



The Wellness Family

Dr. Brayton Keeps You Informed

Meal Planning for Wellness

We all want to raise healthy children, and one of the most important things we can do is feed them right. But cutting back on sugar, dairy and fast-food is just one step. The most important thing we can do is begin helping our children have a healthier relationship with food by knowing and learning more about what's behind it.

The History

In 1970, only about 5% or 2.5 million children over the age of six were considered obese. By 2010, just 40 years later, that number had increased to about 12% or 9 million children. But just 10 years after that, over 18.5% of children six years or older are considered obese for a total of 13.7 million children. That is over a 50% increase in obese children in just 50 years. Unfortunately, according to the World Health Organization, worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975. 38 million children under the age of 5 were considered obese or overweight in 2019 and in 2016 statistically over 340 million children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 19 were overweight or obese.

We know that the Western Diet has worked against us. As fast-food franchises grew, so did their portion sizes. Additionally, in the 1950s the average dinner plate was only 9" in diameter but by the mid-70s that had grown to 12" and more room on the plate means more food. When you couple this with 54% of adults still obediently cleaning their plates, a lesson habitually taught to children, and the bigger plate has led to bigger weight.

The Obesogenic Environment

The American Psychological Association contributes the rise in obesity to an obesogenic environment that promotes inactivity and overeating. They recently reported that women working outside of the home has led to a decrease in the amount of time spent on food preparations. When you add to this the increase in fast-food and full-service restaurants, more families are dining out. Of course, it's wise not to ignore the increase in readily available processed foods and the increased consumption of chemicals like high-fructose corn syrup found in soft drinks and most fruit juices.

The biggest problem is found when we combine these horrible food choices with a sedentary lifestyle. Fifty years ago, kids were playing outside: riding bikes around their neighborhood, getting a group together for a ball game in a vacant lot or digging in the dirt and tumbling in their yard. The advent of the video game wasn't even the catalyst to the problem, as kids walking to their

neighborhood arcade with a pocketful of quarters still got them out of the house and moving. The first video-game console was invented in 1972 and home consoles really hit the market in 1977. By 1985, most homes had an arcade in their house and screen time replaced playing outdoors.

Toxic Foods

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, consumers in 2018 spent the majority of their food dollar on foodservice establishments or prepared foods and just a fraction of their money went towards foods that required any preparation on their part. Interestingly, while over a 30-year time span Americans did spend a lot less money on groceries, a greater portion of that spending was on processed foods and sweets.



The most valuable way to ensure that you and your family are eating healthy for every meal is to meal plan.

Unfortunately, the Western Diet tends to rely on processed and ready-to-eat foods which are chemically-laden and lacking in nutrition content.

In a recent study, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* concluded that highly processed food purchases are a dominant, unshifting part of U.S. purchasing patterns, but highly processed foods may have higher saturated fat, sugar, and sodium content than less-processed foods. For example, the most common food stabilizer found in many prepackaged baked goods is calcium chloride, which is also used for de-icing planes, road stabilization used as dust control, condensation traps and also as a drainage facilitator.

The Food and Drug Administration has a list of over 3,000 ingredients in its database titled, "Everything Added to Food in the United States" and current research estimates that Americans consumes almost 1 trillion pounds of chemical food additives each year.

Inflammation Foods

Second only to processed foods, inflammation foods are equally problematic. It could be that your family rarely eats out, avoids sugar and other toxic foods but is still consuming items that are harmful to their health.

Steven Gundry, in his book *The Plant Paradox*, explains that there are foods that have been considered healthy for years that could actually be working against our desire to eat a healthy diet. It's common to reach for "a vegetable," only for it to actually be a fruit, grain or legume that may not in fact be the healthy vegetable or mineral you think it is, but instead is a starch that can spike blood sugar and additionally create inflammation in the body.

The Solution to the Problem

It is possible to overcome years of habitually bad eating habits. With some minor changes spread out over time, our children can learn to have a healthy relationship with food and avoid becoming part of these statistics.

The first step is to identify the problem. Does our family "live to eat or eat to live"? Is the next meal our primary focus or do we fix the next meal with our mind on fueling our bodies properly? Do we enjoy cooking or is it a burden? Is it possible that something from our childhood has influenced our relationship with food and we're perpetuating that problem with our children? Do we want our children to have the same relationship with food that we have? Acknowledging these questions and their answers is going to be the first step toward helping our families have a healthier relationship with food.

A Healthy Relationship with Food

Like any successful relationship, start with an introduction. No matter the age of your children, it's not too late to introduce them to food and begin to develop a healthy connection by learning and teaching them more about what they are eating. Recognize that if your children want to be in the kitchen with you that's a good thing and let them be part of the food preparation. Whether it's helping to wash or chop vegetables or you're getting down to their level to help prepare the entrée for the oven. If you encourage your children to enjoy cooking and being in the kitchen, they'll remember this not just as something that has to be done but something that was fun – and invites them to feel comfortable learning more.

Consider taking them with you to the produce section of your local grocery market. Can they name all of the vegetables that are there? If you find an item they don't know, then do an online search for a recipe that includes it. When you go grocery shopping next, pick up that vegetable and create the new dish for dinner. Be sure to encourage your children to be invested in the preparation and develop a stronger connection to the meal.

Meal Planning

The most valuable way to ensure that you and your family are eating healthy for every meal is to meal plan – focus on whole foods first. We've all heard the saying, "You are what you eat," so we shouldn't be eating chemicals.

Every meal should start with a protein and vegetable, even breakfast. The Western Diet says that eggs and bacon are the only breakfast protein, and that cereals, bagels and toast are a staple. That's just not true and actually really unhealthy. There is no rule that says what must be eaten at each meal; chicken, avocado, asparagus, and broccoli can all be a part of a healthy breakfast. If the family balks against it then start with making healthy omelets. Slowly moving away from the standard breakfast fare and enjoying variety at every meal.

When it comes to meal planning, it's simply a matter of making a menu for each week and purchasing only the items needed for that menu. In order to avoid sabotaging yourself, be sure to keep a few 10-minute meals in the freezer or have healthier alternatives in mind for those days when life has you running behind. The drive-thru should never be an option. Most grocery stores have rotisserie chickens or roasted turkey breast. Pick up a bag of mixed greens for the side and stay on target for every meal.

This isn't a change that your family can make overnight, but it is one you can make. Ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor for recommendations and let them help you help your family live the wellness lifestyle.



*Dear Patient,
Dr. Brayton is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

This newsletter is provided to you by:

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