



◎ Something that you should know: Link between food rewards and childhood obesity

A Canadian study has suggested that, children who are rewarded by their parents with food for different types of behavior are at an increased risk of developing destructive eating habits and childhood obesity (Spence et al, 2010).

◎ Never use food as a reward

Rewarding children for good behaviors is important, as it helps them to internalise positive behaviors. However, it should NOT involve food, especially unhealthy ones, as this may have negative consequences:

- Encourages overconsumption of food high in sugar and fat
- Disrupts their internal hunger responses and satiety cues, thus encouraging them to eat even when they are not hungry
- Teaches them to connect food with mood
- Encourages their preference for unhealthy foods
- Provides unnecessary calories, which may contribute to poor health



◎ Never Use Food As A Reward

- Instead use verbal praises, such as “well done” and “good boy” which affirm a child’s worth as a person.
- Give stickers with positive messages such as a “good work”, “good job”, “superb”, “totally terrific” or “great” written on it.
- Take a trip to zoo
- Read his favorite bed time story.



◎ Never use food as punishment

Punishing children for their bad behaviors by withholding food is NOT advised because it can lead to eating disorders. It may make them fearful that they will go hungry the next time they misbehave which causes them to overeat when food is available.

Spence J.C et al. (2010). Examining behavioral susceptibility to obesity among Canadian pre-school children. The role of eating behavior. Int J Pediatric Obesity.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Breast milk is the best food for babies as it is the sole source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life and is recommended to be continued until 2 years, with introduction to appropriate complementary foods after 6 months of age.

A. Following are the details of advantages, as also nutritional superiority of breast-feeding :

- i) Immediately after delivery, breast milk is yellowish and sticky. This milk is called as Colostrum, which is secreted during the first week of delivery. Colostrum is more nutritious than that of mature milk because it contains more protein, more anti-infective properties which are of great importance for the infant's defence against dangerous neo-natal infections. It also contains higher level of Vitamin 'A';
- ii) Breast Milk -
 - a) Is a complete and balanced food that provides all the nutrients needed by the infant (for the first six months of life);
 - b) Has anti-infective properties that protect the infants from infection the early months;
 - c) Is always available;
 - d) Needs no utensils or water (which might carry germs) or fuel its preparations;
- iii) Breast-feeding is much cheaper than feeding infant milk substitutes as the cost of the extra food needed by the mother is negligible compared to the cost of feeding infant milk substitutes;
- iv) Mothers who breast-feed usually have longer periods of infertility after child birth than non-lactators;

B. Details of management of breast-feeding, are as under :

- i) Breast-feeding-
 - a) Immediately after delivery enables the contraction of the womb and helps the mother to regain her figure quickly;
 - b) Is successful when the infant suckles frequently and the mother wanting to breast-feed is confident in her ability to do so;
- ii) In order to promote and support breast-feeding the mother's natural desire to breast-feed should always be encouraged by giving, where needed, practical advice and making sure that she has the support of her relatives;
- iii) Adequate care for the breast and nipples should be taken during pregnancy;
- iv) It is also necessary to put the infant to the breast as soon as possible after delivery;
- v) Let the mother and the infant stay together after the delivery, the mother and her infant should be allowed to stay together (in the hospital, this is called "rooming-in");
- vi) Give the infant Colostrum as it is rich in many nutrients and its anti-infective factors protect the infants from infections during the few days of its birth;
- vii) The practise of discarding Colostrum and giving sugar water, honey water, butter or other concoctions instead of Colostrum should be very strongly discouraged;
- viii) Let the infants suckle on demand;
- ix) Every effort should be made to breast-feed the infants whenever they cry;
- x) Mother should keep her body and clothes and that of the infant always neat and clean,