that they're eating without harshly depriving them. It takes creativity and patience, but it can be achieved if done early and consistently."

Parents should know how many breaks their children take at school. Let's say they have two but you only prepare one snack, the child will end up hungry and be tempted to buy something unhealthy," Hala says.

"If the school is providing food the parents must be able to guide their children with regards to their choices."

As for the lunchbox content, Hala recommends including a variety of healthy items to ensure that the child gets all the necessary nutrients.

"Vegetables cut into shapes. Fruit for energy. Dairy products including milk, laban and cheese. Lean protein sources such as turkey, egg white and peanut butter. Good sources of grains such as whole wheat bread or brown rice."

She adds, "I also advise parents to give their kids small healthy crackers, which they can eat on the way home. This is very applicable if the travel time from the school to house is far. It's a way to suppress their appetite so that they'll not binge and eat everything once they reach home." 14

WORDS Ferdinand Godinez

KIDSMENU

Homemade food can be prepared as a substitute for fast food meals. This way parents can ensure a nutritious alternative without skimping on taste – better yet, homemade variations can significantly reduce calorie intake.

JUNK FOOD



ize instead and swap the soda for water

HOMEMADE





ne look at Homer Simpson and you'll kn that donuts contain loads of saturated an trans fats, exacerbated by the addition o sugar, glazing, and custard.







CHICKEN WRAPS

Ingredients

- Handful of spinach

Directions:

- slightly bubbles Flip and cook for another two minutes

- Mix the avocado, formato and capsicum together with a squeeze of lemon juice and
- Fold the wrap over, cut in half and est!

Visit www.facebook.com/ paleobabyledweaning