

A Scary Trend in Kids Cuisine

There is a trend even scarier than childhood obesity sweeping the nation...stunted taste buds! According to childhood obesity experts children's palates are being dumbed down by greasy, salty and sweet foods and drinks. And once they get used to these flavors, the taste threshold is set so high that fresh fruits aren't sweet enough and vegetables taste too bitter. The challenge to parents: get rid of the 'kids menu' at your house. Feed kids the same variety of foods that you eat and don't let restaurant choices define what your fix.

This doesn't mean that food can't be fun...here are some great ways to get kids to try some new things:

1. Make Oatmeal Stew—rather than stirring up super sweet instant oatmeal, mix up a bowl of plain oatmeal and let kids make their own stew with milk, dried fruit, nuts and brown sugar.
2. Shapley Sandwiches—make sandwiches with thinly sliced meats and cheeses which are easier for kids to chew through and cut them out with cookie cutters (seems like a simple trick but it works).
3. Soup-er Buffet—heat up soup on the stove and let kids add their own toppings: shredded cheese, chunks of chicken, goldfish crackers, salsa, cooked noodles, shredded carrots, chopped green beans, edemame, zucchini. Remember that kids may need to be exposed to foods many times before they will even try it. Just keep trying!