

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS & "SUPER FOODS"

Every day it seems as if there's another so-called "breakthrough" in nutrition--a new supplement, a rare exotic fruit, or a new research study touting the benefits of mega-doses of certain vitamins. While following food fads can be risky for adults, it's definitely not a good idea for children. As a parent or caregiver, your best bet for optimal child health is to encourage children to eat a wide variety of foods, including plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Nutritional Supplements

Most children can benefit from a good quality multivitamin each day, but multivitamins are especially important for children with food sensitivities or allergies, or who are from vegetarian or vegan households. Whenever possible, choose a more natural product, made from food sources, as opposed to one made from synthetic compounds. And, always speak with your child's doctor before administering any vitamins or supplements.

Super Foods

Another way to supplement your child's diet is with what are currently being called "super foods." Super foods are whole foods that have not been refined, processed or preserved and are very close to their original source. These foods provide a child's body with essential fats, vitamins, minerals, lean proteins and iron. Incorporating them into your child's routine is a way of providing them with the essential nutrients necessary for healthy growth and development.

Some Examples of Super Foods Include:

- ➔ **Whole grain bread**
Whole grain breads break down into glucose-- the main source of fuel your child needs to maintain energy.
- ➔ **Blueberries**
Blueberries are a wonderful way for children to get a sweet fix without the addition of refined sugars. They're also high in disease-preventing antioxidants.
- ➔ **Yogurt**
It's one of the best sources of protein and calcium for your child.



- ➔ **Sweet potatoes**
Sweet potatoes are loaded with beta carotene, vitamin E, vitamin B6, potassium and iron.
 - ➔ **Beans**
Beans are packed with fibre and protein, and are an excellent source of iron.
 - ➔ **Broccoli**
Broccoli offers many disease-fighting natural compounds as well as a healthy dose of vitamin C.
 - ➔ **Eggs**
Eggs are a wonderful source of protein and essential fats. The Omega-3 fats they contain have been shown to improve skin, allergies, brain function and mood in children.
- One of the ways to add more super foods to children's diets is to choose fruits and vegetables based on this simple colour guide.
- ➔ **White:** Eat cauliflower more often than potatoes, onions and mushrooms.
 - ➔ **Green:** Eat more dark lettuces, such as romaine and red leaf lettuce; and spinach, broccoli and Brussels sprouts rather than iceberg lettuce and green beans.
 - ➔ **Yellow/orange:** Eat more carrots, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, oranges and grapefruit, instead of sweet corn or bananas.
 - ➔ **Red:** Choose tomatoes, red peppers and strawberries instead of apples.

Thank you to Food For Tots (www.fft.ca) for sharing this information. For more healthy eating tips please visit www.healthylicious.ca.