

Start Healthy!

Lessons For A Lifetime Of Good Eating Habits

(NAPSA)—Most parents know the challenges of getting their child to have a balanced diet and try a variety of foods. It's not an easy task—especially since most babies are born with a protective instinct to be afraid of new foods. However, now is the time to teach your baby healthy eating habits that will last the rest of his life.

Research shows that lifelong eating habits and tastes are learned early. Unfortunately, many American children are not getting this important early training. Obesity is on the rise, with 13 percent of children ages 6 to 11 overweight.

Gerber, a leader in pediatric nutrition for 75 years, is sponsoring a national education campaign to communicate the importance of healthy eating for infants and toddlers and to help parents make nutritious food choices for their babies. As part of this campaign, Gerber has suggestions for teaching your baby healthy eating and exercise habits now, so he will make healthy choices later in life.

Did you know...?

1. Breastfeeding teaches your baby to like the flavors you eat.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding as the best way to feed your baby because breast milk not only helps in your baby's eye and brain development, but it also reduces your baby's chances of developing allergies and infections. It may even reduce the risk for obesity later in life.

*Remember,
right now is your best
opportunity
to teach your baby
good habits
that will last a lifetime.*



2. Babies are born knowing how much they need to eat to grow and thrive. Infants understand their bodies and their hunger right from the start. When your baby starts eating solid foods, watch for "I'm full!" cues, and never force your child to clean his plate. He'll make up for the missed calories at the next meal or the next day.

3. Babies are born with a protective instinct to be afraid of new foods. In fact, research shows that it may take up to 10 exposures before a baby truly decides if he likes a food. If a baby rejects a certain food, try the new food along with a familiar food and don't apply pressure, which can slow the acceptance process.

4. Exposure to fruits and vegetables early sets the stage for more variety later. Build

your baby's taste buds with a variety of healthy food choices from each food group. Research sponsored by Gerber and conducted by the University of Tennessee Nutrition Department demonstrates that parents who introduce their babies to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables early in life are more likely to have children who establish a lasting preference for a variety of foods later in childhood.

5. Fifty percent of children ages 2 to 18 eat less than one serving of fruit a day. Five servings of fruits and vegetables a day are important to provide your older baby with essential nutrients, teach her new flavors and get her into a healthy habit. Different color fruits and vegetables provide different nutrients, so introduce your baby to a rainbow of colors. One-half of a jar of baby food or one-fourth of a cup equals one serving. Unfortunately, many American children are not eating the recommended five servings a day.

6. Early physical activity contributes to early brain development and learning. Nurturing your child's motor skills helps to ensure healthy development and later participation in physical activity. Establish physical activity as a routine to promote an active lifestyle.

For more information, please visit www.gerber.com or call the Parents Resource Center at 1-800-4-GERBER anytime, day or night, to request a brochure on teaching your baby healthy eating and exercise habits.