

PRINT EDITION  
WEDNESDAY  
TUESDAY  
MONDAY  
SUNDAY  
SATURDAY  
FRIDAY  
THURSDAY

[Home](#) > [Good Eating](#)

## HEALTH WATCH

### Why won't Johnny eat broccoli?

#### Nurturing your child's palate can encourage more healthful eating

By Janet Helm | Special to the Tribune  
**September 26, 2007**

Everything you need to power your home search

How did today's so-called "kids' cuisine" become so narrowly defined? It's mostly limited to fried breaded chicken, fries and the like.

Experts say this beige, deep-fried diet -- often washed down with "tall" sugary drinks -- may be one reason American children are gaining weight at alarming rates and developing early signs of heart disease and diabetes.

But beyond the childhood obesity threat, this modern-day kiddie meal may be doing something equally insidious to young kids: deadening their developing palates.

#### Article tools

- [E-mail](#)
- [Share](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Single page view](#)
- [Reprints](#)
- Text size:

#### Ads by Google

**Popcorn Fundraiser**  
Popcorn "The Most Awesome Snack We've Ever Tried." -Chicago Tribune  
[www.popcornpalace.com](http://www.popcornpalace.com)

**Light C. Orville**  
Experienced Greensboro attorneys Attorney At Law  
[Storefront.DexOnline.com/Orville](http://Storefront.DexOnline.com/Orville)

**ICICI Bank NRI A/C**  
Money Transfer, ATM, Debit Card Send Free Gift to India. Apply Now!  
[ICICIBank.com/NRI\\_Banking](http://ICICIBank.com/NRI_Banking)

**Top 10 DUI Attorneys**  
DUI Attorney Listings Top DUI Attorney Solutions  
[greatduiattorney.net](http://greatduiattorney.net)

**Expungement Assistance**  
Want to know about expungements? Find out if you're eligible today!  
[www.ClearMyRecord.com](http://www.ClearMyRecord.com)

"Our children's palates are being dumbed down by greasy, salty and sweet foods and drinks," said pediatric nutritionist Keith Ayoob at Albert Einstein Medical Center in New York City.

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, he said.

Dr. David Ludwig, a childhood obesity expert in Boston and author of "Ending the Food Fight: Guide Your Child to a Healthy Weight in a Fast Food/Fake Food World," worries we're stunting children's taste buds.

He said the extra-intense artificial flavors that dominate "kid food" interfere with a child's natural tendency to develop a broader palate.

"Our taste preferences, by nature, are designed to broaden over time, but we're short-circuiting basic biological pathways and warping children's taste buds," Ludwig said.

We're essentially putting the breaks on children's palates and preventing them from appreciating more natural and healthful food, he said. And it is critical to think about palate development as soon as children start solid foods since preferences are established early.

#### Related News from the Web

- [Dining](#)
- [Life](#)
- [Preschoolers](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Family](#)
- [Vegetables](#)
- [Nutrition](#)
- [Kids](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

Lynn Fredericks, author of "Cooking Time is Family Time" and founder of FamilyCooks Productions in New York City, blames the ubiquitous children's menus in restaurants, where chicken fingers and fries rule.

"The concept of 'food for children' has been one of the most detrimental developments to corrupt the family meal," said Fredericks, who develops culinary education programs and materials for children and their parents.

Restaurants are attempting to define what children will eat, which has changed what parents serve at home, she said.

"In virtually all other cultures in the world, kids eat what the parents eat," she said.

So how do you get out of a chicken fingers-and-fries rut and raise an adventurous eater? Here are some tips to help you stay mindful of your preschooler's health, weight and developing palates:

Take control: Remember, you're in charge here. Parents need to play an active role in shaping their young



Catch it [here](#)

[Game photos](#) | [Piniella-Gram](#) | [Historic video](#)

#### ADVERTISEMENT



#### Search classifieds

[JOBS](#) | [SHOP](#) | [CARS](#) | [HOMES](#)

[Chicago jobs by category, company or industry](#)

### Listings, directories and deals

- Apartments
- Items for Sale
- Dating
- Pets
- Grocery coupons
- Boutiques
- Travel deals
- Place an Ad

### Popular stories

[Most viewed](#) | [Most e-mailed](#)

**Federal agents arrest Chicago cop at home**

**Fatal Elgin crash closes highway**

**Harvey cops get cold-case warning**

**'Our quarterback' to sit**

**Blackhawks owner Wirtz dead at 77**

[More most viewed](#)

#### ADVERTISEMENT

children's food preferences, which will likely last a lifetime, said Chicago chef J. H. conducts hands-on cooking classes for preschool-age children and their parents f

"When you shop for a preschooler, your job is not to buy the foods your child like to like what you buy."

Cook with your child: Never underestimate the value of getting your kids in the kit educator Lois Levine, who teaches cooking classes for the Chicago Public School more likely to try something new if they've had a hand at preparing it.

Be a role model: One of the best ways to get your children to eat a diverse diet i same. That means you may need to examine your own eating habits, which may powerful influences of all -- for better or worse. "I've yet to meet a child who eats parents," said Ayoob, who works with overweight children and their families.

Bury your own food bias: Don't let your own food preferences keep you from intro or other foods to your child, said registered dietitian Bridget Swinney, author of "I like Brussels sprouts, don't pass on that bias to your child. Continue to expose y more even if that means you need to "put on your poker face" and take a bite yourself

Don't default to the kid's menu: Swinney recommends other options when dining request half orders, or combine an appetizer with a side dish. Check out ethnic re can be exposed to a wide variety of flavors and textures.

Sit down to dinner: Scores of studies show that children who sit down to family d turned off) have better diets and are less likely to be obese, according to a resear month's Journal of the American Dietetic Association. Children who frequently hav families eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more milk, consume fewer fried foo sodas.

Aim for progress, not perfection: Don't feel defeated if you find yourself heading 1 resorting to frozen nuggets. Just look for ways you can enhance those meals wit fries and low-fat milk in place of sugary drinks. Keep introducing new foods -- it n attempts, so don't give up. Small changes can make a big impact over time.

---

Healthy kids

The Naturally Healthy Children's Expo, a family festival promoting healthful living, by Laura Bruzas of Healthy Dining Chicago and Melissa Graham of Purple Asparagus. \$10; \$5 teens and grandparents; free to children under 11. Oct. 6-7. Navy Pier Festival Hall. Information and tickets, 708-361-6000 or naturallyhealthychildren.com.

Traffic presentations

Check for traffic hot spots

	I-94 Edens Exwy	Out   In
	I-90 Kennedy Exwy	Out   In
	I-55 Stevenson Exwy	Out   In
	I-90 / I-94 Dan Ryan Exwy	Out   In

Helm is a Chicago-based registered dietitian and nutrition consultant (and a mother of preschooler) prescribes

[more articles in /services/newspaper/printedition/wednesday/goodeating](#)

Copyright © 2007, Chicago Tribune

Would you recommend this? Rate it: ☆☆☆☆☆

Stocks

Quote | Symbol or Nam  
Go |

Finance Tools  
[Sign up for BizWrap, your free daily business news briefing](#)

[Chicago's Top 100](#)



Looking for advice?



- Ask Amy
- Miss Manners
- Dear Abby
- Tales from the Front
- Horoscopes


Find something to do

- DINING
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- STAGE

Find a restaurant


Partners



**Metromix**  
Final five best bartenders



**ChicagoSports**  
Baseball writers blog pennant race



**RedEyeChicago.com**  
Vote for America's top party school

Images in the news



- [Photos of the day](#)
- [Celebrity sightings](#)
- [Bears vs. Cowboys](#)
- [Tribune photo page](#)
- [Send us your photos](#)

Sponsor: [Ritz Camera](#)

Ads by Google

**Aggressive Defense Lawyer**  
Local, Experienced Attorney Reasonable Fees, Excellent Results  
[www.bruccarandyetter.com](http://www.bruccarandyetter.com)

**Get a Home Get a Mortgage**  
Chicagoland's Top Source for Real Estate Sales and Mortgage Financing  
[www.getahomegetamortgage.com](http://www.getahomegetamortgage.com)

**Criminal / DUI Defense**  
You need a lawyer you can trust. Free Consultation - 630-679-0930  
[www.GoLawOffice.com](http://www.GoLawOffice.com)

**Lose 9 lbs every 11 Days**  
Learn the 10 Idiot-Proof Rules of Dieting & Fat Loss.  
[www.FatLoss4idiots.com](http://www.FatLoss4idiots.com)

**Contract litigation**  
Expert local contract law attorneys Specializing In Trademarking  
[rehalsey.com](http://rehalsey.com)

---

**Local partners:** | [Triblocal](#) | [metromix.com](#) | [chicagosports.com](#) | [Chicago Magazine](#) | [Hoy Chicago](#) | [RedEye](#) | [CLTV](#) | [WGN-TV](#) | [WGN-AM](#)

---

**Site policies:** | [Terms of service](#) | [Privacy](#)

---