



The first 3 years of your child's life are a window of opportunity for forming lifelong healthy habits.

Use this time to:

- Expand your child's taste buds
- Teach him what healthy food is supposed to taste like
- Offer him fresh and healthy foods as much as possible
- Guide his healthy food choices and allow him to decide what and how much he wishes to eat so that even if he chooses some less healthy potions, they will be occasional indulgences in small doses.

"Research suggests that the earlier and broader experience with food, the healthier the child's diet"



☉ Parents as role models

As a parent, you have to "walk the talk" when it comes to teaching your child to eat healthfully. At this age, your child wants to copy whatever you do, including what you eat. So, reflect on your own food habits:

Do you restrict yourself to a narrow range of food?	Yes	No
Do you eat very few fruits and hardly any vegetables?	Yes	No
Do you prefer sweetened drinks, e.g. soft drinks over plain water?	Yes	No
Do you snack frequently on high fat foods, e.g. potato chips and pastries?	Yes	No
Do you add salt and sauces to your food before tasting?	Yes	No

If you answered YES to most or all the questions, then you are not eating healthy and not setting a good example for your child. Change your habits today.

Start fostering healthy lifelong dietary habits in your child by:

- Eating and enjoying balanced and varied meals together as a family
- Engaging your child in food decisions eg. Grocery shopping
- Enrolling her help in planning and preparing meals
- Encouraging her to taste new foods
- Explaining to her why some foods are healthier for her while others are not



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,