

Tots in Danger and Medics don't know enough to help

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Children under five are at risk of stomach cancer, asthma; obesity & kidney disease from incorrect levels of salts, sugars and fats in their diets. And, when health professionals were questioned, a staggering majority was ignorant of the safe nutritional levels.

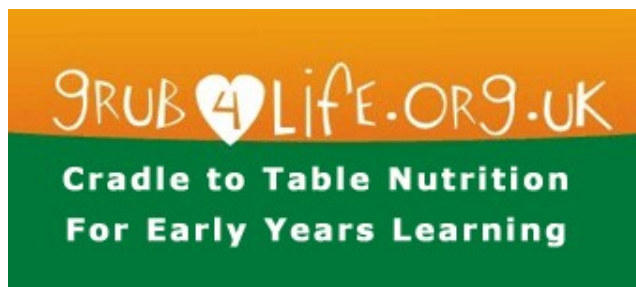
"If the professionals don't know – how are mums, dads and carers meant to be able to feed our children properly?" said founder of www.grub4life.org.uk and the Reports Author, Nigel Denby RD.

The majority of polled professionals miscalculated crucial levels of salts and fats and was unsure of the correct calorie intake required for under 5's. "The levels of salt, fats and sugars that our under 5's consume is damaging their health on a daily basis" concluded Denby. This report highlights how few professionals are themselves aware of safe levels.

But an overwhelming majority calling on the Government to issue guidelines on safe levels for all under 5's in the UK. "There are no minimum standards set for EY or any nutritional training for childcare staff. The current legislation assumes there is a nutritional 'common sense amongst Early Years professionals and Children Centre Cooks" says Denby " But if that 'common sense' isn't shared amongst the Dietitians, what help can there be for the overworked EY professionals?" In just salt alone, the average under 5 could be consuming 6 times the safe levels – every single day. Children under 3 are recommended only 1 gm of salt per day, 2 gms for 1>3 years and 3 gms are considered safe for 4 > 6 year olds. For many a daily packet of crisps are enough to put youngsters in the danger zone.

- 89% called for standards to be set for EY Nutrition
- More than 8 out of 10 did not know the correct number of calories required by EY's 5's
- More than half didn't know the safe levels of salt for the under 5's
- 7 out of 10 respondents did not know the safe levels of fat for under 5's
- 60% were unaware of the correct levels of sugar under 5s should have
- Despite nearly half the respondents having children of their own

The poll was taken in the week that the University of Bristol delivered its findings that the wrong levels of salts and fats in Early Years leads to irreparable reduction in a child's IQ in later life. "Britain is poised on the brink of a childhood health time bomb. We are already one of the fattest nations in Europe and we know that is firmly rooted in our children's diets" said Denby. The poll was conducted in February 2011 by the profession's trade magazine **Network Health Dietitian** & Early Year's community www.Grub4Life.org.uk. Free resources for parents & Carers are available from www.Grub4Life.org.uk

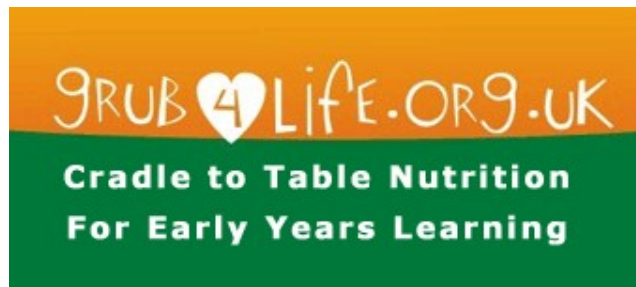


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We have prepared the following to assist you in writing a Feature on Under 5's Health Eating including the following: -

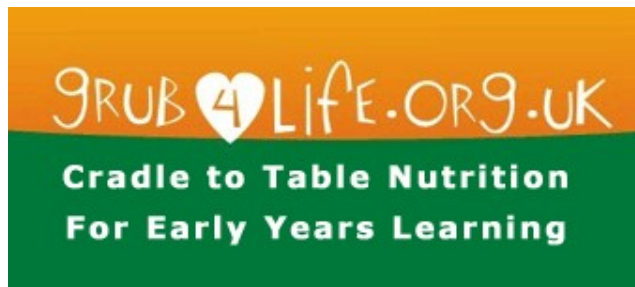
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1. **Do's and Don'ts for your children's food by Nigel Denby - Child Nutritionist and founder of Early Years Community www.grub4life.org.uk**
 - Do choose canned vegetables in unsalted water- this can make a big saving and canned veg counts towards your 5 a day
 - Do cut down on salty snacks like crisps, make them occasional treats once a week
 - Do keep a watch on naturally salty foods like yeast extract. Two slices of toast and marmite gives about 2g of salt even when it's spread thinly
 - Do look at labels on bottled mineral water, some can contain high levels of salt and there are no regulations to limit how much they can contain
 - Do choose reduced salt products like stock cubes, gravy granules and baked beans- they are often over 25% lower in salt than regular varieties. Even better- make your own stock and gravy.
 - Don't buy low sat or salt alternatives, they still contain sodium and do nothing to help wean your self off salt
 - Don't rely on ready meals too often. Try to cook from scratch more often; it's the best way to cut down on salt. Even aiming to cook from scratch an extra day each week will make a difference.
 - Don't eat too many smoked foods; the traditional smoking process often involves adding a lot of salt to the meet, cheese or fish.
 - Don't ignore the label, foods which contain more than 0.3g of salt per 100g are HIGH in salt- so steer clear
 - Don't forget hidden salt in foods where you wouldn't expect to find it- breakfast cereals, biscuits, sauces and condiments are all common culprits.
 - Do make sure your toddler has some foods which contain natural sugars - these include fruits, milk and dairy products, starchy carbohydrates like bread, cereals, rice, pasta and grains
 - Do serve some puddings to your toddler 2-3 times a week. But try and use less added sugar and sweeten pudding recipe with dried and fresh fruits instead- you can cut the sugar by around 1/3rd in most pudding recipes.
 - Do use some butter, margarine or unsaturated oil when cooking for your toddler – they contain essential fats that children need for growth and development.
 - Do involve your toddler in some cooking- making bread, cakes or biscuits and preparing vegetables helps them learn and experiment with a wide variety of foods. Do make sure your toddler has some fruit at breakfast and at least one fruit and one vegetable at lunch and the evening meal.



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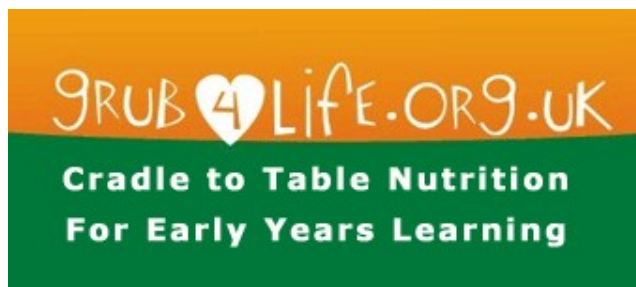
Do's and Don'ts for your children's food / Cont ... 2

- Do eat fruit and vegetables with your toddler- they learn by example
- Do cut fruit and vegetables into slices, cubes or sticks- this makes them easy for toddlers to eat
- Do try new recipes- toddlers often prefer veggies which have been stir fried, roasted baked rather than just boiled.
- Do serve milk and dairy products or alternatives to your toddler three times a day to give them enough calcium. 120ml of milk, a 120g pot of yoghurt or a matchbox size piece of cheese all count as 1 serving.
- Do encourage your toddler to try softer cuts of meat like chicken, minced beef, lamb or turkey before moving on to tougher cuts.
- Do make sure you serve fruits and vegetables containing vitamin C (tomatoes, broccoli or peppers) with vegetarian protein foods like beans and pulses- the vitamin C will help your toddler absorb iron from the pulses.
- Do persevere with fish, use canned salmon or sardines in fishcakes or try mackerel with white fish in a fish pie- toddlers need the omega-3 fats in oily fish about twice a week.
- Don't serve too many high fibre foods to toddlers- these will fill them up and make it difficult to eat the full range of foods they need to get all the vitamins and minerals they need to be healthy.
- Don't serve low fat milk to children under 2years, they need the energy from whole milk. Children over 2years who eat well can move on the semi skimmed milk.
- Don't rely on ready meals and convenience foods for your toddler- these often contain high levels of hidden salt and sugar.
- Don't serve undiluted fruit juice, fizzy drinks or concentrated squash to toddlers, these contain high levels of concentrated sugar and acids which can cause extensive damage to teeth and can lead to obesity.
- Don't rely on follow on milks for toddlers unless they are poor eaters- these will discourage children without feeding problems from eating normal family food.
- Don't ban toddlers from ever eating crisps and chocolate- instead make them occasional foods you eat together and never use them as a way to reward toddlers.
- Don't serve diluted squash to toddlers in bottles- use a cup. The bottle baths kids teeth in sugar and promotes tooth decay.
- Don't panic if your toddler doesn't eat "perfectly" all the time- 75% of toddlers go through periods of faddy or fussy eating- it's normal!
- Don't fill your toddler up on too much milk- a 2 years old only needs between ½ and 1 pint of milk a day if they are eating well.

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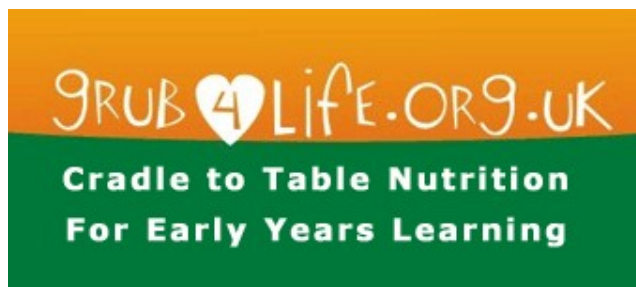
2. A typical 'healthy' diet for under 5's

Even a 'healthy' home cooked diet can be loaded with salts – with disastrous effects!

Breakfast	Salt content
30g Kellogg's cornflakes with semi skimmed milk:	0.7g
1 slice of buttered toast	0.5g
Mid morning	
Cheese triangle (Dairy lea)	0.3g
2 breadsticks	
Lunch	
Egg mayonnaise sandwich	1.9g
200g serving canned tomato soup	2.0g
Packet of cheese and onion supermarket brand crisps	1.3g
Dinner	
Roast chicken	0.25g
Instant gravy	1.3g
Ready made stuffing	1.1g
Frozen Yorkshire pudding	0.5g
Frozen roast potatoes	1.3g
Boiled carrots and peas	0.01g
Ready made Apple pie	0.8g
Ready made custard	0.3g
Total for day:	11.26g
	6 times safe amount

Nigel Denby says: - "I don't believe any parent deliberately feeds their toddler a diet high in sugar, unhealthy fats and salt- So many of the parents I talk to just don't realise that toddlers nutritional needs are quite different from older children and adults. There's massive confusion about which foods contain hidden nutritional nasties too. Up to 75% of the salt in the UK diet comes from processed and convenience foods, not from the salt we add at the table or during cooking, fizzy drinks can contain up to seven teaspoons of sugar and shop bought cakes and biscuits often contain less healthy types of fat."

Have a look at an 'alternative' to the above.....



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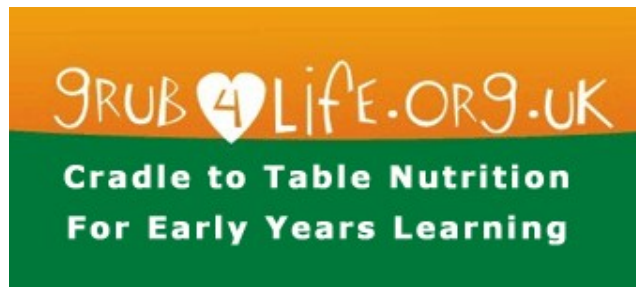
3. An alternative 'healthy' diet for under 5's

Breakfast	Salt content
30g Shreddies with semi skimmed milk and a banana:	0.2g
Mid morning	
Fruit Fromage Frais	0.0g
Lunch	
Tuna mayonnaise sandwich (made with canned Tuna in Spring Water and low salt mayo)	0.8g
200g serving Home made vegetable soup using very low salt vegetable stock	0.1g
Carrot and cucumber sticks	0g
Dinner	
Roast chicken	0.25g
Homemade mushroom and onion sauce	0.2g
Home made mashed potatoes	0.1g
Boiled carrots and peas	0.01g
Home made Apple crumble	0.1g
Fromage frais	0g
Total for day:	2.86 g
	Within safe amount

Nigel Denby: - "The bottom line is, if you want to control how much sugar and salt and the types of fats your child eats, you do need to cook more often from scratch.

This can still be economical and quick, it doesn't need to be complicated and you definitely don't have to be a brilliant cook.

At www.grub4life.org.uk thousands of parents log on every day to download quick, easy and healthy family meals free of charge. A lot of our recipes have been tried and approved by over 40,000 children."



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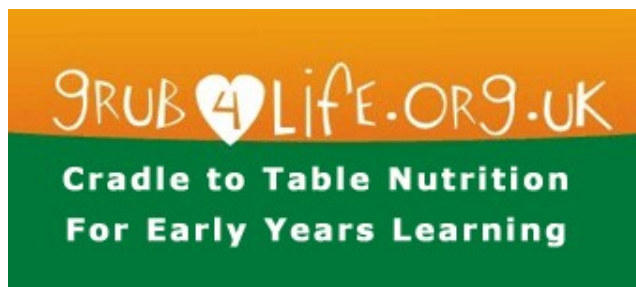
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4. Network Health Dietitian and Grub4Life Report Highlights:

- 89% called for standards to be set for EYC Nutrition
- More than 8 out of 10 did not know the correct number of calories required by EYC's 5's
- More than half didn't know the safe levels of salt for the under 5's
- 7 out of 10 respondents did not know the safe levels of fat for under 5's
- 60% were unaware of the correct levels of sugar under 5s should have
- Despite nearly half the respondents having children of their own
- The majority of the respondents felt that dental health should be given the same level of priority as childhood obesity, over and above iron deficiency anaemia and rickets which are both on the increase
- 92.9% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MAXIMUM level of SALT in meals served to children attending day care
- 69% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MAXIMUM level of FAT in meals served to children attending day care
- 81.6% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MAXIMUM level of SUGAR in meals served to children attending day care
- 64.3% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MINIMUM level of ENERGY in meals served to children attending day care
- 79.8% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MINIMUM level of CALCIUM in meals served to children attending day care
- 76.6% of respondents think there should be mandatory standards setting the MINIMUM level of IRON in meals served to children attending day care
- 89% of respondents think there should be standards regarding specific foods served to children attending day care, such as servings of fruit and veg per day
- 79.5% of respondents think a lunchtime meal which provides 1.5g of SALT is TOO HIGH IN SALT for an Early Years Child Care setting

Nigel Denby says: - It's surprising and worrying that so many nutrition professionals don't know how toddlers' diets differ from older children's and adults. If my own profession is unsure it's little wonder that so many parents and childcare professionals are getting it wrong. As a result of this poll, www.grub4life.org.uk are training and updating dietitians and nutritionists throughout the UK on the fine detail of healthy eating for the under 5s."

Notes to editors: - 127 respondents; 73.2% dietitians; 12.6% nutritionists; 10.2% dietetic students; 3.9% other nutrition professional; 42.5% of respondents have children of their own; 30.7% of those have used or do use day care; 22.8% of respondents' work involves contact with Early Years Child Care



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5. **Official Guidelines from CASH – Consensus Action On Salt -**
<http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/salthealth/children/index.html>

Babies only need very small amounts of salt and their kidneys are too immature to cope with any added salt. A high salt diet during childhood could increase the risk of other conditions later in life. This includes increasing the risk of stomach cancer by damaging the stomach lining and increasing the growth of the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori*; asthma by increasing bronchial reactivity; kidney disease by increasing protein urea (major kidney disease risk factor) and the stress the kidney is under.

It is well known that a high salt intake is associated with high blood pressure in the adult population. There is now evidence to show that a high salt intake in children also influences blood pressure and may predispose an individual to the development of a number of diseases including: high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and respiratory illnesses such as asthma, stomach cancer and obesity.

Age	Maximum Salt Intake
0-6 months	<1g / day
6-12 months	1g / day
1-3 years	2g / day
4-6 years	3g / day
7-10 years	5g / day
11 years and above	6g / day

SACN Recommended maximum salt intakes

A high salt intake can cause calcium losses through the urine which can lead to bone demineralisation and significantly increase the risk of osteoporosis, a bone condition causing fragility and breakages. Although osteoporosis is most common amongst older people, studies have shown that the effect of salt on calcium metabolism can be detected in children and continue in to adult life.(9) This increases the risk of osteoporosis later in life, particularly for girls. Whilst salt is not a direct cause of obesity it is a major influencing factor through its effect on soft drink consumption. Salt makes you thirsty and increases the amount of fluid you drink. 31% of the fluid drunk by 4-18 year olds is sugary soft drinks 13 which have been shown to be related to childhood obesity