



Positive Parenting

PP13746/06/2013 (032586)

Nutrition in the First 1000 Days

Discover the impact of proper nutrition in the first 1000-days of your child's life for his future health

Breastfeeding Concerns
- Famous Four

Healthy Weight Gain
During Pregnancy

JE: The Third World Disease

Getting to Know OCD

Energy Drinks for Caffeine Fix?



Volume 1 • 2014
Family Wellness

Volume 2 • 2014
Nutrition & Healthy Living

Volume 3 • 2014
Child Health

Volume 4 • 2014
Child Development



Positive Parenting

Malaysia's Pioneer Expert-Driven Educational Programme

Initiated in year 2000 by the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA), the Positive Parenting programme offers experts advice and guidance by key healthcare professionals from various Professional Bodies in the field of child health, development and nutrition, teen issues as well as family wellness.

We understand the challenges parents face in raising a child and that is why we bring together expert organisations through this programme via its many activities to support you throughout your journey.

It is our vision to bridge the gap between the healthcare professionals and parents to empower you with unbiased, accurate and practical information.

Together, we can give our children the best start in life to ensure a brighter future.

Key activities of PP

• Positive Parenting Guide:



Published quarterly, it is distributed through a network of healthcare professionals in private and government clinics and hospitals as well as selected kindergartens nationwide.

• Facebook:



Follow us on Facebook to gain access to the latest parenting tips and updates from the Experts.

• Talks and Seminars:

Have questions to Ask the Experts? Join us in our Positive Parenting seminars featuring some of the nation's top Parenting Experts!



• Website:



www.mypositiveparenting.org: One-stop digital portal with hundreds of articles, recipes and easy access to paediatricians.

• Educational press articles:



Look out for our dedicated 'Positive Parenting' columns every fortnight and monthly in Malaysia's leading English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese newspapers.

~ Our Collaborating Expert Partners ~



Positive Parenting is a non-profit community education initiative. Companies wishing to support us or wish to collaborate with the programme are welcome to contact the Programme Secretariat.

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It's Never Too Early to Start Being Healthy

Studies have indicated that a person's well-being during adulthood is very much influenced by his or her first 1000 days of life which begins from conception, followed by nine months during pregnancy and a couple of years after delivery. The Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) as the concept is referred to, explains that a poor start to life is associated with an increased risk of contracting numerous types of disorders, especially non-communicable diseases (NCDs), later in life such as type II diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

This factor has prompted us to feature an article on the matter which will depict various health guidelines for expecting mothers, weight gain tips for pregnant and lactating moms, diet plans for growing children and so much more. Hopefully, this will inspire you and other parents out there to become more conscious about the future of our children's health and what we can do now to minimize their risk of developing serious medical disorders when they get older.

We'll also be addressing topics such as breastfeeding concerns and outsourced parenting. You can also expect articles by our experts regarding diseases such as Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and the ever present threat of Pneumococcal disease. There will also be some helpful tips and information for parents on maintaining a good digestive health as well as getting to know obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in children. In addition, this latest issue will also take you through some misconceptions about breastfeeding infants with congenital heart disease (CHD) and enlighten you with a few useful know-how's on keeping your child choke hazard-free. Last but certainly not least, we have some very interesting family cooking tips to share with you on how to make your food not only healthier but also look and taste even better.

Therefore, we sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading through this issue and benefit from our expert-driven articles.

DATUK DR ZULKIFLI ISMAIL

Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee
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Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee and Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist



Positive Parenting

expert
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Malaysian Paediatric Association

“Parental awareness and education is vital in raising healthy children.”



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Malaysian Psychiatric Association

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Dr Yen Teck Hoe
Consultant Psychiatrist



National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia

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Dr Anjli Doshi-Gandhi
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P.H. Wong
President, PPBM



Malaysian Association of Kindergartens

“A quality preschool education prepares children for formal schooling and lifelong learning.”

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Nutrition in the First

1000 Days: Setting a Healthy Foundation



Dr Tee E Siong
President of Nutrition
Society of Malaysia



Your child's future health is influenced by nutrition in the early stages of his life.

Health authorities all over the world have highlighted the importance of good nutrition in the first 1000 days of your child's life. The first 1000-day period of your child's life begins right from the moment of conception (Day 0) and lasts through the entire pregnancy (Day 0-270) right up to his second birthday (Day 1000).

The importance of proper nutrition during this 1000-day period cannot be stressed enough. During this critical period of your child's life, there is a tremendous amount of growth and development that occurs in several key areas such as cognitive (brain) development and physical growth and development. By ensuring that you provide the right nutrition during this 1000-day period, you are also ensuring your child's future health, wellbeing and success.

In addition, a new field of medicine known as the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD), has uncovered new evidence that shows how environmental stressors (e.g. smoking, overweight) and poor nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood

causes greater susceptibility in children developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease in later adult life. Quite possibly, this vulnerability to NCDs can be passed on to their own children.

This article explains why the need for ensuring adequate nutrition during the first 1000 days and the consequences if nutritional needs are not met. It also explains the new field of the DOHaD theory.



The importance of nutrition during pregnancy (Day 0-270)

Proper nutrition is important since the moment your child is conceived (Day 0) and throughout pregnancy (which lasts for around 39-40 weeks, or around 270 days). Healthy eating is crucial as the energy and nutrient intake during this time is channelled toward nourishing the foetus to support his rapid growth and development. Remember that the only source of nourishment for the foetus is what you eat and drink.

An example of the rapid growth is the fact that most of the brain's connections are established in the first few years of life, beginning in the womb itself. The neural tube starts forming 16 days after conception, and at around the eighth week of pregnancy several nerve cells branch out to connect with each other to form basic neural pathways. This process continues until birth, when the brain grows to about a quarter of its adult size. As such, it is important that all pregnant mothers take extra care to ensure that their nutritional intake covers all the necessary nutrients. Hence, adequate nutrition starting from pregnancy (and right up to the second year of life) is therefore absolutely necessary for optimal brain development. This is the time when your child's foundation for future cognitive ability is established.

Also, by ensuring that the pregnant mother's nutritional requirements are met, she will gain the appropriate amount of weight during her pregnancy. In turn, this will ensure that the foetus will grow and develop properly. Malnutrition

(over- or under-nutrition) during pregnancy may result in either low- or high- birth weight babies. There are adverse effects for either situation, such as:

- Small babies with low birth weight often face complications, which affect their main organs. As a result, they are more vulnerable when exposed to infectious diseases. It has been shown that when they are adults, they may face greater risks of developing Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and coronary heart disease.
- Large babies with high birth weight may grow up to become an overweight/obese adult, which also exposes them to higher risks of developing Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and coronary heart disease as an adult.

Therefore, it is crucial that the nutritional needs of both the mother and foetus are met. Read on the next section (page 10) on the essential nutrients during pregnancy and for further information on appropriate weight gain for pregnant mothers, refer to the article entitled "Healthy Weight Gain during Pregnancy" at page 28.



The importance of nutrition during the growing stages of infancy and early childhood (Day 271 – 1000)

Nutrition will continue to play a crucial role from the time your baby is born and into the first few years of his life, as it marks the most significant period for physical and mental development (which is known as the “formative years”), spanning the first six months after birth until his second birthday.

This is a critical period as he will never again experience such rapid growth and development at any other time in his life – this is also the time when his foundation for future cognitive ability, school success, and productivity is set.

During this rapid growth period, infants under two years of age are also susceptible to malnutrition if mothers do not provide the right nutrition. Malnutrition encompasses both under- and over-nutrition. If your child is not given the proper amount of both macro- and micronutrients during this critical growing stage, he may face some irreversible negative effects, which includes:

Did you know?

A readily observable effect of under-nutrition is stunting, or being too short for his age. This condition occurs due to a lack of nutrients, which triggers the growing child’s body to sacrifice growth (and consequently development) for survival. Under-nutrition can occur during foetal development when the mother is malnourished or during early childhood. Stunting often has permanent effects which can lead to premature death due to vital organs that do not develop fully.

- **Under-nutrition:** is associated with more than one third of the global disease burden for children under five. Providing infants and young children with proper nutrition improves their chances of survival and promotes healthy growth and development, thus lowering morbidity and mortality rates, risk of chronic disease, and promotes better overall development.

Young children who are under-nourished will also face impediments to their behavioural and cognitive development, which can lead to future deficiencies in learning.

- **Over-nutrition:** this can cause children to become overweight or obese, thus increasing their risk of growing up to become overweight or obese adults as well. Consequently, this will increase their risk of developing other NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

It is therefore important to help your child meet his energy and nutrient needs through appropriate feeding practices to give him the best head start. Babies should be exclusively breastfed from birth up to six months of age, and a lactating mother needs to ensure her diet contains the necessary nutrients to ensure a healthy production of quality breast milk. Nutrition continues to play a critical role as you move into the complementary feeding phase when your child is around six-months-old up to two years old. Read on next section on page 12 on how to provide the best head start for your child from birth to 2 years old.



DOHaD in a nutshell

It is now understood that most, if not all NCDs have their roots early in the life of a child. A poor start in life is linked to an increased risk to a number of NCDs, including heart disease, obesity, diabetes and certain cancers. According to the DOHaD theory, certain environmental factors that affect changes in development during early life (at conception, and/or during foetal life, infancy and early childhood) can have long term impact on health and disease risk later in life.

These environmental factors include poor dietary pattern, sedentary lifestyle, smoking and even stress. A great deal of attention has been given to the detrimental effects that under-nutrition will have from the time of conception till birth. It has also been demonstrated that the effects can span generations and remain measurable up to two generations later.

This theory therefore also emphasises the utmost importance of proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle in the early life of a child, from conception till early childhood, in order to reduce risk to various NCDs.



Securing his future

The 1000-day period represents a golden opportunity for you to ensure that your child's future health, growth, and development are maximised. Proper and adequate nutrition is something that cannot be ignored for both mother and child, both during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Nutrition continues to play a critical role as you move into the complementary feeding phase when your child is around six-months-old, and when he transitions to a fully solid-food diet in his toddler years.

As parents, the power to influence his future health and development is in your hands. Help shape your child's future into a healthier and more prosperous one with proper nutrition. For more details on getting the right nutrition during pregnancy and the first six months of your baby's life, turn to the next page. More details on how you can ensure that your child receives the right nutrition up to the 1000-day mark are included in the next section as well. **PP**



Getting the Right Nutrition from the Start

Find out the nutritional needs of both mother and infant or baby for a healthier outcome.

The 40-week pregnancy period represents the first 270 days out of the 1000-day period. At this point, the nutritional needs of pregnant women play an important role in determining the baby's health. In fact, good nutrition should be practised even while trying to conceive a baby as the health and nutrition of both the mother- and father-to-be have to be in good shape. More research has shown that when a healthy woman with normal body weight becomes pregnant, there is a better birth outcome compared to overweight/obese women, as there is an increased risk of diabetes occurring in both mother and child in later years.

Thus, it is best that you and/or your partner prepare your body with the proper nutrition while at the same time ensuring that both lead a healthy lifestyle. Increased energy, protein, vitamins and minerals are required to support the nutritional demands of pregnancy. This will ensure that

adequate and proper nutrition are provided so that the baby develops normally. Begin by following the Malaysian Food Pyramid and select foods that will cover your nutritional needs and those of your growing baby.

Starts in your womb...

From the moment the foetus begins to develop, its nutritional needs are supplied via the mother's womb. This allows the foetus to grow and develop into a healthy baby. Every effort should be taken to ensure that the foods are nutrient dense. Below are some key nutrients that pregnant women need:



Nutrient	What it is for	Sources
Energy	The extra energy is needed by pregnant women (in the 2 nd & 3 rd trimester) and lactating mothers. This is needed in order to sustain either a proper weight gain through the course of their pregnancy and/or increases in their basal metabolic rate which cannot be compensated for by reductions in their daily energy expenditure.	It can come from foods such as rice or bread (preferably whole grain rather than refined as they have higher fibre content), and also from any other food sources. These foods will provide you with calories; 'empty' calories should be avoided as they only contribute toward the daily energy needs but not the nutritional needs of the pregnant/lactating mother.
Protein	It is an essential component for the growth and synthesis of muscle and body tissues, thus it is crucial for the healthy growth and development of your baby.	Legumes (e.g. dhal, lentils, beans, soy products like <i>tempeh</i> or <i>taufu</i>), fully cooked fish or seafood, meat, chicken, eggs, and milk.
Folate	It is a type of B-vitamin that is essential for proper cellular function. You should be taking folic acid supplements (as prescribed by your doctor) when you are planning to get pregnant and during the first three months of pregnancy to prevent deficiency that can increase the risk of neural tube defects (spinal cord defects) in your baby.	Green leafy vegetables, lady's finger, asparagus, lentils, legumes, and fortified grain products. Fruits such as orange (or freshly-squeezed orange juice), banana, and papaya also contain folate.

Nutrient	What it is for	Sources
Iron	Your blood contains red blood cells which provide your body with oxygen. Around two-thirds of your body's iron goes toward maintaining sufficient numbers of red blood cells. In addition to that, it also plays a role in keeping cells healthy, and retains skin, hair, and nails in good condition.	Lean meat, chicken eggs, liver, chickpeas, dried soya bean curd, bitter gourd, spinach, <i>kangkung</i> .
Calcium	Both you and your baby need calcium to build new bones, and to keep existing bones healthy and strong. It also assists your body to maintain a proper heart rhythm and muscle function.	Milk and dairy products, bean and bean products (e.g. yellow dhal, <i>tofu</i> , <i>tempeh</i> , etc.), vegetables (e.g. spinach, watercress, <i>kai lan</i> , etc.), and calcium-fortified products (e.g fortified milk, yoghurt, cheese, etc.)
Iodine	It is required to keep your thyroid functioning normally. The thyroid controls your body's metabolism. It also secretes hormones that influence the development of the bones and the brain during pregnancy and infancy.	Seafood (e.g. cockles, mussels, marine fish), seaweed, eggs, meat, milk and milk products, and cereal grains. Caution! Avoid eating seafood raw as there is a risk of contamination caused by sea-borne organisms that can cause illness. Avoid fish that may contain high levels of mercury such as swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, and sharks.
Zinc	It is a mineral that is essential to keep the immune system working properly. Your body also requires it in order to grow and develop properly. The healing of wounds and the proper use of your senses of taste and smell are also tied to having sufficient zinc in your diet.	Meat, fish, shellfish, nuts, legumes, and whole grain cereals.
Vitamin A	This nutrient is critical to keep your vision functioning normally, and also aids your immune and reproductive system to work properly. Other organs that require it to function properly include the heart, lungs, and kidneys.	Milk, eggs, yellow and red-coloured fruits (e.g. apricot, mango) and vegetables (e.g. spinach, broccoli)
Vitamin B1	It is a critical component used in many bodily functions, ranging from nervous system and muscle function to digestion and carbohydrate metabolism. Severe thiamine deficiency has been known to lead to serious complications of the nervous system, brain, muscles, heart, and stomach and intestines.	Lean pork, legumes, and fortified products (e.g. bread, cereal products, biscuits, etc.)
Vitamin B2	It is necessary to aid with our skin's development and function (which includes the digestive tract's lining) and blood cells.	Legumes (chickpeas, soya bean, etc.), meat, eggs, milk and beef extract
Vitamin B3	Plays an important role in metabolism, helping the body release energy from dietary carbohydrate. Your body needs this vitamin if it is to use protein and fats effectively, and it is essential for a healthy circulation and digestive system.	Beef, pork, fish, anchovies, peanuts and other nuts, whole grains and wholemeal wheat flour.

Always consult with your doctor first before taking any supplements.

Ensuring a Healthy Diet

Although most doctors will recommend prenatal vitamins and mineral supplements, they should never be used as a substitute to a healthy diet. Beware of taking extra doses of supplements as it can be harmful to you and your baby.

Below are some handy healthy eating tips you can follow to ensure you receive proper nutrition:

- Choose foods based on the Malaysian Food Pyramid. Ensure that you balance your meals by incorporating foods from the 5 major food groups.
- Having a variety of foods from within each food group is important in order to ensure that you receive all the different nutrients that your body needs.
- Take moderate serving sizes and exercise regularly to maintain a steady weight gain.
- Include more fruits (at least 2 servings per day) and vegetables (at least 3 servings per day) in your diet as they are rich in vitamins, minerals, fibre and other phytochemicals.
- To get enough calcium, make sure you increase your consumption of milk (at least 2 glasses a day), dairy products and other calcium-rich foods.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of fluids a day, especially plain water.
- Eat according to scheduled mealtimes. If you feel hungry between meals, take healthy snacks.
- Only take supplements that have been prescribed by your doctor. **PP**

Providing Infants and Toddlers with the **Best Start**

Key points to keep in mind as your infant grows from a baby into toddlerhood.

The period after your child is born right up to his second birthday represents the rest of the 1000-day period and starts from day number 271 onward. This formative period is especially critical as it is the only time when he experiences rapid growth and development. Helping your child to meet his nutritional needs is crucial to ensure that his growth and development is optimised as well as to help to reduce his risk of contracting common childhood diseases and diet-related diseases later in life.



Professor Dr Poh Bee Koon
Nutritionist & Lecturer,
University Kebangsaan
Malaysia

Breast milk is the Best Nutrition (0-6 months)

Nothing beats breast milk for new born babies, which is why both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Malaysian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents recommend exclusive breastfeeding from birth for six months and to continue doing so for up to two years old.

When it comes to nutrition, a breastfeeding woman needs to eat slightly more food and maintain a healthy diet just as a pregnant woman needs to. Baby relies on the mother to provide the necessary nutrients to help him grow, thus it is important to continue eating a nutritious and balanced diet – just as pregnant women need to. The nutrients gained from the mother's diet are essential to ensure that her baby receives enough (as well as good quality) breast milk and that the mother's health is not jeopardised.

Lactating mothers have similar nutritional needs as a pregnant woman does, thus good nutrition should always continue to be practised especially during the first six months where the baby solely rely on mother's milk.

Milk production can be affected by what you eat, so lactating mothers need to eat healthily to ensure meeting the baby's needs. Avoid drinking beverages containing caffeine or alcohol before you breastfeed as these substances can make it into the breast milk that your baby drinks.

It is important to note that during this stage in his life (first six months), your baby does not need any additional food, fluid, or water. Breast milk is nutritionally complete and it contains all the essential nutrients and antibodies that your baby needs. It is also rich in essential fatty acids such as ALA and LA which are in turn required to produce DHA and ARA (essential components for his physical and mental development).



Starting on Complementary Foods (6 months and above)



What is BMV?

A **balanced** diet should encompass foods from all five food groups in the Malaysian Food Pyramid, be comprised of **moderate** portions that are served in accordance with the recommended number of servings per food group, and consists of a wide **variety** of foods to meet all your nutritional needs.

By the time that he is six months old, you will need to increase his intake of some nutrients. At around the 450th day onwards, which is very close to the halfway point of the 1000-day period, breast milk on its own will not suffice for his growing and nutritional needs. This is where complementary feeding must come into the picture.

Complementary feeding must be given both on time (i.e. at six months, not earlier or later) and adequately (given in appropriate amounts, frequency and consistency) to prevent malnutrition. Complementary foods should cater for one-third of baby's daily energy needs when he is six to eight months, half when he is nine to twelve months and over 60% once he is older. Breastfeeding must be continued to be given to the baby even when the child has already started taking complementary foods.

When you start complementary feeding, make sure that the types of food, texture and consistency you feed your baby are appropriate to his stage of development. You will need to feed him with enough food to meet his energy needs, and to change the food texture and preparation methods as he grows older. This includes the texture and consistency of the foods to make it easy for him to eat without choking. As soon as he gets used to the foods that you provide him, you can vary what he eats. The frequency of feeding should also be increased gradually as he grows older. You should always follow the basic rule of Balance, Moderation, and Variety (BMV) in order to ensure that your child's nutritional needs are met.

Keeping an eye on your child's growth

A simple yet effective method to gauge whether your child is getting enough nutrition and growing properly is to measure his height and weight regularly. Frequent monitoring is crucial especially for infants from birth to 12 months in particular, as this is the time when they will experience the most growth. Their weight will generally double within the first four to five months, and increases by almost four-fold by the age of two years.

WHO recommends using body mass index (BMI)-for-age as a useful tool to gauge whether your child is under- or over-weight according to the WHO growth standards, which will allow you to find out if he is growing within the normal range. Consult your baby's doctor or paediatrician to ensure he is growing right and monitor his growth. **PP**



No Second Chances



Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
Chairman, Positive Parenting Management Committee
President, Asia Pacific Paediatric Association (APPA)

As parents, you will be faced with many challenges in bringing up a healthy child who will have all the opportunities you have never had yourself. However, most parents seem to place great emphasis on academic opportunities or performance with many neglecting an equally critical aspect – that nutrition as it will affect their child’s current/future health and even his mental/physical development.

A significant point to keep in mind is the importance of inculcating healthy lifestyle habits into your child’s routine when he is still young. By exposing him to a healthy habit/lifestyle, it also makes it more likely that he will follow these practices when he grows up, thus minimising the chances for him to develop NCDs in later life.

The 1000-day window of opportunity is unique and if you miss it, there is no catching up or making up for lost time. By providing him proper nutrition from the very start, you are giving him the opportunity to maximise his potential, and also to lower his risk of NCDs in his later years.

With the rising costs of healthcare and the increasing numbers of Malaysians who have NCDs such as diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure, it just makes sense to do what you can to give your child a head-start in life.

So make it a priority! **PP**





Positive Parenting

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- **Purpose:** Strictly educational and must not be linked to any commercial or product marketing purpose, whether directly or indirectly. Members of the public may only be charged a very nominal entrance fee, if at all.
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Your Role

- Invite us in **writing**, stating: your topic/area of interest, date options (best Saturday afternoons or Sundays), suggested duration, venue address, minimum **guaranteed** audience size & preferred language(s).
- Provide suitable venue, adequate audio-visual equipment, and refreshments for your audience (if desired).
- Promote the event to maximize turn-out.
- The seminar (like all other Positive Parenting activities) are made possible by educational grants from our corporate sponsors. It would be appreciated if you could allocate them booth space (10 ft x 10 ft) at the event, if space permits.

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Nutrition & Healthy Living

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Not Such a Sweet Treat

By **Professor Dr Norimah A Karim**, Nutritionist & Honorary Secretary, Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Ever wondered why your kids prefer sweet treats and fast foods? That mystery has now been put to rest. Scientists tell us that it's all in the genes! Children are biologically programmed from birth to detect sweet and salty tastes over other flavours. In fact, they are sensitive to bitter tastes. Nature has predisposed children to the sweet flavour to ensure that they get enough calories for their bodies to grow and mature. This strong preference for sugar will only decline after their growth peaks in the post puberty years.

Another reason for craving sugar is because it induces the release of the "feel good" brain hormone dopamine, giving your child pleasurable feelings. Unchecked sugar consumption in the early years can lead to sugar addiction in later years.

What is sugar?

Sugar in foods can be naturally occurring or it can be added on. Naturally occurring sugar are found naturally in foods such as fruits (fructose) and milk (lactose). Fructose and lactose are purely carbohydrate but the food sources in which they are found have a lot of other important nutrients like protein, vitamin D, calcium and fibre. Hence, consuming foods that contain natural sugar such as milk, fruits and vegetables is not harmful when eaten in moderation. Neither is the glucose that is metabolised when consuming starchy foods and carbohydrates such as rice, noodles, cereals, bread and tubers.

The white powdery substance that we commonly use at home as table sugar is refined sugar that is extracted from sugar cane and sugar beet. Added sugar is also found in partly refined products such as corn syrup, molasses, honey, brown sugar, caramel, and *gula Melaka*. In addition, other forms of sugar are also added to soft drinks, fruit drinks, cordials, beverages and processed foods. These added sugars will appear on the packaged food labels as sucrose, fructose, galactose, lactose, maltose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, molasses, cane juice, evaporated fruit juice, barley malt, honey, maple syrup and so on. Added sugar is used as a flavour enhancer, sweetener, or preservative. It can also alter the texture and colour of food.



How much is too much?

It is the added sugars that are the main cause of concern in your child's diet. Nutritionally speaking, your child does not need any added sugar and can get enough natural sugars from foods that contain carbohydrate such as rice, breads, cereals, tubers, milk, legumes and fruits.

The World Health Organisation (2003) recommends that sugar consumption should not exceed 10% of total daily energy. Hence, maximum daily intake of added sugars in your child's diet is not more than 5 teaspoons a day for 1-3 year olds and not more than 7 teaspoons a day for 4-6 year olds.

As a general guide, calories from sugar should not be more than 160 calories which is approximately 8 teaspoons of sugar per day. Take note that it is better to be lower than the maximum recommended intake per day. This maximum recommendation is easily exceeded if care is not taken to limit foods and drinks with added sugars.

Table 1: Example of sugar content in some beverages and snacks

Food	Sugar content (teaspoon; 1 teaspoon level = 5g)
Rose Syrup*	 3 ½ teaspoons
1 Can of Soft Drink**	 6 ⅔ teaspoons
1 Cup of Chocolate Malted Milk**	 4 ⅘ teaspoons
Chocolate Ice-cream (100gm)**	 5 teaspoons
Ice-cream Sundae with Topping of Whipped Cream**	 6 ⅔ teaspoons
1 Cupcake**	 5 teaspoons
1 Piece of Chocolate Cake with Frosting (64gm, 1/8 of 18oz cake)**	 5 ⅑ teaspoons
1 Piece of <i>Kuih Seri Muka</i> *	 2 ¼ teaspoons
1 Piece of Plain Doughnut*	 1 ¼ teaspoons

Source: *National Coordinating Committee on Food and Nutrition (NCCFN), 1999; **USDA Nutrient Database SR18

Too much sugar isn't so sweet for your health

Excess sugar intake has been associated with diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and dental cavities.

Obesity – when your child consumes too much sugar, there is excess energy (calorie) intake. When your child does not burn up these excess calories with physical activity, the extra calories that are not used up is converted to fat and stored in the body and causes overweight and obesity. Research has shown that the percentage of overweight and obese children in Malaysia has gone up alarmingly as the prevalence of overweight children below five years in Malaysia is 6.4%. Obesity is also a risk factor for developing non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, cardio-vascular diseases, and even cancer.

Diabetes – though sugar by itself does not cause diabetes, it can lead to excess glucose in the bloodstream. The body produces insulin to remove the excess glucose but if not enough insulin is produced to control the levels of glucose, this can lead to Type II Diabetes.

Dental cavities – bacteria in the mouth uses sugar to produce a substance called glucan. Glucan helps bacteria stick to your child's teeth and produce acids that will erode the protective enamel of his teeth.

Cut sugar intake by half

Sugar rich foods are full of empty calories and often displace nutritious foods that children need. Experts say that eating high sugar foods in their early years makes children crave sugar more in later years. So, start training your child early to reduce their craving for sweet things.

Here are some tips:

- Keep the sweets, honey, sweet sweetened beverages out of sight while keeping in view healthy snacks such as fruits and nuts.
- Limit your child's intake of sugary and cordial drinks to the occasional parties and outings and stick to 100% fruit juices, milk and water at home.
- Instead of store-bought processed treats, make healthy homemade sweets. Try to cut down the sugar called for in your recipe by one-third to one-half. Often you won't notice the difference.
- Instead of adding sugar in recipes, use extracts like almond, orange, vanilla or lemon.
- Allow your child sweet treats once a week and stick strictly to this timetable. Your child will begin to accept this as a routine practice in your home and soon, it will become a habit.
- Don't use sweets to reward your kids.
- Make food shopping in the supermarket a learning experience by teaching your children to read the food labels to pick out unhealthy ingredients. If sugar is listed at the top of the ingredients list - that is an indication it contains mostly sugar as one of the main ingredients.
- Your child is watching what you eat. Be a role model to your child by choosing healthy alternatives to sugary treats and limiting your intake of sugar. **PP**

An educational collaboration with



Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Breastfeeding Concerns

– The Famous Four

By **Dr Gan Yoke Cheng**, Consultant Paediatrician & Breastfeeding Advisor

Breastfeeding is an acquired skill - it takes time, patience, practice and perseverance to perform correctly without being overly discomforting.

Experts have agreed that breast milk is both highly nutritious and acts as a natural antibiotic that helps the baby fight off numerous types of infections. Breastfeeding should also be rewarding and relaxing for both the mother and the baby, however, some complications can arise during breastfeeding that may discourage mothers to continue feeding their child. These are some of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) by new mothers:



Are my nipples supposed to feel sore and dry during or after breastfeeding?

No, most experts agree that any sensation of soreness or cracking of the nipples are caused by the baby's poor-positioning during feeding and the use of hygiene (soaps, creams, etc.), products on the breast before, during or after breastfeeding.

Latching and positioning is the key, ensure proper latching and use your finger to break suction. Optionally, you can apply lanolin after feeding as it provides protection and care for your skin whilst preventing over-drying of your nipples. You could also apply your own breast milk around the nipples after feeding your baby. During feeding, you can also alternate between nipples and let them air-dry between each feeding session. Experiencing soreness of the nipples for the first few days is normal, it gets easier as your body adjusts.

I understand that my body is producing milk during this time and this causes my breast to enlarge. But why does it feel hard, painful and swollen?

Having your breasts full of nutritious milk for your baby is both natural and healthy. However, if not emptied regularly the blood vessels situated in the breast become congested, which in turn traps fluids within the breast tissue causing engorgement. Nipples may flatten if engorgement is allowed to persist causing poor-latching and further discomfort.

Engorgement usually happens on the 3rd – 5th day after birth. Feed your baby regularly and avoid missing feeding times. You can also express your milk manually or via pump, massage while running warm water over your breast can also work to soothe when in pain. Coincidentally, you can also prevent blocked ducts using the same technique.

One of my breasts feels sore, achy, hot and tender-like, often following up is a fever, can I continue to breastfeed or should I wait for the fever to go away before breastfeeding again?

The symptoms described are similar to when a mother's breast is bacterially-infected. Scientifically referred to as Mastitis or breast infection, the breast may feel swollen, a hot sensation builds up on one breast and pain accumulates. Symptoms seem similar to the ones suffered during engorgement or plugged ducts and is often perpetrated by high-stress and/or fatigue.

Preventing mastitis can be done by continuous breastfeeding or expression of milk on a timely basis. If you are infected, don't stop breastfeeding the baby, your milk shouldn't be infected and thus won't affect your child. Don't wait for the fever to go away, you should visit your local pediatrician/ lactation consultant for further treatment.



Can I breastfeed my baby if I have a fungal infection?

Yes, however, you should visit your doctor for immediate treatment for both you and your baby. Fungal infection of the nipple or "Thrush", is a common occurrence triggered by a build-up of Candida bacteria around your nipples. If you're already infected, make sure you clean all your stuff that has either come into contact with you or your baby thoroughly, soaking in hot water usually suffices. Another tip is to change nursing pads regularly and keep your nipples air-dry.

Mothers often have had to deal with these and other intimate and personal concerns alone and this adds to the pressure. Husbands, partners and other immediate family members should play a role in providing much needed emotional, psychological and physical support.

Learning the proper techniques in breastfeeding may also help you better hone your maternal skill sets. Support groups, pediatricians, lactations, maternal consultants and even family and friends can help you through your breastfeeding debacles. **PP**



An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

6 Ways to Make Malaysian Dishes Healthier

Important!
Fruits and vegetables are not interchangeable, which means you cannot get away with feeding your child with just one or the other. Ensure variety in every meal.

Want to stay healthy? Don't completely give up on your favourite local dishes just yet. Consider these six simple ways to make our local fares healthier.

By **Professor Dr Norimah A Karim**,
Nutritionist & Honorary Secretary, Nutrition Society of Malaysia

'Healthy' isn't a word one often associate when describing our local cuisines that we just love so much. We certainly don't skimp on the coconut milk or the sugar when cooking, do we? It's these not so healthy ingredients that make our dishes richer and certainly more flavourful.

But that's not to say that there isn't any healthy Malaysian food. As parents, it is your responsibility to ensure your family eats healthy. We need to make smart choices and a few small changes here and there. Consider these easy ways to enjoy our local delights with your family while still keeping health in check.

Healthy tips!
When cooking with coconut milk, use less coconut milk and replace half of its amount with low-fat milk or reduce its thickness by adding more water.



- 1 Cook from scratch.** Avoid using ready-made sauces and seasoning as they contain too much fat, sugar and sodium. Take the time to make your own blend of spices. It'll make your cooking tastier as all of the ingredients are fresh.
- 2 Steam it!** Who doesn't love a good deep-fried *siakap tiga rasa*? For a healthier choice, but still taste just as good, steam the fish (skip the deep frying), and then pour your homemade sweet-sour sauce on the steaming hot fish. Garnish with coriander and serve.
- 3 Substitute.** Enjoy a guilt-free, all-time favorite *nasi lemak* by omitting the coconut milk. Instead, cook the rice with lots of ginger and pandan leaves for that tantalizing fragrance. Once cooked, add a teaspoon of coconut oil for the coconut-ty aroma we all know and love. Alternatively, use brown rice instead of white.
- 4 Go heavy on the veggies.** Colour your plate with different types of vegetables and fruits. To entice your child's appetite, decorate your dish with vegetables of various colors, shapes, texture and sizes. Not only will it add more nutrients to your meal, it'll help to make your dish look more interesting, attractive, appetizing, and delicious to eat too!

- 5 Use natural flavourings.** Flavour your food with bold herbs and spices to enhance the flavour of your dish, rather than relying on salt for taste. Pandan leaves and lemon grass are fragrant, refreshing options too.
- 6 Make appropriate choices.** Choose wisely when dining out. Love curry noodles? Have it with *bihun* instead of yellow noodles or *kuey teow* with loads of green vegetables and bean sprouts. Buy your child clear soupy noodles instead, and limit fast food to an occasional treat.

Another tip that can come in handy is to be mindful of the food portion. Everyone can still enjoy our tasty local dishes but balance, moderation and variation are important. Make sure to serve more veggies and whole grains and less of meat group (protein) and cereal group (carbohydrates). More importantly, savour it! When you enjoy what you eat, you'll feel more satisfied. You don't have to completely deny yourself and your family favourite local delights just to lead a healthier lifestyle. **PP**

An educational collaboration with



Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Making Mealtimes

FUN

Humans are drawn to visually attractive things. How can you prepare a meal that is nutritionally balanced and looks aesthetically appealing and appetizing in a simple and fast way?

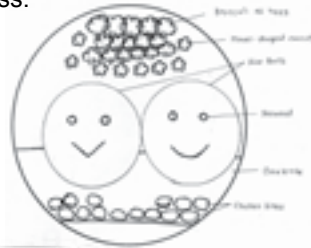
Researchers at Cornell University found that kids choose their food based on how their food is being presented on their plate. What seems attractive to an adult does not warrant the same excitement in a child.

According to the study, children prefer greater diversity and averagely they prefer seven different items on their plate with six different colors. Comparatively, adults are happy with just three different colored items. Other factors include the placement of entrée and how the food is being organized.

How to make mealtimes more fun?

Below is an example on how to decorate your child's meal. This dish in particular involves just 9 simple steps to help make your child enjoy their meals even more.

Step 1 Start with a simple sketch. Be fun and creative, this is where a good imagination comes in handy. It's a chore only if you want it to be, so learn to enjoy the process.

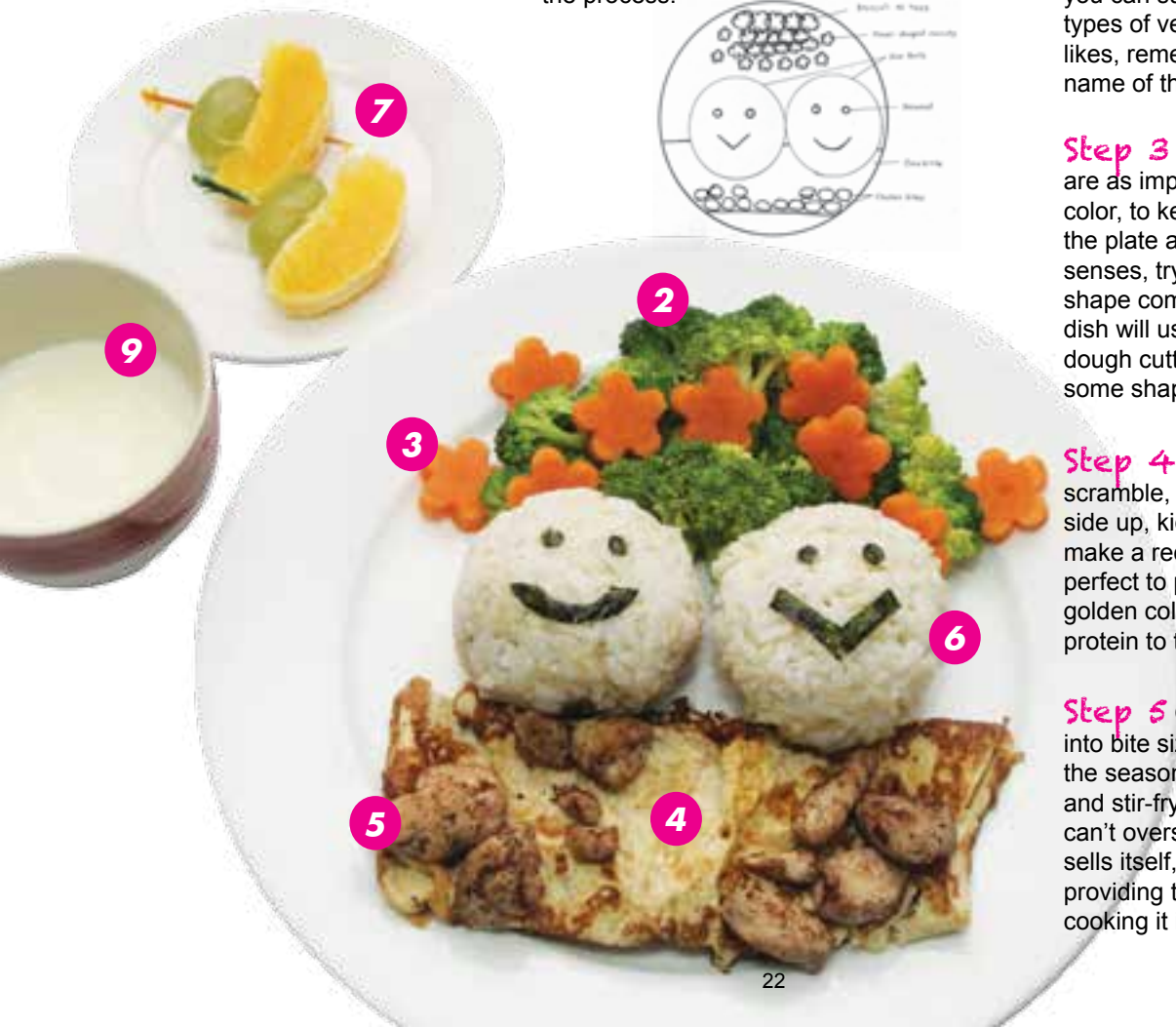


Step 2 Cut the broccoli into bite sizes and cut them in half lengthwise prior to steaming them. Broccoli will be used as the trees, you can substitute it with other types of vegetables that your child likes, remember, 'diversity' is the name of the game.

Step 3 Playing with shapes are as important as playing with color, to keep things interesting on the plate and arouse your child's senses, try an array of color-to-shape combos. For example this dish will use a flower shaped dough cutter to give the carrots some shape before we steam them

Step 4 You can shallow fry, scramble, boil or turn them sunny side up, kids love eggs! Here we'll make a rectangle-shaped omelet, perfect to provide both vibrant golden colouration while adding protein to the dish.

Step 5 Cut the chicken breast into bite sizes and marinate with the seasoning of your preference and stir-fry, grill or steam them. You can't oversell meat - it practically sells itself, so just make sure you're providing the right amount and cooking it in a healthy way.



Step 6 Your child needs carbohydrate for energy. You can try a choice of bread, noodles or rice. So what we're going to do is mould the cooked rice into a ball and make a face on it using pieces of pre-cut seaweeds. You can use whatever you think is appropriate, as long as it's healthy and wholesome as well as fun and interesting.

Step 7 If your child needs something sweet to end a meal, try a fruit kebab. Use different types of fruits with different colors and assemble them together using a toothpick.

Step 8 Organize all the components of the dish that you've prepared on a plate according to the sketch made earlier. You can also use colorful decorative plates or food containers to add more effect.

Step 9 A milk-based dessert like pudding or yoghurt is perfect. Shape it to look like a car or an animal using a mould makes it even better.

What do you need to keep in the kitchen?

These are some essential items that can help you to decorate your child's meals/plate:

- Sketch book
- Shaped paper punch
- Cookie/sandwich cutter in different shapes
- Moulds
- Skewer/Tooth pick



Tips

from Ms Samantha Lee, Food Artist

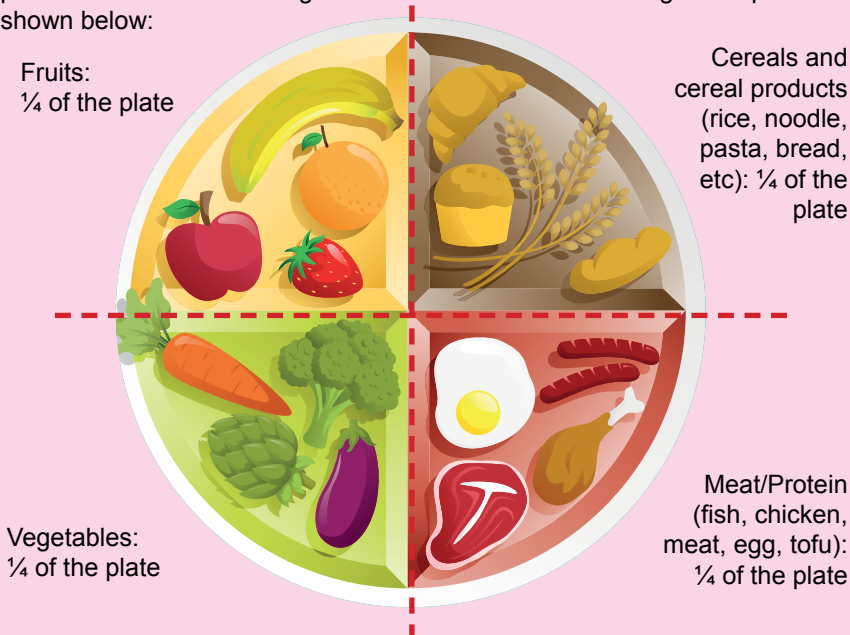
- 1 Keep it simple.** Vegetables and fruits should essentially be presented as it is. Children should recognize the food that they eat in its original form.
- 2 Ask your child what she likes.** Bring them for grocery shopping and get them involved in the kitchen. Eg. They can help to cut the carrots using the cookie cutter or punch the face features from the seaweed sheet.
- 3 Basically all types of food can be decorated.** All you need is a good imagination and proper planning.
- 4 Always have a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables** stocked in your refrigerator

Tips

from Dr Tee E Siong, President of Nutrition Society of Malaysia

While decorating meals, do ensure meals that you serve are balanced (consists of all the food groups from the Food Pyramid) and in moderate portions.

To know how much of each of the food groups to serve, simply imagine your plate has 4 sections. Arrange the food on the dish according to the portions shown below:



Remember to include milk or other dairy products in at least 2 of the main meals.

Note: Serve a variety of foods to your child to ensure he gets different nutrients from different foods to support his growth and development.

Eg. If you have served fish for lunch, serve chicken for dinner; if he ate long beans for lunch, give him spinach for dinner.

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Healthy, Yummy Fish

Seafood such as fish and crustaceans are a great source of protein and contains a variety of nutrients that you and your child needs. It is low in fat content and power packed with lots of goodness that includes omega-3 which is needed for brain development; iron to make new blood cells; calcium for strong bones; vitamins A, B and D and many more. You

can enjoy the goodness of fish by grilling, steaming, or baking it either as a whole fish or as a fillet. Here are two simple fish recipes that will entice and certainly tickle your taste buds.

1. **Steamed Tilapia with Preserved Soy Bean**
2. **Mini Fish Pie**

Steamed Tilapia with Preserved Soy Bean

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 300-400 g red Tilapia, cleaned
- 20 g (1 tbsp) preserved soy bean (taucu), mashed
- 5 g (1 clove) garlic, chopped finely
- 10 g (½ inch) ginger; julienned
- 7 ml (½ tbsp) cooking oil
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) water
- 4 g (½ whole) red chili, chopped (optional)
- 1 stalk spring onion, chopped
- 1 sprig coriander leaves, chopped

Method

1. Heat the cooking oil in a frying pan and lightly fry the garlic and ginger before adding in preserved soy bean paste. Add water and stir-fry until gravy begins to thicken. Remove from heat and add chopped chili.
2. Place fish in a heatproof serving dish, pour the gravy over it and steam over boiling water for 10-12 minutes. Test to see if fish is cooked by pushing a small knife into the thickest part of the fish to see if the flesh will come away from the bone. If the flesh comes away easily, the flesh is cooked.
3. Serve immediately, garnished with spring onion and coriander leaves.



Nutritional Tip

- Taucu is a paste made from preserved fermented soybeans in Chinese and Indonesian cuisine. The taste is salty, therefore it is advisable to add less salt or no salt at all when cooking Taucu.

Nutrient Content Per Serving:

Calorie 94 kcal	Carbohydrate 1.0 g
Protein 16.2 g	Fat 3.2 g

Mini Fish Pie

(Serves 5)

Ingredients

270 g (3 medium-sized) potatoes
240 g (1 cup) fish fillets, skin and bones removed and minced
30 g (2 tbsp) butter
80 ml (1/3 cup) milk
60 g (1/2 cup) cheddar cheese, grated
50 ml (1/5 cup) homemade vegetable stock
30 g (2 tbsp) peas
25 g (1 whole) onion, finely chopped
8 g (1 tbsp) whole meal flour
3 g (1 tbsp) parsley, chopped
1 bay leaf
1 egg, lightly beaten
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Heat oven at 180°C. Bring a pan of lightly salted water to the boil with a pinch of salt, add the potatoes and cook for 15-20 minutes. Drain, peel and mash potatoes with milk and half of the butter until smooth.
2. Melt the remaining butter in a saucepan; add the chopped onions and sauté until softened. Add the flour and cook for 30 seconds, stirring continuously. Gradually stir in the milk and then the stock. Bring to the boil and cook for one minute.
3. Add the fish with the parsley and bay leaf. Simmer for about 3 minutes and then stir in the peas and cook for one minute. Remove the bay leaf and stir in the cheese until melted. Season with a little salt and pepper.
4. Put the fish mixture into serving dishes and top with the mashed potato. Brush with the lightly beaten egg. Heat through in the oven for about 15 minutes and finish off for a few minutes under a preheated grill until golden.
5. Decorate the pie with vegetables.



Nutrient Content Per Serving:

Calorie 198 kcal	Carbohydrate 12.7 g
Protein 14.5 g	Fat 9.9 g

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Recipes courtesy of 'Buku Masakan Pilihan Pakar Pemakanan, Jilid 2: Resipi untuk Seisi Keluarga' by Nutrition Society of Malaysia. To purchase this recipe book which includes 100 recipes, please email: president@nutriweb.org.my

Improve Your Child's

Improving your child's memory skills can provide an advantage which lasts a lifetime. From remembering names of people he has met to recalling facts and information, a good memory can help a child be successful in school or in daily life.

When my 6 year old son comes home from kindergarten, I usually ask him about his day. He typically gives a nonchalant "I don't know" shrug of his shoulders. Even when I ask him leading questions like, "So what did you have for your tea break today?" his usual reply is, "I forgot". It wasn't him being uncommunicative as I initially thought; he had actually forgotten what he had done just a couple of hours ago!

At this phase in life, most children have to learn to remember many things- from their daily routine to the facts they learn in class. With increasing academic demands, some children may feel inadequate when they are unable to recall what they have learned. As a parent, your reassurances and guidance in preparing them for this can make it a less intimidating and more enjoyable time of learning.



Giving the brain a workout

Memory is like a muscle- the more you use it, the better it works. The more opportunities your child has to use her memory muscle, the better it gets at handling the information load. Here are a few enjoyable ways to improve your child's memory power:

Playing memory games

Playing games are fun. Memory games not only boost memory power, but they also give you the opportunity to interact and bond with your child. Try out these suggestions:

1. I'm going on a picnic...

You can play this simple game even in the car. Someone starts by saying "I'm going on a picnic, and I'm taking..." Everyone has a turn adding an item and repeating the ones said previously.

2. Total Recall

Place 10 to 15 objects on a table. Give everyone 2 minutes to remember the objects placed. After that, get everyone to list down the items they recall.

3. Match and win

Use a standard set of deck cards and lay out the cards individually face down. Each person gets to open up 2 cards at a time. If matching cards are opened, the person gets to keep them. The person with the most cards wins.

4. Storytelling

Write a list of 10 random words. Get your children to make up a story using the list of words. Encourage them to come up with silly, funny stories that will help them remember. Then, when they have made up the stories in their head, remove the words and ask them to relay the story. Check if they are able to recall the 10 words in the correct order.

Suggest strategies

A useful strategy to help children remember information is utilising mnemonics. Mnemonics are clues which help us to remember information. These clues help us to associate the information we need to remember with an image, a word or sentence.

Here are examples of some mnemonic devices you can use:

Mnemonic device ¹	Example
Visual image Associating an image with words you need to remember	To remember the name of the first Resident General of the Federated Malay States, Frank Swettenham, visualise a <u>fr</u> ank <u>fu</u> rter (sausage) <u>sw</u> atting a slab of <u>h</u> am.
Acrostic or sentence Making up a sentence whereby the first letter of each word represents the initial letter of what you want to remember	The lines on a music staff represent the notes E, G, B, D, F, which can be remembered using the phrase "Every good boy does fine."
Acronym A word made up of the initial letters of all the words or ideas you need to remember	The name RAHMAN represents the names of the 6 Prime Ministers of Malaysia – Rahman, Abdul Razak, Hussein Onn, Mahathir, Abdullah, Najib.
Rhymes and alliteration These are memorable ways to remember facts and figures	The rhyming phrase 'I before E, except after C' helps children remember how to spell difficult words such as 'receive'.
Chunking This breaks up large amounts of information into smaller, manageable parts	To help a child remember the 10 digit mobile phone number of a parent, break it up into 3 sets of numbers: 012 0432 0077 as opposed to 012 432 0077.
Method of loci Imagine placing items you need to remember along a familiar route	To remember examples of food that provide energy or carbohydrate, imagine a bag of rice at the front door, noodles in the living room, potatoes on the stairway and a loaf of bread in the bedroom.

Memory Skills

Fuel the brain

It has been said that investing in nutrition is a necessity, and not a luxury. Nutrition during the early years of childhood is important as it is linked to general well-being and school performance in the later years. In a Taiwanese study of school children, unhealthy eating patterns were found to be associated with unfavourable school performance. Unhealthy eating patterns include the high consumption of low quality food such as sweets and fried foods, accompanied by the low intake of dairy products and highly nutrient dense food such as meat, fish, vegetables, fruits and eggs.

Just as your body needs fuel, so does your brain. Eating a brain-boosting diet not only provides health benefits, but may also boost memory. There is a great deal of interest and research on-going in this area to evaluate how different nutrients may impact memory and learning.

Choline is similar to a B vitamin. It is used in many chemical reactions in the body and appears to be especially important in the nervous system. It is the precursor to acetylcholine, one of the crucial brain chemicals involved in memory. Studies

indicate that perinatal supplementation enhances memory and learning. Choline is found in foods such as liver, muscle meats, fish, nuts, beans, peas, spinach, wheat germ, and eggs. It is also used as a supplement in infant formulas.

Taurine is an amino acid. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Taurine is found in large amounts in the brain, retina, heart, and blood cells called platelets. The best food sources are meat and fish. Taurine has been shown in studies to increase GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) levels in the brain. This may help with memory, learning and anxiety.

Iron is an important component of brain tissue. Electrical nerve pulses in the brain fire slower when there is a lack of iron. Iron deficiency in the early years is also associated with behavior change and delayed psychomotor development. Heme iron is found in animal foods that originally contained hemoglobin, such as red meats, fish, and poultry.

Iodine is a trace element that is naturally present in some foods and added to others. It is required for proper skeletal and central nervous system development in infants. Iodine deficiency is associated with an average 13.5 point reduction in the I.Q. of a general population. In children, deficiency is linked to poorer cognition and school performance. Dietary sources of iodine include seaweed and seafood. Dairy products, especially milk, and grain products are the other major contributors of iodine to the diet. Iodine is also present in human breast milk and infant formulas.

Zinc is an important nutrient for cellular growth, immunity and metabolism. An adequate amount is vital for brain function. Zinc influences both behavior and learning performance. Good food

sources of zinc include oyster, red meat, poultry, beans and nuts, certain types of seafood (such as crab and lobster), whole grains, fortified breakfast cereals, and dairy products.

Making memories

Nutrition, genes and environment are 3 critical factors that have an effect on cognitive development. While our genes are beyond our control, as parents we can create a nurturing environment that enhances memory and learning; and provide the right nutrition for the optimal development of our children.

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Did you know?

A well-known study on remembering textbook materials compared the percentage of material remembered after different lengths of time. This is what they found:

After 1 day	54% was remembered.
After 7 days	35% was remembered.
After 14 days	21% was remembered.
After 21 days	18% was remembered.
After 28 days	19% was remembered.
After 63 days	17% was remembered.

Family Wellness

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Gain Weight Healthily during Pregnancy

Learn what you need to know about the fundamentals of pregnancy weight gain.

By **Prof Dr Poh Bee Koon**, Nutritionist & Lecturer, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

During pregnancy, it is important to eat a healthy and balanced diet so as to ensure that you gain a healthy amount of weight during your pregnancy. Not only that, a balanced diet is crucial so that your body can provide your growing baby with the nutrients he needs for healthy growth.

How much weight gain is enough?

Pregnant women will gain weight progressively throughout the 40 weeks, and achieving the right weight is important to avoid an oversized or underweight baby. On average, women of normal weight will need to gain between 11 to 16 kg during pregnancy. However, your pre-pregnancy weight and body mass index (BMI) should determine and guide you on the appropriate amount of weight gain you should work toward. Therefore, based on your pre-pregnancy BMI, refer to the table below on the total weight gain you should have put on by full term:

Pre-pregnancy BMI	Total weight gain by full term
Underweight: $<18.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$	12.5 – 18 kg
Normal: $18.5 - 24.9 \text{ kg/m}^2$	11.5 – 16 kg
Overweight: $25 - 29.9 \text{ kg/m}^2$	7 – 11.5 kg
Obese: $\geq 30 \text{ kg/m}^2$	5 – 9 kg

*If you are underweight....
It is crucial that you gain a reasonable amount of weight during your pregnancy in order to avoid problems such as premature delivery or low-birth weight in your baby.*

*If you are overweight/obese....
You may face increased risks of pregnancy complications, such as gestational diabetes and high blood pressure. Work closely with your doctor to ensure that you have a healthy pregnancy.*

Another simple guide that can be used as a way to monitor your weight gain is by aiming for a 1-2 kg increase in the first trimester, with a subsequent weight gain of about half a kilogram a week until delivery. In the case of twins, your weight gain during pregnancy should be between 16 to 24 kg, with an average of 0.7 kg per week after the usual 1-2kg weight gain of the first trimester.

Gaining more than the recommended amount of weight for pregnancy is fine, but if you are unable to shed the extra weight after delivery, you may increase your risks for developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life. Excessive weight gain during pregnancy is also a factor in increasing your baby's health risk at birth and if not controlled, may lead to childhood obesity.

What if you are expecting more than one baby?

It is critical that you gain a healthy amount of weight because it will affect the weight of your babies. In the case of multiples, early birth is often the norm, thus a higher birth weight is important for their health. Consult your doctor to find out what is the correct weight gain for you and your babies.

Finding out where you stand

How do you know if you are overweight, obese, underweight, or normal? You can use your body mass index (BMI) to determine this. It is calculated by taking your pre-pregnancy weight and dividing it by your height squared (BMI=weight (kg)/height (m) x height (m)). While BMI does not directly measure body fat, it is a fairly true indicator of body size. It is also a quick and easy method of screening to determine your weight category.

Eat Well & Be Active for Healthy Weight Gain

While the fact remains that your body requires extra calories, "eating for two" is an oft-misused phrase. On average, a pregnant woman does not need any additional calories during her first trimester, but only needs an additional 360 kcal per day during her second trimester and 470 kcal per day during her third trimester. To meet the increased calorie needs, it is therefore recommended to eat several small meals throughout the day, i.e. five to six small meals, instead of just three main meals.

In addition to that, it is important to note that the foods that you choose are "nutrient-dense" so as to not only meet the increased energy needs but also certain nutrients such as protein, folate, calcium, iron, and B vitamins (refer to feature article on page 10-11).

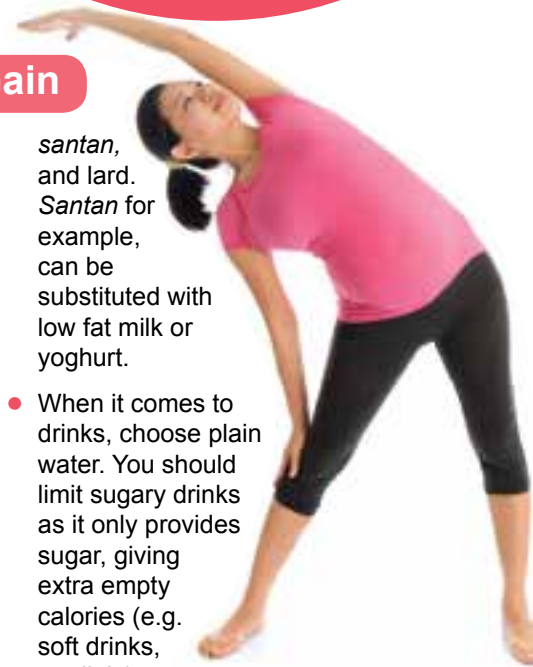
Watch out for those empty calories and ensure you gain weight healthily while meeting your increased needs during your pregnancy. Here are some healthy eating tips:

- Limit your intake of high-calorie foods such as deep-fried foods, fast foods, processed meats, sweet desserts, such as cakes, cookies and snack foods (e.g. commercially prepared potato crisps, local *keropok/kerepek*).
- Watch out for the way foods are being prepared. Opt for healthier alternatives such as food that has been steamed, baked, grilled, braised, or poached instead.
- When cooking meals at home, use moderate amounts of high fat ingredients, such as cooking oils, margarine, butter, mayonnaise,

santan, and lard. *Santan* for example, can be substituted with low fat milk or yoghurt.

- When it comes to drinks, choose plain water. You should limit sugary drinks as it only provides sugar, giving extra empty calories (e.g. soft drinks, cordials).

Above all, you should embrace the principles of balance, moderation, and variety (BMV) all the time when it comes to choosing your foods.



Lastly, continue to keep your body active by exercising regularly. It helps in controlling your healthy weight gain, reduce the risk of diabetes and hypertension as well as speed up the post-natal recovery to get back to your normal weight. In addition, exercise promotes good posture and prepares your body for an easy delivery by strengthening and stretching your muscles. With the improved fitness and stamina level, regular exercise also prepares you for the rigours of labour.

Simple exercises such as walking or swimming are generally safe for pregnant women, but don't hesitate to consult your doctor for advice on exercises. **PP**

An educational collaboration with



Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Managing Finances

with a new member of the family

Rearing a child is expensive, no one with a child will tell you differently. But a child shouldn't be a reason for lack of financial stability and management, on contrary - it should be the very reason for actually having one in the first place.

By **Mohamad Khalil bin Jamaludin**, Head of CorpComm Department, Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit (AKPK)

Life with the addition of a new family member is always an exciting experience for parents. However, you can't help but feel financially nervous for your family since the undertaking and upbringing of a child will leave you inevitably spending more than you normally would. Luckily, there are ways to mitigate some of those spending costs and turn a profit so that you can flow the money elsewhere in order to create revenue instead. After all, one cent saved is another cent earned.

1. Buy in bulk

You can save a lot by buying diapers during sales or at wholesale markets. Buy in bulk and save some money. Store brand diapers also provide more or less if not equal protection and function as the more expensive ones would.

2. Reuse, reduce and recycle

Reach out to your friends and family members who have had babies before and probe through their vast collection for cloths or other items like bottles and breast-pumps. You'll usually receive baby gifts from friends and family, buy only what is absolutely necessary for the first month and plan again what to buy for your baby from there.

3. Au naturel

- Breast feeding is always recommended, it further bonds the relationship between mother and child, it's a healthier more reliable food source and it



can potentially save you money for your first maternal year (at least).

- When searching for formula, cheaper brands provide similar nutrition at a fraction of the cost, so do your homework and browse around before you settle on a particular brand.
- As your child gets older, you may also want to consider making their food from natural fresh foodstuff like vegetables and fruits.

4. Location, location, location

- The cost of sending your child off to day care may vary according to your location and the type of day care you choose. So consider all options and choose according to your priorities and budget.
- If both parents are working, find out what type of company benefits there are and take full advantage of it, big companies usually provide good child care centers at the office.
- Some parents may choose to send their children over to immediate family members, which is also ideal provided that everyone is in mutual consent.

5. Bank on it

- In managing your financials it's always good to plan ahead. Investments are a good monetary option for the long run. Invest now and invest smart, you don't need to take out a whole chunk out of your budget for this, but doing so at an early stage can do you wonders in the future.
- You may also want to look into saving for your child's education. Tertiary education is not cheap, there's a lot of education savings schemes out there, so find one that suits you and start saving.
- Many investment and/or insurance options offer good deals at valued cost, choose the best in line with your budget.

6. Tax em'

Be sure to look for redemptions, rebates and deductions that are attributed to you having a child, it may be time consuming and some of them aren't automatically given. It requires you to fill in some forms, but given the fact some of us pay quite some amount on our income tax, it's useful to know where you can save for more.



7. Freebies

Vouchers and freebies are a great way to save. Many brands are giving out baby stuff for free these days, from free samples to discount vouchers. It may not seem as much, but these little savings can amount to a whole lot over time.

Having a baby is, without a doubt, a costly endeavour. However, with a little planning and creativity you can save money and start a lifestyle without making your budget stretch too far. Always remember to spend within your means and don't give in to expectations, you yourself know what's best for your family. From diapers to dorm rooms and toys to tertiary education, failing to plan is planning to fail and failure is never an option when it involves the future and well-being of your child. **PP**

This article is brought to you in collaboration with Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit (AKPK), a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) aimed at serving the public in areas of Financial Education, Counseling and Debt Management. For more details on services provided by AKPK, visit www.akpk.org.my



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Eczema: Trigger-ed

By **Dr Najeeb Ahmad B. Mohd. Safdar**, Dermatologist

Eczema isn't easy, it's uncomfortably exasperating for your child and managing it is no walk in the park either. Prevention is certainly better than a cure, know what triggers your child's eczema and avoid the symptoms!

Eczema/ dermatitis, is a condition that causes the skin to become inflamed or irritated by certain trigger factors. These triggers are often defined as external substances that irritate the skin and cause flare-ups. The most common type of eczema is known as atopic dermatitis, or atopic eczema, where the advent flare-up or symptoms of eczema lead to other allergic-related complications such as asthma.

Triggers are not causes of eczema, rather they are merely substances that initiate its symptoms. Similarly, the exact cause of eczema, atopic or otherwise is unknown. The closest explanation to why eczema transpires within a person is that external factors (i.e. cold or hot weather, dust, dander, etc.) prompt an overactive defensive response from the body's immune system.

Eczemic triggers can be divided into a few different categories, namely, physical irritants, allergens, and microbes.



Physical irritants can worsen the symptoms of Eczema and may vary from one child to another.

- Soaps and detergents
- Cosmetics and perfume
- Shampoos, dish-washing liquids
- Bubble bath
- Disinfectants like chlorine
- Coarse clothing (Wear it loose and wear cotton!)



Ensure all cleaning products are kept from reach of children and that you choose suitable toiletries for your child (soap, towel etc.). It's always good to prepare a small bag of products you already know works for your child that won't cause irritation or flare-ups. Remember, sharing isn't always caring, especially when it's itchy!

Allergens are what trigger allergic reactions and besides eczema symptoms, it may also lead to other complications such as asthma and hay fever. These allergens can further be divided into:

Environmental

- House dust mites
- Dander
- Pollens (seasonal)
- Molds
- Dandruff

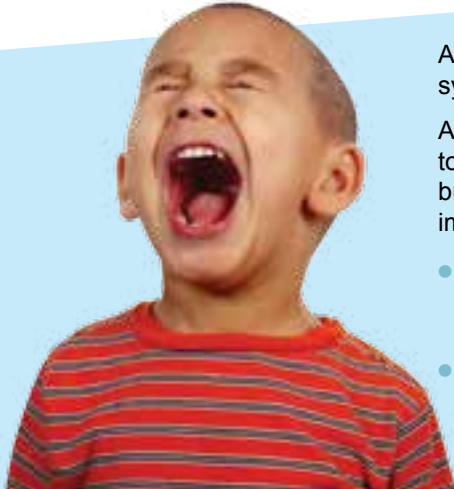
Food

- Egg, Nuts
- Dairy products
- Soy products
- Wheat
- Fresh fruit juice, meats, vegetables

Your child may have inherited an allergic response to a specific substance from you or your spouse. You may want to assess the extent of the allergy by seeking further medical advice.

Microbes can also trigger eczemic reactions, some commonly known are:

- Bacteria such as *Staphylococcus* and *Streptococcal* strains.
- *Molluscum contagiosum* virus thrives in warm, humid climates and in areas where people live very close together and common in infants.
- *Malassezia* and *Candida* fungal strains colonizing child's skin can initiate an inflammatory response.



Although not considered to be triggers, stress and climate conditions can intensify symptoms of eczema:

Adults and even children can experience physical, mental or social stresses that amount to escalation or worsening of eczema symptoms. The reason for this remains a mystery but some experts suggest that certain hormones released during stress or reduced immune response of the body may be responsible.

- Changes in daily life like moving into a new house, school or environment can cause stress.
- Other illnesses such as the common cold can also cause stress and initiate an eczema response.
- Certain climatic conditions and temperatures often intensify the severity of eczema.
 - Cold environments produce dry air which dries skin.
 - Hot, dry environments cause dehydration and flaking of skin.

Eczema outbreaks can be avoided or the severity lessened or managed. Consider these takeaway-tips:

- Moisturize frequently with a good choice of fragrance-free moisturizer.
- Avoid sudden changes in temperature or humidity.
- Avoid sweating or overheating, regular baths can help cool your child down.
- Reduce stress and practice good emotional support.
- Avoid scratchy materials, such as wool.
- Avoid harsh soaps, detergents, and solvents.
- Be aware of any foods that may cause an outbreak and avoid those foods.

Familiarise yourself with your child's condition to avoid things that may cause a flare-up. You'll need to know his sensitivities intimately if you are to avoid aggravating his condition. If you're sending him to day care or have a caregiver take care of your child, it's best to keep them informed as well. It's also recommended that you get advice from a dermatologist/pediatrician on managing your child's eczema. **PP**

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All about Pneumo

By **Dato^r Dr Musa Mohd Nordin**, Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist

Who is at risk?

Pneumococcal disease is prevalent among children under 2 years old, children staying in group child care and those who have underlying medical conditions such as HIV infection and chronic heart or lung conditions.

Adults who are 65 years old and older presents higher risk of infection. Adults between 19 and 64 years old with chronic illnesses such as lung, heart, liver or kidney disease, asthma, diabetes or alcoholism are at risk too. In addition, their risk increases if they are presented with conditions that weaken their immune system (HIV/AIDS, cancer or damaged or absent spleen); living in nursing homes or other long term care facilities; has cochlear implants or CSF leaks and those who smoke cigarettes.

How is it transmitted?

Pneumococcal disease can be transmitted from person-to-person by direct contact with respiratory secretions such as saliva or mucus. The bacterium, *S. pneumoniae* colonises the back of the nose and it is usually found in many people, especially children (30-70%) but they may not get ill (carriers). As your child grows, there will be lesser *S. pneumoniae* found in their nasopharynx. This is because they have acquired a more matured mucosal immunity against the dominant strains found in the community or due to reduction in exposure.

Diagnosis

As with any disease, early diagnosis and treatment are vital for survival. In order to diagnose meningitis and bacteraemia, blood samples or CSF are collected and sent for laboratory testing. For non-invasive pneumococcal diseases (sinusitis and otitis media), diagnosis is usually made by healthcare practitioners through physical examinations and cultures of nasal and ear discharges.

Otitis media

Signs and Symptoms:

ear pain, red and swollen ear drums, and fever.

Sinusitis

Signs and Symptoms:

cold or respiratory illness that has been getting better and then worsens; high fever with discoloured nasal discharge that does not improve, with or without a cough.

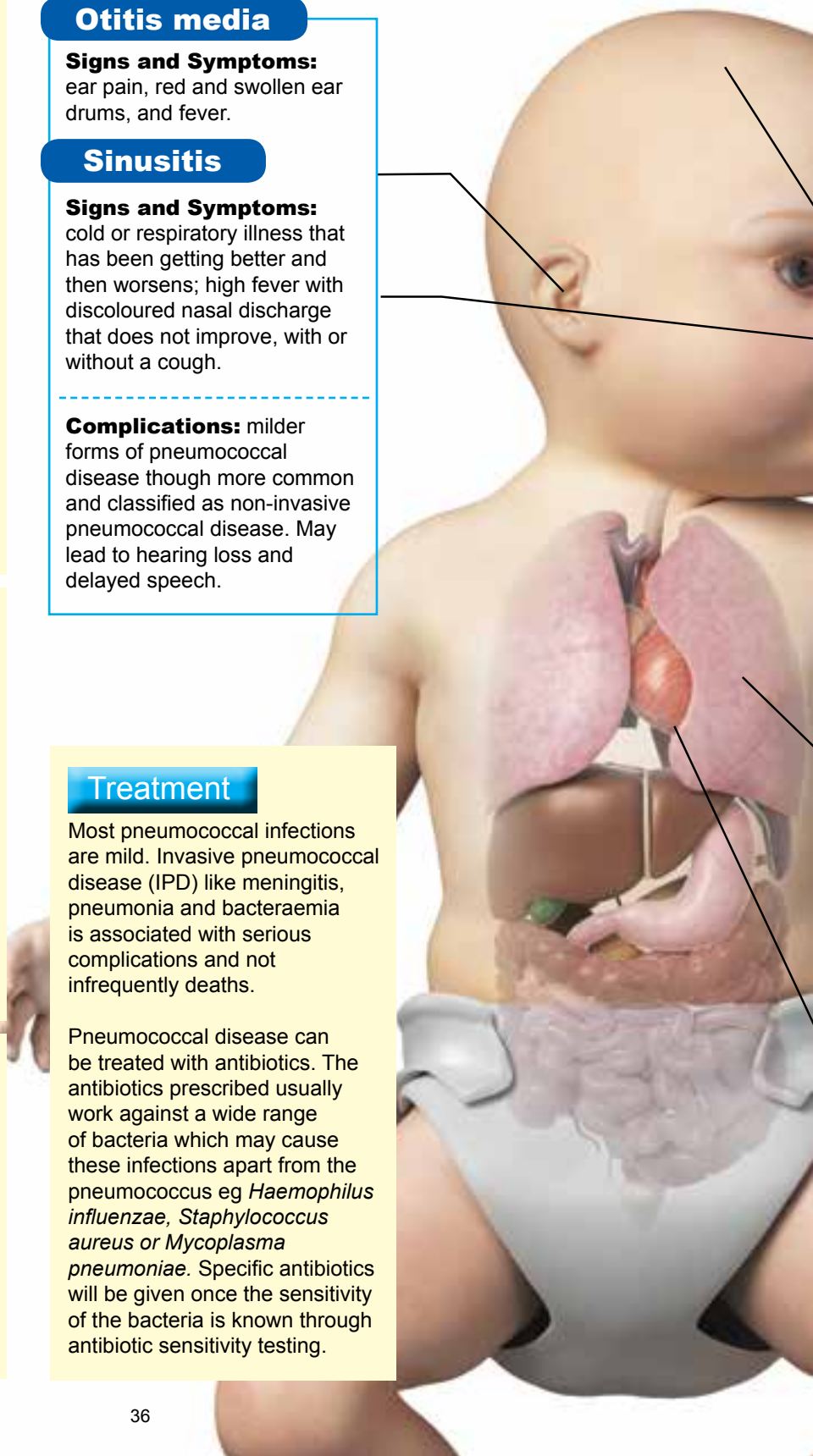
Complications:

milder forms of pneumococcal disease though more common and classified as non-invasive pneumococcal disease. May lead to hearing loss and delayed speech.

Treatment

Most pneumococcal infections are mild. Invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) like meningitis, pneumonia and bacteraemia is associated with serious complications and not infrequently deaths.

Pneumococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. The antibiotics prescribed usually work against a wide range of bacteria which may cause these infections apart from the pneumococcus eg *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. Specific antibiotics will be given once the sensitivity of the bacteria is known through antibiotic sensitivity testing.



coccal Disease

Pneumococcal disease encompasses a wide range of illnesses such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs), meningitis (infection of the meninges), otitis media (infection of the middle ears), sinusitis, and bacteraemia. It is caused by Streptococcus pneumonia also known as pneumococcus.

Meningitis

Signs and Symptoms: stiff neck, fever and headache, pain when looking into bright lights, and confusion. Babies will have drowsiness, poor eating and drinking and vomiting.

Complications: most severe type of invasive pneumococcal disease. One in ten of children below 5 years who are infected will usually die while others may suffer hearing loss or developmental delay.

Pneumococcal pneumonia

Signs and Symptoms: fevers and chills, cough, rapid breathing or difficulty in breathing and chest pains.

Complications: if left untreated immediately will lead to empyema (infection of the space between membranes surrounding the lungs and the chest cavity), pericarditis (inflammation of the sac surrounding the heart), atelectasis (collapsed lungs) and collection of pus in the lungs. The death rate from pneumococcal pneumonia is 5% and the rate increases among elderly patients.

Bacteraemia

Signs and Symptoms: Fever, chills and drowsiness.

Complications: happens when the bacterium infects the bloodstream. The risk of death is 4 out of 100 children and it increases among the elderly.

Prevalence

- About 14.5 million cases of serious pneumococcal disease were reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2000. Out of this, 826 000 deaths were recorded among children between the ages of 1 to 59 months.
- Pneumonia claimed the lives of 1.25 million children in 2011.
- Asia records the highest occurrence of pneumococcal disease (both invasive and non-invasive).
- One in three people will succumb to pneumococcal disease.

Prevention

Besides good personal hygiene, pneumococcal disease can be prevented through vaccinations. There are 2 common types of pneumococcal vaccines namely Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) and Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPSV). The PCV is recommended for children and it protects against multiple strains of pneumococcal bacteria. PCV13 which protects against 13 strains of pneumococcus is also recommended for adults beyond 50 years of age and those with certain underlying medical conditions.

Studies have shown that the PCVs reduce the carriage of pneumococci in the nasopharynx and hence prevent the transmission and spread of the disease.

What is herd immunity?

Herd immunity: Children who are immunised are protected from the disease. They cannot get the disease and they cannot give the disease. If enough children are vaccinated against a disease then the disease cannot spread into the community. This is called "herd immunity". Thus children who are not vaccinated (e.g. by choice) or cannot be vaccinated (e.g. have cancers) will be similarly protected because of the reduced opportunity for the disease to spread in the community.

Besides getting the pneumococcal vaccination, it is important to get the yearly influenza vaccine as the risk of developing secondary pneumococcal disease increases if you have the flu. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



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BROADER PROTECTION
against Pneumococcal disease



Pneumococcal disease is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable death amongst children below five years globally.¹

Pneumococcal disease is caused by *streptococcus pneumoniae* that can cause infections and may lead to brain damage, lung infections and deafness.²

13 types of ***streptococcus pneumoniae*** cause **80% - 90%** of invasive diseases in young children worldwide.³



Ask your doctor today about the available vaccines.

References: [1] Acute Respiratory Infections (update September 2007): *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/vaccine_research/diseases/ar/inf/index3.html [2] Pneumococcal Vaccine: What you need to know. ViiVMD Children's Vaccines Health Centre, <http://children.viiemd.com/vaccines/pneumococcal/vaccine-what-you-need-to-know> [3] GSK's PneumoADP, Surveillance and Research Report (November 2007).

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JE: The Third World Disease

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

Japanese encephalitis (JE) is a brain infection that infects both humans and animals. The disease is caused by a Flavivirus (a genus of viruses in the family Flaviviridae) that affects the brain, causing an inflammation that is potentially fatal.

Outbreaks in Malaysia

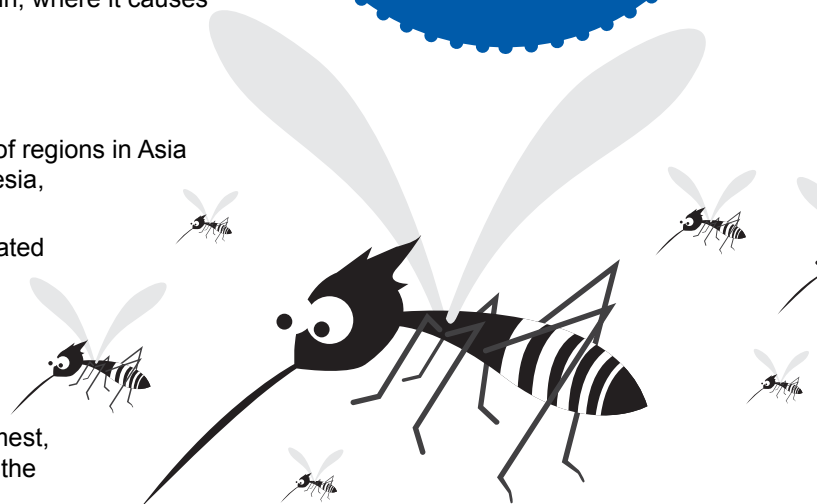
Major outbreaks of JE occurred in Langkawi in 1974 (10 cases, 2 deaths), Penang in 1988 (9 cases and 4 deaths) and in the Serian district of Sarawak in 1992 (9 cases, 4 deaths). In 1999, more than 50 people have died and hundreds of thousands of pigs—the possible carriers of the infection—have been culled nationwide.

Transmission

- The JE virus, which is commonly found in mosquitoes, pigs and wading birds, is transmitted to humans through a bite from an infected *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* or *Culex vishnui* mosquito.
- Once a person is bitten by an infected mosquito and the virus enters the body, it travels to various glands where it multiplies. The virus can then enter the bloodstream and ultimately settles in the brain, where it causes serious problems.

How it spreads

- Mosquitoes that carry this virus circulate in a number of regions in Asia including Japan, Korea, China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines.
- The circulation of JE virus in Malaysia is linked to irrigated rice paddy fields, and pig rearing. The flooding of the fields leads to a build-up of the mosquito population. The mosquitoes act as a vector to circulate the virus and spread it to humans if they have bitten infected birds or pigs.
- These mosquitoes are most abundant during the warmest, rainiest months as these conditions are necessary for the mosquito breeding cycle.



Controlling the disease

After the 1999 outbreak, the Malaysian Ministry of Health mounted a well-funded campaign to control the disease: 64 767 people were vaccinated, 150 000 farms and houses sprayed with insecticide, and an active programme of health education and social mobilization were mounted in affected areas.

The introduction of JE vaccination in July 2001 had also reduced the number of JE cases in humans. According to data collected from Sarawak, cases have dropped from 84 to 49 cases after the vaccine was introduced in Sarawak. The majority of JE cases generally occurred in the 4th quarter of the year (October to December).



Signs and symptoms

Most people infected by the JE virus do not develop any symptoms. However, approximately 1 in 200 infections results in severe brain inflammation characterised by:

- rapid onset of high fever,
- headache,
- neck stiffness,
- disorientation,
- seizures (fits),
- spastic paralysis (inability to speak or control movement)
- coma, or
- death.

According to the World Health Organisation, the case fatality rate can be as high as 60% among those with disease symptoms; 30% of those who survive suffer from lasting damage to the central nervous system.

These symptoms begin to appear 6-15 days after being bitten.

Prevention

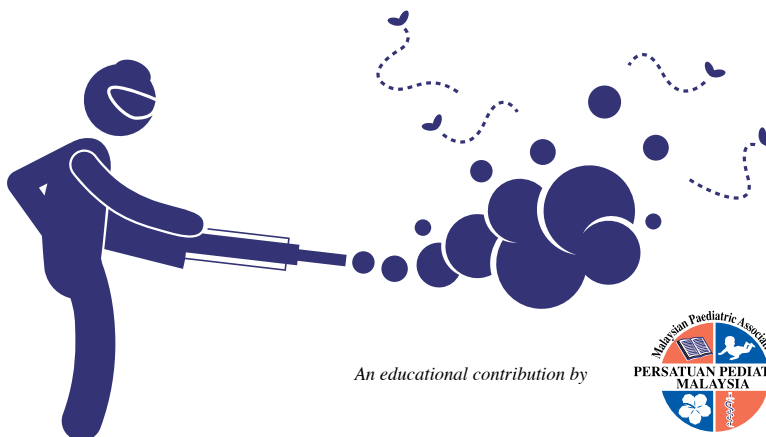
1) Vaccination of high risk groups of the human population e.g. pig farmers, people staying in or near the pig farms up to a radius of 2 km, and young children. A hospital-based surveillance system for JE in Sarawak from 1997 -2006 found that 92% of 133 cases were children aged 12 years or younger. Under the National Immunisation Programme, primary immunizations are administered to children in two primary doses given four weeks apart, followed by a booster after a year, and at three-year intervals after that. Newer vaccines will see children getting only two doses, one year apart.

2) Take steps to avoid contact with mosquitoes. Visitors to regions with high rates of JE or those living in the area should take personal protective measures to prevent mosquito bites e.g. using repellents and/or mosquito nets, fixing wire netting at all the windows, wearing long sleeved clothes/ trousers.

3) Vector control against the Culex mosquitoes by fogging and larviciding including destroying Culex breeding sites by land filling and improving sanitation/drainage. **PP**

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for JE. Patient management focuses on supportive care (e.g. feeding, airway management, and anticonvulsants for seizure control) and management of complications. Fluids are given to decrease dehydration and medications are given to decrease fever and pain. Medications are available to attempt to decrease brain swelling. Patients in a coma may require mechanical assistance with breathing. The management of these cases is usually in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).



An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association



Protect your family against the dangers of Japanese encephalitis

Japanese encephalitis (JE) is a potentially fatal disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. It is endemic to Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.^{1,2}

Out of the **50,000** reported cases each year:³

- one third of patients **do not survive**⁴
- about half of the survivors will **suffer from permanent neurological damage**⁵

There is no specific treatment for Japanese encephalitis.²



Reduce the risk of infection with vaccination²



JE vaccine is available for active immunisation of **adults and children** from age 9 months and above.

Protect yourself and your loved ones against Japanese encephalitis.

Ask your doctor about preventing Japanese encephalitis virus.

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Breastfeeding infants with CHD

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist

Congenital heart disease (CHD) affects around 8 of every 1000 newborns. With an annual birth rate of 500,000 the Malaysian Ministry of Health (MOH) estimates that 4000 – 5000 infants will be born with heart abnormalities annually.

Congenital defects of the heart can either be induced externally through environmental factors such as maternal smoking or alcohol consumption as well as be genetically-driven (i.e. Trisomy 21 [Down Syndrome] or Trisomy 18 [Edward Syndrome]). Infants may show signs of heart failure early if there is a large hole in the heart. Some may be blue due to reversal of blood flow that bypasses the lungs. Heart failure presents with breathlessness during feeding.

Some mothers may feel a little apprehensive about breastfeeding their child for fear that it may worsen the severity of their child's symptoms or provoke an attack. The following are some of the more widespread misconceptions of breastfeeding a CHD infant:

Misconceptions

1 CHD infants can only feed exclusively on formula.

- Studies suggest breast milk effectiveness is enhanced in premature or ill-affected infants. Breast milk is also easily digested and contains antibodies that most formulas can't offer.
- Usually involves combination of formula, supplements and breast milk.
- Hospitals will consult on options for feeding the baby. Ultimately, the current condition of the infant will dictate the best possible option.

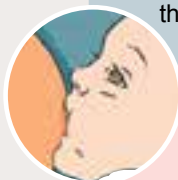
2 Breastfeeding tires CHD infants more quickly as opposed to bottle feeding.

- Experts have agreed that suckling, swallowing and breathing is relatively

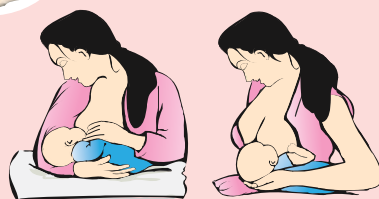
easier when a baby is breastfeeding provided the techniques used are sound (proper latching and positioning).

What is proper latching/ attachment?

Baby's mouth covers the whole nipple, her chin and nose are touching your breast. You can hear her swallow and the experience feels comfortable. Breastfeeding shouldn't hurt your nipple.



Positioning



Cradle hold

Football hold



Lying down

3 CHD infants under intensive care units cannot be fed breast milk.

- Expressed breast milk can be fed to the infant while in intensive care with added supplements.
- Helps mothers feel involved in the development of the child in the ICU.
- Short but periodically frequent breast feeding during the day and pump your milk when you can so that if you are unable to breastfeed your baby

due to restrictions (i.e. baby placed in incubator) then the milk can be fed to her through tubes.

- In any case, your milk can still be stored and used when the baby is ready. Expressing your milk will also prevent from complications such as engorgement, thrush or mastitis of the breasts.

4 Bottle-fed babies get better faster.

- Studies have shown breastfed CHD infants gain weight more quickly than their bottle fed counterparts. Antibodies in the breast milk also help babies fight against infections. This translates into shorter stays at hospitals.
- Severity of the disease has nothing to do with, and neither is it affected by, breastfeeding.

Since breastfeeding is an activity that further strengthens the bond between mother and child, missing out may affect mothers emotionally. Therefore, resilience and persistence of the supporting family unit including immediate family members and friends is vital. There is no substitute for the rich goodness of a mother's breast milk for a newborn. However, don't feel discouraged or inferior if you can't breastfeed your baby as often, what's even more important to consider during this juncture is that the baby receives proper medical treatment for his/her heart condition. **PP**

An educational contribution by



Malaysian Paediatric Association

Share the Goodness of Healthy Digestion



Malaysia's first and No.1 cultured milk drink, VITAGEN is jam-packed with billions of good bacteria. Known as Lactobacillus acidophilus and Lactobacillus casei, these good bacteria cultures help fight bad bacteria to promote a healthier digestion. VITAGEN is also good for stimulating a stronger immune system by helping the body defend itself against toxins, harmful bacteria and allergen.

VITAGEN Regular

A trusted cultured milk drink loved by all Malaysians, VITAGEN Regular, infused with billions of good bacteria, comes in a variety of delicious flavours made with real juice from apples, grapes, oranges and LB (natural).

VITAGEN Less Sugar

This delightful cultured milk drink offers the same nutritional benefits to improve digestion and stimulate a stronger immune system – minus the sweetness!

VITAGEN Collagen Less Sugar

It's a revolutionary formula that is infused with 500mg of marine collagen peptides (of fish origin) and Vitamin C, which helps to re-synthesise collagen for a more radiant, younger looking skin. This revolutionary formula also contains prebiotic fibre, which supports the growth of good bacteria in the intestines for a stronger digestion and a healthier immune system.

Lactobacillus cultures
(good bacteria)



Read article on following page and safeguard your child's digestive health.

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Exercise for Better

Digestive disorders are fairly common and may have a variety of causes. While it is true that your child's dietary intake plays an important role, ensuring that he maintains a physically active lifestyle will have a positive impact on his digestive health. Getting regular exercise can help your child maintain a healthy body and also helps his digestive system work the way it should.

By **Dato' Dr Muhammad Radzi bin Abu Hassan**, National Head & Consultant Gastroenterologist, MOH & Chairman of Digestive Health Advisory Board (DHAB)

Reasons to move more

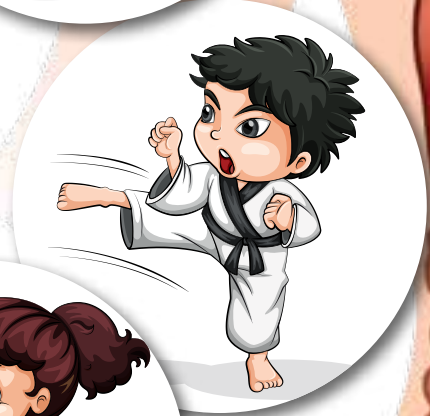
Being physically active can work wonders on your child's digestive system, for instance:

- Regular exercise stimulates intestinal muscles to contract, thus regulating his bowel movements.
- Help relieve constipation by moving food through his digestive system.
- Better absorb nutrients.
- Feel better while exercising.
- Helps gas pass through the digestive tract quicker.

Maintaining regular physical activity will help prevent obesity, indigestion, and diverticulosis.

What you can do about it

- Encourage an active lifestyle.
- Discourage extended periods of inactivity e.g. long hours playing computer games or watching TV.
- Limit screen time.
- Get them involved with household chores, sports, and other games.
- Teach them the importance of being physically active.



Digestive Health

As parents, it is important to keep two main things in mind:

1. Ensure your own lifestyle incorporates physical activity (children tend to follow their parents' lifestyle)
2. Keep a part of your child's daily schedule free for physical activity such as games, sports, or any form of unstructured play



Timing is important

Be aware that physical exercise can be both beneficial and harmful for the gastrointestinal tract. It plays protective role against colon cancer, diverticular disease, and constipation.

- Avoid heavy exercises after a large meal or it can lead to bloating and constipation.
- Stress also affects digestive health; avoid strenuous exercises during times of stress.
- Avoid stressing your child unnecessarily, e.g. having a schedule that permits no time for rest or relaxation.

One of the factors leading to the higher levels of obesity among children in Malaysia now is a lack of physical activity. Don't let your child become another statistic in the current trend of obese children.

An educational contribution by



Digestive Health Advisory Board

Billions of Good Bacteria for a Healthy Digestive System

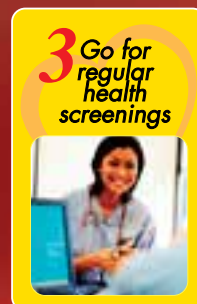
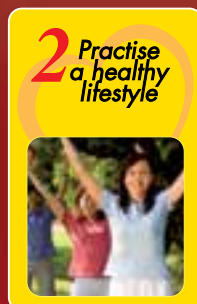
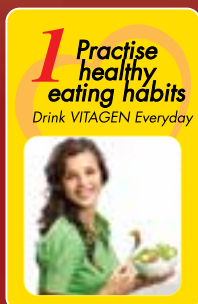
Why is your digestive health so important?

In Malaysia, diseases of the digestive system are the 5th principal cause of death and 7th principal cause of admission in government hospitals in 2011.*

A healthy digestive system is central to your overall health and wellbeing. Not only does it process food and transport important nutrients, vitamins, and minerals throughout your body, it is your body's first line of defence against diseases because 70% of your immune system lies in your digestive tract.

What can you do to improve your digestive health?

It's simple. What you need to do is to practise these simple steps TODAY!



Are all bacteria bad?

No, not all bacteria are bad for your health, there are good bacteria too. Your digestive tract is home to trillions of bacteria. A healthy digestive system should have a healthy balance of 85% good bacteria and 15% bad bacteria.

What happens inside?



- Good bacteria fights bad bacteria for nutrients



- Good bacteria blocks the growth of bad bacteria



- Good bacteria kills bad bacteria

What should you do when bad bacteria overpowers the good bacteria?

Unhealthy lifestyle, stress, unbalanced diet, aging, lack of exercise, consumption of antibiotics, and bacterial infection in the gut can cause microflora imbalance. You can replenish the good bacteria in your digestive system by consuming probiotics.

What are probiotics?

According to the World Gastroenterology Organisation, probiotics are live microbes that have been shown in controlled human studies to induce measurable benefits on intestinal health and immunity. **

Goodness of Probiotics

Probiotics can benefit your digestion if consumed regularly.

- Helps reduce risk of intestinal disturbances such as constipation, diarrhoea, ulcers, bloating, belching, bad breath, allergy, heartburn, and nausea
- Helps maintain a healthy bacteria balance by keeping the good bacteria in high levels
- Helps improve bowel movement
- Helps improve tolerance to milk
- Helps boost immune system
- Helps replenish good bacteria after taking antibiotics
- Helps with digestion



In support of World Digestive Health Day

- Promotes good digestive health through fun and educational activities
- Supports expert initiatives such as:



* Data from the Ministry of Health, Health Facts 2012.
** Data from the World Gastroenterology Organisation.



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Positive Parenting

Pledge to

Disconnect Digitally

and Reconnect Emotionally



Guilty of spending too much time connecting with your gadgets instead of with the people around you? It's not too late to make a difference! Join Positive Parenting as we pledge to spend at least an hour a day to reconnect with our children by indulging in simple pleasures in life.


What can you do to reconnect with your children without the gadgets?

Simple!

- ✓ Play a game of "I Spy" or "Memory Game" in the car with your children
- ✓ Read to them before bedtime
- ✓ Get them involved in the kitchen
- ✓ Have one family meal together daily
- ✓ Help them with their homework



The Positive Parenting "Family Quality Time" Pledge was recently initiated by Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Hj Mohd Ali at the Launch of Positive Parenting Phase III on April 12, 2014. The initiative was brought about as we realized the need to revive traditional family togetherness for the emotional betterment of our children.

Join us at  Positive Parenting to take the pledge to "disconnect digitally and reconnect emotionally with our children"! Share with us your idea and photos of what spending "Family Quality Time" meant to you and your loved ones in our #100qualitymoments photo contest to be in the running to **win household appliances or shopping vouchers** from June till October 2014.

Pledge, Snap & WIN! 5 Lucky Monthly Winners!



* pictures are for illustrative purposes only.

1st prize:

Household appliance worth RM400

2nd prize:

Household appliance worth RM200

3rd prize:

Household appliance worth RM160

Consolations (x2):

Shopping vouchers worth RM120



- Five (5) lucky pledgers with the most interesting photo and captions will be chosen every month from June till October 2014
- Prizes will be given in November 2014, at the end of the contest period

PLEDGE NOW

Child Development

- Skills
- Socio-emotional
- Problems
- Physical Activity

Outsourced Parenting

By **Dr Anjali Doshi-Gandhi**,
Deputy Director General (Policy), National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN)

“Smart Parenting” is about being there for your child, it’s about taking up an active role in their development and more importantly, it’s about bonding and building a healthy connection.

Housemaids have become an integral part of family life in Malaysia, some may say it’s a necessity – they provide much needed support to parents who often don’t have extended family around to assist with childcare or dual-career parents who are often left with little choice and require help as well as support to carry out their family responsibilities.

It’s fair to say that commitment and devotion towards a successful career and rearing a child requires both sacrifice and no small amount of resolve and effort for either to work out in tandem. These and other factors prompt most parents to employ a housemaid, helper or caregiver to assist them in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. The notion being that maids would provide assistance to much needed help around the house and allow parents more freedom and time to spend with their children.

From things like potty-training, to swimming and riding a bicycle, from learning not to bully other kids to learning from mistakes and forgiving other people for them. All these are lessons that can be outsourced to



Outsourced Parenting, what’s happening overseas?

In more developed countries such as the US, outsourced parenting often means getting professionals to teach your child certain skills or behaviors such as sleep training or basic etiquettes, provided that you can afford such services, you can even find professionals to baby-proof your house or pick the best name for your newborn. But in Malaysia, outsourced parenting usually involves employing a maid or helper to assist in parenting tasks and other household chores. The help is often on full-time basis.

maids, helpers or even professionals. But just because it can, doesn’t mean that it should.

Any Time Is Quality Time

Work almost always tires you out by the end of the day, but every parent is familiar with that satisfactory feeling you get when you come home to the warm loving embrace of your children running to the door to greet you after a hard day's work. It's about how you spend your time that matters, not necessarily the overall amount. Take time to listen to your children, ask them about their day and if they're old enough to understand, maybe even tell them about yours. You could probably even do some short physical activities together like cooking or playing any kind of sports outside the house. Create a meaningful bond of understanding and love by learning to appreciate those precious moments with your child, seize the opportunity to share experiences together and communicate more intimately with each other. When you make the most of the time you have with them - even on busy days, all will be worthwhile.

The Important Things In Life

Sometimes your child can be much too much for the maid to handle and more often than not, maids will concede just to diffuse the situation. There are no high roads, just the one providing least resistance. High level of responsiveness with a low level of enforcement is the agreed universal recipe for spoiled child served with hot temper and tantrum gravy. Parents should be involved in the process of enforcement of rules and the moulding of their children's core values, cultural etiquettes and life's philosophy. Things that maids would otherwise teach according to their understanding and experience instead of what you would prefer it to be. Parents shouldn't franchise this critical role and responsibility to their maids or anyone else for that matter.

Point Of Reference

When a child spends little or hardly any time at all with their parents, they seek emotional

support from the next best thing, their "Nannies". Of course some maids can (rarely) assume this role but the beacon of hope and light of wisdom should always be the parents, the "be-all-end-all solution" to their problems. Emotional and psychological support is an integral part of development, so parents should always be there for them. Encrusted in a strong family relationship must always be trust, love and understanding which coincidentally, are the very foundations that hold the family unit together.

Learn to set your priorities and figure out where you can

make do without the help of your maid. Nothing can really prepare you for parenthood and its prerequisite challenges, but the rewards are promising and life-long. Parental roles cannot be effectively substituted, franchised or outsourced to other parties - they can only supplement existing fundamental parenting responsibilities.

It's important that both you and your significant other are on the same page and complement each other on things as vital as raising a child. Having a maid can be a boon and help save you a lot of hassle and enables you to ensure work-life balance and harmony, plus it's a perfect solution to spend more time with your child, but you must take charge of your own life and that of your little one. Don't be too over-dependent, though there is no shame in hiring a maid to help out, the same may not apply in being a consistent absentee in the life of your child. **PP**



Role of Parents/Key Responsibility

Setting the foundation for a well-developed child imbued with the right values and skills to become a holistic, well developed, responsible and resilient child.

- 1) Discipline
- 2) Values inculcation
- 3) Socialization, etiquette, etc.,
- 4) Role model



An educational collaboration with



National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia

Getting to Know OCD!

By **Dr Yen Teck Hoe**, Consultant Psychiatrist, Malaysian Psychiatric Association

Zaim brushes his teeth 8 to 14 times a day because he is convinced that his mouth is filled with germs. He always takes 20 minutes to half an hour to brush his teeth and doesn't stop even when traces of blood appear.

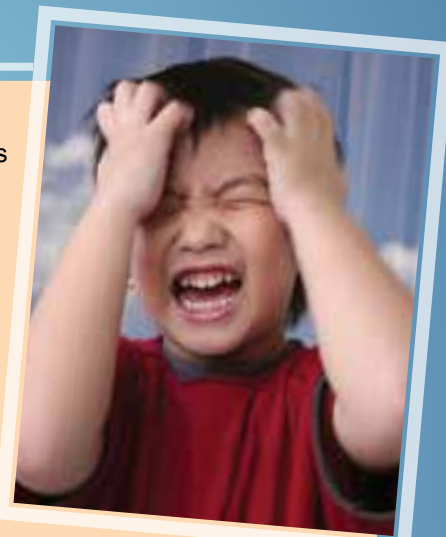
Karina erases everything she writes 9 times (sometimes more) because she believes that her handwriting is crooked. She constantly tries to straighten it, over and over again.

Both Zaim and Karina are suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

OCD is a type of anxiety disorder that can sometimes severely disrupt a person's academic, social and working life. Persons suffering from OCD will have recurring obsessions, recurrent unwanted thoughts, compulsions and repetitive excessive actions that cause them much distress, takes up a lot of time and interfere with their daily lives.

OCD sufferers are powerless to stop their compulsive behaviours, and may have elaborate "rules" as to how they must be done. They will repeat them over and over until they feel they have got it right. However, unlike the obsessive compulsions to drink or shop, OCD compulsions do not give the sufferer pleasure, but only a measure of relief.

Although this disorder was once thought to be rare in children and adolescents, OCD is now believed to affect around 2-3% of children. This disorder often goes unrecognised because OCD sufferers and parents do not realise that OCD is a medical illness and there is treatment for it. For those who know that OCD is an illness, they may be too ashamed to seek help or are unable to accept OCD as a brain disease.



Understanding its causes

The exact cause of OCD is unknown, but experts believe it to be linked to an imbalance of the chemical serotonin in the brain. When the flow of serotonin is blocked, the brain's 'alarm system' overreacts and mistakenly triggers danger messages. Instead of blocking out these danger messages, the mind of an OCD sufferer will instead dwell on them causing him or her to experience certain doubts and fears.

Genetics are also thought to play an important role. Family members or a descendant who may have had a history of this disorder increases the risk of OCD for the OCD sufferer. Additionally, if the OCD sufferer is a perfectionist, then his/her upbringing can also increase the risk for OCD. However, just because a child has the genetic tendency for OCD does not mean that he or she will develop OCD. It just means that there's a stronger chance that he or she might develop it.

Sometimes an illness or some other stress-causing event may trigger the symptoms of OCD in a person who is genetically prone to develop it.

It is important to understand that OCD behaviour is not something that a child can simply stop just by 'trying hard' or because you or your child want it to stop. OCD is a disorder just like any other (e.g. diabetes or asthma); it is not something that your child can control nor has he caused it himself.

Certain traumatic events (such as the death of a loved one or an accident) may worsen or trigger the onset of OCD in children who are prone to develop it.



Treating OCD

There are a few types of treatment available for children with OCD namely, behavioural therapy and medication. Behavioral therapy, also known as cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy (CBT), helps kids learn to change thoughts and feelings by first changing behavior.

Drugs work well in relieving both obsessions and compulsions. Treatment is long-term because patients tend to relapse when the drug is discontinued, often within weeks. Psychosurgery would be the last resort for treatment-resistant patients.

So if you notice any unusual behaviour in your child, consult your doctor immediately as treatments are available. **PP**

An educational collaboration with





Choking Hazards: Children & Toddlers

By **Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Cardiologist



The exploratory nature of babies involves a lot of saliva-covered cuteness and mouthing is the best most straightforward technique to do this. Parents must always be aware of what their children put into their mouths as choking and all its hazards are an ever present and constant threat.

Mouthing as it's referred to, isn't a condition; it's the natural state of things, it's how your baby learns to get to know the world around them. As parents, our responsibility is to always keep a watchful eye on them at all times and provide for them to the best of our ability a safe and conducive learning environment.

Defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as the blockage or hindrance of respiration by a foreign-body obstruction in the internal airway, choking has been one of the leading causes of child morbidity and mortality especially for those under 3 years of age. At this stage of growth and even more so when they start teething, your infant is more likely to use her mouth as a tool for exploration and discovery as a National Geographic photographer would his DSLR.

There are 2 types of prevalent choking hazards; one is **food**, which accounts for more than 50% of all choking

cases. It's no surprise really since babies until the age of 2 years old are unable to properly digest solids and tend to swallow their food whole. Unlike the reticulated python of the Bornean jungle, babies have a relatively small, fragile esophagus and a less powerful digestive acid.

Other types of choking hazards are **miscellaneous items** such as small toys, balloons, buttons, coins, marbles, fridge magnets, basically as a rule-of-thumb, if it fits in your child's hand, it's best to keep those items away from her.

Studies have shown that babies aged 6-18 months of age spend around 30 minutes mouthing various types of objects, teething, sucking, and drooling on anything they can get their hands on. Even though the average mouthing time spent per day isn't at all impressive if you compared it to the time babies allocate for sleeping, it's the time of the day these 30 minutes are spread across that parents must be alert of.

Here are a few take home tips you can use that are win-win for both your toddler's excessive mouthing tendencies and your peace of mind:

1 **Childproof your house.** Don't leave your personal stuff lying around on the floor.

- Buy a childproof container and store all your belongings that you like to throw around such as keys, smart phones, coins and buttons in them. Keep the container far from reach (store more than 1.75 meters above floor level).
- Also remember that poisonous products such as detergents, bleach and other cleaning materials are to be kept out of reach. Remember to label them as well.
- Check under your couch and in between the cushions, tables and carpets for hazardous items and make sure to do this regularly.
- Wires and extended cables are to be neatly fastened on the wall, tied up and placed out of sight and reach. Close power outlets off with safety plugs or with safety covers that snap shut when the outlet is not in use.
- Sharp and hazardous objects in the living room drawers or kitchen cabinets should be kept under lock and key.
- Telephone cables are a constant strangulation threat, change to a wireless phone instead for a little while. Drapes and curtains can also pose the same threat - simply tie them high enough and out of reach.



Item hazards for babies and young toddlers: Coins, buttons, toys with small parts, toys that can fit entirely in a child's mouth, small balls, marbles, balloons, small hair bows, barrettes, rubber bands, pen or marker caps, small button-type batteries, refrigerator magnets, pieces of pet food.

2 **Be picky.** Make sure to pick the right set of toys for your child according to their age.

- Usually toy manufacturers have labels on them that help you identify and indicate what sorts of toys are appropriate for your infant.
- Make sure the toys you buy are properly made and doesn't fall off easily.
- Be aware of the mechanics of the toys you buy, probe the toys for small parts, detachable components and sharp edges.
- Smaller children need to be supervised during playtime. Also remember to store all toys in a container after playtime.
- Don't let your older child share his/her toys with the baby as toys for older children may not be suitable for your baby. This goes without saying for food as well, sometimes siblings like to share or be involved

in feeding the baby during mealtime. It's a good way to teach responsibility, but make sure you explain to your older child about the do's and don'ts and always supervise!

3 **Always supervise.** Oversee mealtime, make sure you and your spouse or the caregiver are always there to supervise.

- Child should sit up straight during mealtime, they should not be simultaneously eating while playing, running or walking, also avoid giving food while in the car.
- If you want to feed her solids, lightly chew the solids to a smaller portion prior to feeding your baby or cut it into bite-sized pieces no larger than ½ an inch.
- Cook harder foods like carrots or broccoli until they become soft and chewable. Avoid nuts, seeds or popcorn altogether, it's not worth the risk.
- Hydrate your child often when eating but refrain from drinking while eating, offer a drink between mouthfuls instead.
- It's important to wean your child off baby food to more solid-based foodstuff - this should be done gradually and safely.
- Until your child can properly chew or accept solids, it's always best to tell everyone taking care of her what is acceptable and what isn't.

The AAP has listed these food items as choking hazards for children below 4 years old: hot dogs, hard candy, chewing gum, nuts and seeds, chunks of cheese, whole grapes, popcorn, and chunks of peanut butter, raw vegetables, and raisins.



Your child would most probably have mouthed a ton of things during these first few years and then some. But always remember that not everything is fun and games. Choking is a real threat to your child and it could happen at any time. So take precautions, always be safe and vigilant, be informed of the decisions you make for your precious one. It wouldn't hurt to also have some basic knowledge regarding child CPR and rescue or first aid techniques as it might help save your child if the situation does occur.

Whether you have a baby, toddler, or school-age child, your home should be a haven where your little one can explore safely. After all, touching, holding, climbing, and exploring are activities that help develop your child's body and mind, and should be encouraged. **PP**

My Positive Teen

- Socio-emotional
- Conditions and Diseases

Energy Drinks for Caffeine Fix?

Parents are advised to keep their eyes on their teens' caffeine daily intake

By **Dr Nazeli Hamzah**, President, Malaysian Association for Adolescent Health

Homework, tuition classes, deadlines, exams, late nights. It's no wonder your teen needs some caffeine fix and has switched from sweetened coffee to a more affordable, on-the-go energy drink!

What is energy drink?

Energy drinks are drinks that contain caffeine, taurine, vitamins, herbal supplements and sugar or sweeteners. They often contain additives such as guarana, kola nut, yerba mate and cocoa. The main ingredient in energy drinks is caffeine. It was found that many energy drinks in the market today contain 70 – 80 mg of caffeine per 8-oz (236.58ml) serving, which is about 3 times more than the amount found in cola drinks!

Energy drinks are claimed to improve energy, stamina, athletic performance, concentration and assist in weight loss. Hence, they are a popular hit with adolescents nowadays. Not forgetting that they are easily available in any convenience store and supermarkets.

So does this mean that energy drink is dangerous to drink? Although they aren't necessarily bad to drink, they provide no nutritive value and over consumption could be damaging. It may help with morning drowsiness but the bad news is your teen's body will eventually depend on them to keep up with normal functioning.

Do you know?

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) do not limit the content of caffeine in energy drinks as they are classified as dietary supplements. However, FDA strongly advises consumers that products marketed as "energy shots" or "energy drinks" should not replace rest or sleep.



What are the side effects of energy drinks?

Listed below in descending order are the side effects of over-consumption of energy drinks gathered by the Australian Poisons Center:-

1. Palpitations/ tachycardia
2. Tremors/ shaking
3. Agitation/ restlessness
4. Gastrointestinal upset (diarrhoea/ constipation)
5. Chest pain
6. Dizziness
7. Paraesthesia (tingling, tickling, or numbing sensation of the skin)
8. Insomnia
9. Respiratory distress
10. Headache

What are free sugars?

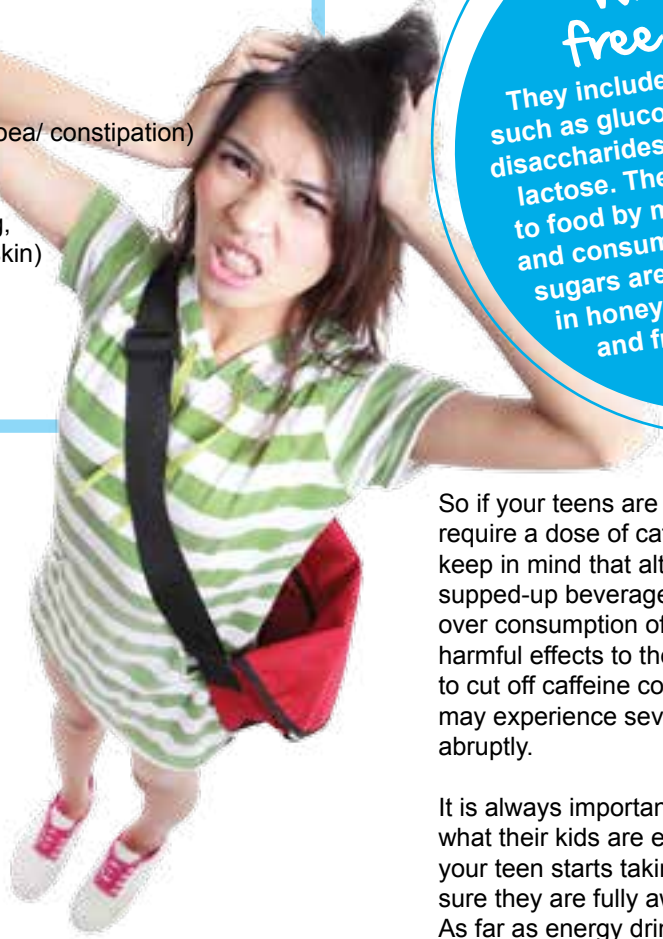
They include monosaccharides such as glucose and fructose; and disaccharides such as sucrose and lactose. They are usually added to food by manufacturers, cooks and consumers themselves. Free sugars are also found naturally in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit concentrates.

Energy drinks, when consumed in moderation may have no short term adverse effects, but the effects from long term consumption are still not fully understood. Studies have shown that people who consume energy drinks are more likely to be associated to high-risk behavior, including the use of drugs, sexual risk taking, being involved in fights, not using seat belts and taking risks on a dare. They too are more likely to take up smoking and drinking.

Energy drinks contain a large amount of sugar. In a 500ml can of energy drink, there is typically 54 g of sugar which is equivalent to 13 teaspoons of sugar. According to the World Health Organisation, free sugars consumption should not be more than 10% of ones' total energy intake per day to curb the problems of obesity or tooth decay. With prolonged use of energy drinks your teen will be at a high risk of being obese and subsequently developing diabetes.

So if your teens are one of the night owls who require a dose of caffeine in the morning, keep in mind that although it is claimed that supped-up beverages are safe, remember that over consumption of energy drinks may have harmful effects to the body. Help your teen to cut off caffeine consumption slowly as he may experience severe headaches if he stops abruptly.

It is always important for parents to know what their kids are eating and drinking. Before your teen starts taking energy drinks, make sure they are fully aware of the side effects. As far as energy drink consumption goes, it should be done in moderation by everyone, especially adolescents. Young children should be discouraged from consuming energy drinks due to the high caffeine content. This is especially so if he or she has an underlying medical condition. **PP**



An educational contribution by



Malaysian Association for
Adolescent Health