

LET YOUR CHILDREN BE HEALTHY, NOT WEIGHTY

OBESITY in youngsters is clearly a weighty issue. I am not just talking about being 'healthy' as our parents and grandparents prefer to put it, but children being grossly overweight. A child is said to be obese when there is an excess of accumulated fat in the subcutaneous tissue (below the skin) and other areas of the body.

Childhood obesity and the development of type 2 diabetes is on the rise amongst children worldwide, including India. According to the National Medical Journal of India, children who are overweight are more susceptible to a variety of diseases like diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases, obstructive sleep apnoea and orthopaedic and psychosocial problems.

Studies in India show that nearly 16 per cent of children are overweight and 31 per cent are in the risk of falling in this category. According to Dr Anoop

Mishra, director, department of diabetes and metabolic diseases at Fortis, Delhi, childhood obesity increased from 16 per cent in 2002 to 24 per cent in 2007 in New Delhi alone. And the percentage is on the rise, daily.

In the string of studies already out there on unhealthy eating habits, another study in Devangere, Karnataka, has concluded that consumption of high fat and high energy (junk) foods and snacking in between meals is the major reason for children being obese. We as parents are also to blame for that because we end up taking the easy way out and packing school tiffins for our children based on what they like to eat instead of what they ought to eat.

Besides the government-supplied midday meals, the horrors of which need not be recounted here, there are a lot of private and high end schools in our cities that offer meals to their students. Now these may be high on

taste, considering the kind of schools they're being served in, but low on nutrition. The food offered typically is full of cholesterol and loaded with saturated fats. These are low on fibre and fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains are way down in the priority list.

The importance of nutrition for children can never be over emphasised. Children who get the right nutrition during their growing years benefit tremendously as they grow older. So, feed your child healthy meals using good fat and only whole grains, even if he or she is not enthusiastic about them. They will grow to like them and you will start to see the results immediately. Their fitness and energy levels will increase right away, and their rate of falling sick will decrease as their immunity builds. To start you off, here is a corn idli recipe. Serve it to them in their tiffins. So tasty!

GOOD FOOD

ANURADHA SAWHNEY



Corn idlis

Ingredients: ½ cup corn daliya, ½ cup urad dal, 1 tsp ground green chilli and ginger, pudina chutney, salt to taste

Method: Wash and soak the corn daliya and urad dal separately for about 12 hours. Grind each well and mix them in a large bowl. Cover with an airtight lid and leave to ferment overnight. In the morning, stir the batter, add the ginger, green chilli and the salt and mix well. Now, steam the idlis and serve with yummy pudina or kachha aam chutney. Similarly, you can make idlis out of suji and moong dal which don't even need to be soaked overnight. Just a couple of hours will do, but don't forget to add a bit of curd to the batter.