

Importance of nutrition in infancy and toddler-hood

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The paper " Importance of Nutrition in Infancy and Toddler-Hood" is a great example of a coursework on health sciences and medicine. A recommendation by World health organization suggests that adequate nutrition during infancy is essential for lifelong health and well-being. An overweight or obese woman has a greater risk of giving birth to a chubby baby compared to a non-obese woman. Such an obese child is more likely to develop diabetes and obesity-related disorders like heart disease and high blood pressure during its later life. Nutritional studies suggest that appetite is controlled by certain specialized centers in the brain and this is likely set in the early stages of child development. Hence it is obvious that nutrient availability during infancy and childhood has a direct effect on obesity. Professor Margaret Morris quotes in The daily telegraph as " Maternal obesity and overfeeding during early life causes significant changes in the chemicals that regulate appetite ". She also emphasizes the fact that " obese babies could be programmed to eat differently from those born from lean mothers". A balanced healthy diet rich in all essential nutrients can be planned for obese infants and toddlers so that it meets their daily dietary requirements thus enabling the kids to develop to their full potential as far as their physical and mental developments are concerned. As far as the infants are concerned, breastfeeding is exclusively recommended for the first six months owing to the fact that it contains all the essential nutrients for the growth of the infant. Moreover, breast milk is sterile, easily digested, has antibacterial and antiviral properties, is economical and convenient. This is followed by a supplementary feeding stage that comprises porridge, boiled egg, mashed liver, and banana mash. It must be ensured that infants are

properly fed for a healthy transition into the toddlerhood. When the child leaves infancy and steps into toddlerhood stage, a wide variety of foods can be offered, no matter they consume only a small amount and in this way, they would be introduced to various taste sensations. Generally, a diet low in saturated fat, unrefined sugar must be followed and excess salt intake is avoided to combat obesity. To meet the everyday requirements, toddlers have to be fed on a diet rich in calcium for developing strong bones and teeth. The diet may include milk, egg, cheese, dark leafy vegetables like spinach broccoli, meat, fish, dried beans, nuts, and mashed root crops. A healthy start of the day ensures that obese toddlers can be fed with flourless bread made from sprouted grains along with quality fat like Pasteur- fed butter or raw cheese taking into account that the trans-fat content is less in these foods. Mashed or finely chopped vegetables can be introduced by placing them in between other foods like hamburger and meatloaf. A healthy nutritious snack may include fruit dips which are served with strawberries, bananas, apples, and pears. Some of the Healthy eating habits for children recommended by BUPA'S health information team include Starchy foods like bread, pasta, potatoes, rice and chapatti which are considered bulky, rich in complex carbohydrates and give fullness of stomach and at the same time they are nutritious. Foods that are rich in fat like chocolate, biscuits, crisps, and cakes can be substituted with crusty bread, fresh fruit, and crackers. Grilling or baking can be regarded as a better option to frying since grilled or baked burgers, fish fingers, and sausages have low-fat content compared to fried items. Fresh fruit juices are healthy as they are full of nutrients. Fruit punches, sweetened soft drinks, and other sweetened beverages can be

avoided due to their reduced nutritional value. A full fat natural organic yogurt is preferred when a fruit of one's own choice can be added since flavored yogurts have high sugar content.