

# Nuts about Nutrition, Fall 2005

## Providing You with Wholesome Nutrition

### **Laura Cipullo. LLC Nutrition Services**

Englewood, NJ, Ridgewood, NJ and Manhattan, NY

Laura Cipullo. LLC's Fall Nutrition Newsletter focuses on feeding our children. Many parents wonder if juice is good or bad; one thing to remember is no one food is bad. Food does not have a moral association, and all foods are okay in moderation. Parents need to send this message to their children, and more importantly, parents need to think about what they are offering their children and what type of meal structure the family is following. Moms and Dads need to be sure their diet mentalities are not infringing on their children's intake. Read on to learn about fruit juice and how to help make your child's diet adequate. If you have more nutrition questions, make a nutrition appointment with a Registered Dietitian by calling 201-567-6999.

### **Super Juice at Snack Time**

By Laura Cipullo, RD, CDE

Nutrition messages can be confusing especially when it comes to how to feed your children. Clients tell me their children will not eat fruits and/or vegetables. They wonder whether fruit juices are appropriate beverages for their children.

Your children can have juice, but which kind and when juice is offered, must be the duty of the parent. You can feed your children 100% juice options like Welch's 100% grape juice or even juice from your own home juicer. Juice is a nutritious option for snack time. It can help to replenish lost fluids and help your children meet the 5-a-day minimum of fruits and vegetables. One half cup of unsweetened juice is equivalent to one serving of a fruit. Offering about one half cup to one cup of juice, at snack time, may be a good a starting point.

*Fruits and 100% fruit juice can be part of your child's healthy intake.*

Juice is also an easy way to introduce the different tastes to your children's senses. As your children grow older, and develop an appreciation for sour, sweet, and bitter, you can add more fruits and vegetables to their meals and snacks. A whole piece of fruit, or a vegetable, is more nutritious especially due its fiber content. However, a pure juice is a great fruit alternative and helps your children meet their nutrition needs.

Juices to try include Tropicana's Fruit Integrity made from juice and pureed fruit, POM's 100% pomegranate juice, and calcium fortified orange juice.

## **When Kids Restrict Their Intake**

By Laura Cipullo, RD, CDE and Elyse Falk, MS, RD

At some point your child may decide to limit their nutrition intake by choosing to follow a vegetarian diet or perhaps by adopting a “no carb” food policy. Teenagers are likely to inform parents of their new diet practice, rather than ask their parents’ opinion prior to the new diet. Self-imposed dietary restrictions are common today. Some of these restrictions include becoming a vegetarian or a vegan, following a no-fat or a no-carbohydrate diet, and/or possibly a raw food diet. While dietary restrictions may serve as a way to create an identity or a “voice” for the teen, it is important to realize children’s self-imposed restrictions may also be the cause of nutritional deficiencies or disordered eating. Parents need to be able to help their children meet 100% of their nutritional needs when foods or food groups are eliminated.

A vegetarian diet eliminates red meat, poultry and fish. It is a plant focused diet with many variations. For instance, the lacto-ovo vegetarian consumes dairy, eggs and plant foods. The lacto vegetarian only consumes dairy and plant foods. When all animal foods are eliminated, the diet qualifies as a vegan diet. The more restrictive the diet, the more challenging it is for the teen to get adequate nutrition. Many teens become interested in a vegetarian diet when they learn how the food companies treat their livestock or how their animals are raised. Children, whom identify with animal rights, seem more likely to become vegetarian and or vegan. Your child may initially choose the diet because of animal rights or healthy eating pursuits. Parents need to know there is a tendency for children imposing vegetarian restrictions to then use the diet as a way to “watch their weight” or make food decisions less mind boggling rather than achieving a heart healthy diet. The vegetarian lifestyle can be healthy, but it is definitely more challenging to get adequate B12, adequate protein and adequate calcium.

*Many children are associating carbohydrates as “bad food” due to society’s fad diet trend of no and low carb diets.*

Another self imposed dietary restriction may be a no fat diet. Kids employing this no fat restriction usually consume only fat free products despite the caloric level. A no fat restriction makes satiety very hard to achieve and thus many kids find their appetite insatiable. Your teen may initially lose weight from the calorie decrease. However, it is probable they will eventually gain weight due to the constant appetite from the non fat food selections. Your child may also be at risk for an essential fatty acid deficiency if they have eliminated all fats from their intake. This may make them moody and even depressed. Kids may consequently reduce their protein intake in fear of eating fat within animal muscle. This restriction leads to further nutritional repercussions such as Vitamin B12 deficiency, iron deficiency and protein deficiency. Remember, your child needs all foods including fats, proteins and even carbohydrates.

The “No – Carb” restriction is also very common among our teens right now. Your child may decide to follow a low or no carbohydrate diet with the intention of losing weight or ridding the “bad” food. Many children are associating carbohydrates as “bad food” due to society’s fad diet

trend of no and low carb diets such as the South Beach diet and Atkins. Kids start restricting breads, pasta, potatoes, rice, beans, fruit, vegetables, milk, and yogurt. Limiting these particular foods is robbing the body of many vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and phytochemicals which all are shown to decrease risk of heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, hypertension, and sometimes gastrointestinal problems. Children are active and are still growing. It is important that they have a varied diet including complex carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates provide energy to the body, especially the brain because it can only use the simple sugar, known as glucose for energy.

*Tip: Remember to buy local and seasonal produce.*

Finally, another self imposed dietary restriction sometimes seen in the older adolescent is known as the raw food diet. The this diet consists of the following: fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, grains, legumes, dried fruit, seaweed, freshly made juices from fruit and vegetables, purified water (not tap water), and coconut milk. The raw food eater omits dairy, meat, eggs, and fish. One tends to eat a higher than average fruit, vegetable and fiber intake, with limited or no processed foods, however this rigid restriction can lead to many nutritional deficiencies. The possible deficiencies include vitamin B-12, calcium, iron, zinc, riboflavin. Additionally, a low intake of high quality protein and calories can leave someone constantly hungry and thinking about the food he/she is not allowing in his/her diet. The restriction alone may lead to overeating of the restricted food or another food and may spiral out of control, leading to a binge/purge episode. Parents needs to know the belief of a raw food eater is that raw foods have essential enzymes that aid in the complete digestion of that food without relying on the body's own digestive enzymes. If the food is cooked, these natural enzymes will be destroyed thus needing the body's digestive enzymes, taxing our bodies. This is thought to be a "bad" thing. There is much scientific evidence that refutes that only raw foods are best. Your children need to know that there is evidence of better iron absorption from many cooked versus raw vegetables. Also, lycopene, a cancer-fighting antioxidant found in red tomatoes, was found to be better absorbed when cooked with oil.

**If you notice your child imposing dietary restrictions** whether it be vegetarianism or a non carb policy, it is recommended that you seek the advice of a registered dietitian to help your child find ways to meet all of their growing needs and help rule out the possibility of an eating disorder. Parents can have their daughter or son consult a Registered Dietitian for a nutritional check-up. Registered Dietitians can be located via the American Dietetic Association's web site:

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

Parents must provide their child with the appropriate nutritional alternatives to meet 100% of their daily needs. Finally, spread the message that all foods are okay, in moderation.

## **Proactive Nutrition Planning**

If your child is restricting their intake the following nutrition action plans may be helpful:

**To increase iron absorption** - combine Vitamin C foods (oranges, strawberries, and grapefruit) with hard to absorb iron foods (spinach, peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat and bran cereal).

**To better achieve adequate vegetarian protein intake** – include soy yogurt, soy milk, tofu, edamame, Quinoa, legumes, nut butters and or nuts.

**To meet folic acid and vitamin B needs** – eat bananas, tomatoes, eggs, whole grain breads/flours, wheat germ, carrots and lentils.

**To obtain vitamin B12 through dietary consumption** – oysters, clams, animal foods and B12 fortified soy milk.

**To prevent a calcium deficient diet** – aim for 1300 mg of calcium/day through skim or 1% milk, low fat soy milk (shaken well), low fat yogurt, cheese, calcium enriched orange juice.

**To obtain essential fatty acids** – include deep sea fish (salmon, tuna, canned light tuna in water), walnuts and or consider a fish oil supplement with your doctor's approval.

**To increase fiber** - include whole grain with  $\geq$  3-5 grams fiber/serving, fruits and vegetables with their skins and legumes.

**To get a variety of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals** - include raw and cooked foods (lycopenes – tomato sauce; potassium • baked white or sweet potato; folate – cooked dried beans and peas).

*Idea: Bring school and nutrition together with the Days of Taste program by Spoons Across America. Visit: [www.spoonsacrossamerica.com](http://www.spoonsacrossamerica.com)*

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Different Types of Vegetarians

- Fruitarian: eats fruits, nuts, honey and vegetable oils
- Lacto: vegetarians include dairy and plant foods
- Lacto ovo: vegetarians include dairy products, eggs and plant foods.