

Rethink Kid Food

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Check any restaurant children's menu and the selection will look much the same: burgers, pizza and chicken fingers. While familiar and delicious, these foods offer little nutritional value. They provide more salt and fat than children require, and rarely contain enough fiber or vegetables.



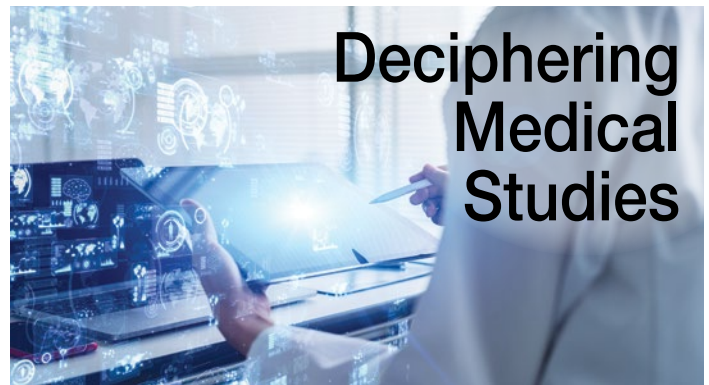
Of course, it's fine for children to eat these fun foods on occasion. Unfortunately, these foods have become the norm. Studies show that among average children in the U.S.: (1) ultra-processed foods comprise 65% of calories and (2) a third of a child's daily food intake comes from products prepared outside their home (e.g., restaurants).

Diets high in ultra-processed foods are linked with an increased risk of conditions, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and obesity.

How can you help children make better choices? Eat meals together and be a good role model. Kids are often interested in what's on an adult's plate, so let them try it. If they watch you eat vegetables regularly, they are likely to follow suit.

Involve kids with food: Go to a farmer's market, visit a pick-your-own farm, grocery shop together, watch a cooking show and try new recipes. Offer meals family style on the table and let kids help themselves (instead of plating meals for them). You may be surprised to see which foods they choose.

Remember that *kid food* is merely a marketing term. Children can and **should** eat a variety of nutritious foods daily, including vegetables, fruit, fish, dairy, eggs, poultry, beans, nuts and whole grains. Don't make any food off limits, but offer a variety of nutritious foods every day.



Deciphering Medical Studies

Nearly every day we read or hear about the results of new medical studies. The amount of information is overwhelming and coverage varies among news outlets. Some research is groundbreaking, while other studies add to many years of scientific inquiry. A few, such as the Framingham Heart Study, encompass several generations of participants.

The goal of medical research is to help health care providers find new and better ways to understand, detect, control and treat illness, and to help patients determine their own personal health risks, especially when they are diagnosed with or are at risk for a medical disorder.

When learning about medical studies, consider these key factors:

- How many people participated and who were they (gender, occupation, health status)?
- Was it a randomized controlled clinical trial? (Participants are randomly assigned to a treatment group or a control group. COVID-19 vaccine trials are an example.)
- Where was the research done and who paid for it?
- For new treatments being tested, were there side effects?

A good way to explore a study is to read its abstract — a summary that can help you quickly learn the important aspects, including the study's purpose, size, methods used, participants, and summarized results.



Start with PubMed (U.S. National Library of Medicine), which includes more than 18 million citations from science and medical journals, at pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.



May is International Mediterranean Diet Month.

You can adopt this traditional eating style in Mediterranean countries by **including** more vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, fish, olive oil and fresh herbs in your diet, while **reducing** highly processed foods, sweets and red meat. This eating plan has been linked with a lower risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and some types of cancer, and is filled with a colorful variety of delicious dishes. No deprivation — just enjoyment.



Balancing Act: Work and Family

By Eric Endlich, PhD

We've all heard it's important to have a work-life balance. But figuring out how to achieve it isn't always easy.



Tips for bringing your work and family into more harmony:

- **Commit to a healthy lifestyle.** A healthy diet, daily physical activity, adequate sleep and finding activities you can share with a partner, family or friends are essential to a balanced life.
- **Set limits for working from home.** Whether you telecommute or spend time occasionally working from home, set up a dedicated office space and make it clear to family and friends when you are at work. But also have a routine — such as shutting down your computer or going for a walk — which signals your workday has ended.
- **Develop a support system.** Enlist family members and trusted friends to help out with childcare or pet care if you have to work late. Likewise, build relationships with coworkers who can cover for you (and vice versa) if a family matter arises.

Stewart Friedman, PhD, director of the University of Pennsylvania Wharton Work/Life Integration Project, says the goal is to “integrate these areas harmoniously instead of thinking only in terms of trade-offs (between work and family).”

Digital Addiction

By Eric Endlich, PhD



Technology addiction is frequent and obsessive use of technology resulting in negative consequences for the user. While experts still debate whether excessive digital use constitutes a true addiction, unchecked use of electronic devices can definitely be detrimental. Symptoms include:

- Impaired focus and increased distraction.
- Caring more about virtual relationships than actual ones.
- Compulsive gaming, shopping, gambling or stock trading.
- FOMO (fear of missing out) on the latest trending topics.
- Phubbing (snubbing) others by using a smartphone during social occasions, such as meals.
- Decreased attention to basic needs such as sleep, exercise or a healthy diet.

If these symptoms seem familiar to you, consider how your internet and smart device use is affecting you. Strategies to reduce the undesirable effects include:

- **Reducing or eliminating** use of electronics for a specified period of time.
- **Deleting social media apps** from your phone so you can only access them on your computer.
- **Leaving your device** outside the bedroom at bedtime.
- **Only using devices** at designated, limited time slots.
- **Using cognitive behavioral therapy** to address resistant internet habits.
- **Designating digital-free times** and areas, such as the dinner table. (Put your phone away while driving.)
- **Recognizing what triggers your online use.** If it's negative feelings, is there a better way to manage them, such as relaxation techniques or offline activities?



Q: When to go to the ER?



A: You need to go to the emergency room for health conditions that risk death or permanent disability. Call 911 for emergencies, such as choking, difficulty breathing, chest pain, head or spine injuries, electric shock or severe burns. Emergency room treatment is also warranted for passing out, severe or unusual headache, sudden slurred speech or weakness on one side, poisoning, overdose, severe allergic reactions, suicidal thoughts, seizures, deep wounds, heavy bleeding, broken bones or other emergency conditions.

Go to an urgent care clinic if your problem is not life threatening and does not risk disability, but you cannot see your primary health care provider soon enough. Common illnesses and minor injuries can be treated at urgent care clinics.

See your health care provider whenever possible for non-emergency health conditions. You will generally get the best continuity of care from providers who know you and have access to your medical records. — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Q&A: How to stop worrying?**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V5tools.

