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Today's fast paced existence has led to stressful living and detrimental lifestyle choices. In light of this problem, the need to have the right foods and achieve overall wellness has become a major priority for many. Unhealthy diets comprised of processed fast foods, sedentary lifestyles, and highly demanding professional lives have all contributed to the spike in lifestyle ailments like heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and even depression. If we do not put a stop to this haphazard way of living, we are at risk of putting our future generations through the same cycle of bad choices and poor health.

Child obesity already is a grave cause of concern particularly in the America that has serious health concern, as statistics reveal the incidence of such cases have tripled since the '80s. As of 2011, nearly 1/3rd of American children between the ages of 9 months and 2 years were either overweight or obese. The early onset of obesity in a child can lead to weight and health problems in adult life as well, not to mention poor self-image. Additionally, obese children also have to deal with the 'stigma' of being fat and being taunted in school, which can really affect them emotionally and psychologically.

The emergence of the fast food industry, which was set up to cater to people who are on the go and have no time to cook, ensured that burgers, pizzas, hot dogs, and fried chicken became part of the standard 'American fare'. Since these foods have become everyday staples, many parents have brought up their children on a diet that's anything but wholesome due to lack of awareness and time. The younger generation especially in the US is eating fried, saturated, and sugary foods.

What We Can Do To Change Our Lifestyle

Ill health, lifestyle diseases, decreased lifespans, and inactivity can all be combated if we make numerous well-meaning choices- both for ourselves and our children. Never before has nutrition been such a determining factor in the progress of our future generations.

Increase awareness about Nutrition and its Importance

On her part, First Lady Michelle Obama has kick started a movement to increase awareness about healthy eating and exercise with her 'Let's Move' campaign, which

focuses on educating parents about the importance of wholesome nutrition and promoting physical education and good food programs in schools. She has also done her bit to promote organic farming and urge people to avoid sugary and unhealthy foods and drinks.

Talk to your kids about the importance of being well-nourished. Unhealthy foods can stunt growth, lead to many illnesses, and even affect a child's ability to perform well in school. Make a list of food that are good and nutritious and communicate this to your kids in a simple way without scaring them so as to make them more aware about the importance of good food.

Buy wholesome food; Make your child habituated to healthy eating.

If you long for a healthy, disease-free future for your family, take action today and resolve to buy only wholesome, natural foods from your grocery store. Young children don't have the capacity to understand why some foods are 'good' and some foods are 'bad', so it is your job to tell them why this is so instead of merely telling them to 'eat their veggies'. Learn ways to involve your children in making healthy food choices. The more often they shop with you, the better it is for their awareness. Allow them to pick healthy meals and snacks for school lunches and other meals.



Image from davidgrotto.com

David Grotto, a registered dietitian is an upbeat character to follow on twitter@[DavidGrotto](#) and you can receive more tips also on his [Meals Matter](#) blog.

Be Innovative and Creative

If you are concerned about your children being averse to eating natural foods, be innovative with your cooking and explore some fun ways in which you can introduce vegetables, pulses, and grains on their plates by 'camouflaging' them with flavors they love.



image from www.nourishinteractive.com

Nourish Interactive is a remarkable site that provides educators and parents with free fun nutrition games, interactive nutrition tools and tips to promote healthy living to your family! You can follow them at [@kidshealthtips](https://twitter.com/kidshealthtips)

Make fitness a priority for yourself and your loved ones

Encourage your kids to go out and play instead of sitting at home and playing video games or watching TV for hours. Make exercise a fun activity instead of a dull chore for yourself and your spouse by changing your routine periodically and reminding yourselves that you are exercising to feel good, not just to maintain your weight!

Ensure abundant physical activity from the time he/she is a toddler so that he/she can grow up to love nature's bounty instead of opting for fast food and a sedentary lifestyle.

Finally yet importantly, inculcate a love for nature and all its offerings in your children so that they can appreciate the value of every morsel on their plate, every gush of fresh air outside, and every ray of sunlight.