



RESTORATION  
CHIROPRACTIC  
FAMILY WELLNESS

# *20+ Tips For a Healthier Family*

*Lifestyle, Self-Esteem, and Food Matter!*

Dr. Andrea Mills Oliveau

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**Restoration Chiropractic**

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When my girls were little, I adopted the belief that chiropractic care and good nutrition are the cornerstones of health. I am so glad I did! My kids are rarely sick and when they get sick they recover quickly. No family or parent is perfect, and every parent is doing the best they can with the information they have. I am sharing with you some of the top tips I've learned that have helped my family.

I hope you enjoy!

## *7 Healthy Habits to Instill in Your Family*

One of the best ways to prepare your children for a long and healthy life is to get them started early with their own healthy habits. This is best taught by example. When the entire family practices healthy habits, these habits are more likely to stick with your children for life.

***Here are six healthy habits to create for you and your family.***

### **1. Drink more water**

Most of us just don't drink enough water. Sure, we hydrate, but it's often with beverages loaded in calories and sugar. Instead, skip the soda, juice, and sweetened drinks and drink water. It may be a tough transition so make the change gradually. One way to begin is by diluting juice with water. Gradually increase the amount of water, and lessen the juice. This will make the transition to water much easier. Most kids love sparkling water and there are great flavored sparkling options.

Another great idea is to add sliced lemon or lime or berries to your water to give it a bit of "zing," and healthy, natural flavor.

### **2. Consume less during mealtimes**

Unfortunately, we are a super-sized society. We're accustomed to eating a lot during mealtimes, and most restaurants cater to that weakness.

Work on eating smaller portions during mealtimes. Serve more vegetables on the plate, and less protein and starchy carbohydrates. Your family will adjust to eating less, but it can take a few days. Large portions lead to big insulin responses, and lots of insulin leads eventually to



type 2 diabetes. If your child is overweight, or if you have type 2 diabetes, your child is at risk for type 2 diabetes when they are older. You can help fill them up with healthy fats like avocados, olives, and nuts.

### **3. Eat less sugar**

Sugar is in just about everything we eat. It's in bread, sauces, and it's sometimes even in lunch meat. Help your family break the addiction to sugar by choosing low-sugar and no-sugar options. Cookies and other sugary snacks are okay occasionally, but they shouldn't be an everyday choice. Keep sugary treats to after mealtimes, when their tummy is full; this will help slow down the sugar spike.

### **4. Appreciate food for what it is**

Food is really only intended to provide us with the needed nutrition to sustain our health and energy. Of course there's a social aspect to food, so there's nothing wrong with enjoying food and including it in social occasions with family and friends. *The key is consuming food, including treats, in moderation.*

People who have a healthy appreciation for food tend to eat healthier. However, if you use food to soothe your emotions or as a reward, it creates a misguided relationship with food. Your children can then also learn to turn to food as a coping mechanism. You can help by not using food as a reward or punishment.

### **5. Make more food at home**

Takeout and prepackaged foods are sometimes necessary, but they're often not healthy. Make food at home using fresh ingredients as often as you can. When your kids are connected to the cooking process, they're more likely to eat healthy and to develop a healthy relationship with food. Make cooking a family activity on the weekends when everyone is home together. This is a great way for your kids to learn about making healthier choices, as well as healthier food

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preparation methods. If you can have a little container garden and grow tomatoes, herbs, or other easy veggies, your kids will naturally want to eat them!

## **6. Move your body**

Find a way to be active each and every day. Walk or bike to places when you can. Take hikes and family walks together. Play sports or engage in physical activities. The more you're active as a family and on your own, the more your children will be active now and in the future. An active lifestyle is key to both a healthy mind and body.

## **7. See your family chiropractor**

Chiropractic care is an important piece of a healthy lifestyle. Chiropractic and good nutrition are the cornerstones of my family's health. If you have never been to a chiropractor, then you may think that it's just for neck or back pain or other aches. The reality is that chiropractic care helps the brain-body connection work at its best, and for growing kids, this is crucial!

I didn't recognize how important chiropractic was to my kids' health until they started daycare. When all of their friends were getting sick and fighting off ear infections, my kids stayed pretty healthy. We never once had an ear infection in my house. If either of my daughters got sick, they usually beat it within 24-48 hours. Even now that they are teens, I check them every week and adjust them if they need it. I personally see my chiro every other week to get checked, and my husband gets checked weekly as well.

The biggest objection parents have to chiropractic for their kids is that they think the adjustment is scary! I thought that too, when mine were little. But adjusting a child is very different than you see on TV. The pressure we use is about the same as you would to test the ripeness of a tomato. If you have any questions at all about chiropractic care for your family, come in for a free consultation. I'm happy to show you anything you'd like.

To conclude, one of your biggest responsibilities is to be a good role model. As your children grow, they'll learn their healthy habits from you. They watch, they emulate, and they adopt what you teach them. Creating healthy habits as a family will help your children grow up healthy and strong, and they'll bring these into adulthood with them.



## *3 Tips on Creating a Positive Self-Image in Children*

With all the media messages surrounding our children, it's amazing that they grow up to be healthy. Kids today are exposed to more negative messages than ever before. They watch more television, see more music videos, advertisements, magazines, and they play more video and computer games. It's tough to develop a positive self-image when you're constantly being bombarded by pictures of perfection. It's your job to help your kids feel good about themselves.

Here are a few tips to help your children develop a healthy, positive self-image:

### **1. Be a good role model**

There's nothing harder on your kids than hearing you berate yourself for the way you look. Put up a good front and demonstrate a positive self-image. Children learn by example. If you love your body and are content with the way you look, your children will be more likely to follow your example. They know they come from you, and if you're happy with your appearance, then they should be too. If you aren't happy with how you look, work on loving yourself as you are while you make healthy changes that support the future you want.

### **2. Show them reality**

More and more models are standing up and saying, "We're airbrushed." They're providing real-life photos and allowing comparison to the magazine photos. This is a great teaching moment. Young children - girls and boys - look up to their role models. Help your children

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understand that what they see on television isn't reality. It's great lighting, professional make-up and clothing, plastic surgery, and little photography tricks called filters, airbrushing, and editing.

Boys are just as much at risk as girls. Boys often worship or look up to professional athletes. It's important to explain to boys that, in addition to the magazine photos being emphasized, painted, and airbrushed, many athletes take unnatural measures to achieve their physical results. These unnatural measures, like steroids or working out eight hours a day, are not normal or healthy.

Do you filter or airbrush all your photos? What message is that sending to your kids?

### **3. Help your children find what's beautiful about them**

We all have something we'd like to change. Maybe it's our nose, our hair, or our height. However, we also have things we like about ourselves. Help your children find what they like about themselves. Maybe they like their eyes, or their smile, or their beautiful red hair. In addition, be sure they include the "inside" characteristics like being caring, a good friend, a good listener, and so forth. Help them focus on the positive things about themselves and to forget about the rest. No one is "perfect" but we are all perfect just as we are. We are constantly growing and changing in life and we all do the best we can with the information we have. Teach your kids that where they are right now is perfect, and also give them tools to learn better life skills. They will continue to grow into their "perfectness" as they evolve and get older.

When your kids realize that they're perfect exactly the way they are, they'll grow up to be strong and confident adults. They'll be able to manage the occasional bumps and bruises to their ego because they will know that they're beautiful.



## *3 Ideas on Talking to Your Children about Healthy Eating*

It's tough to instill healthy eating values in your children. They're surrounded by mixed messages at school, in the media, and with their friends. Kids also tend to rebel when a message is pushed too heavily.

Here's how to talk to your children about healthy eating.

### **1. Look for teachable moments**

If you're constantly drilling your children with why it's important to eat healthy, they're going to tune you out. If you discuss healthy eating during key teachable moments, it can really have an impact.

For example, it's Halloween and your child eats too much candy. He or she feels crappy, has a tummy ache, and is tired. You can quietly explain to your child that sometimes too much sugar makes a person feel sick and grumpy. You can also explain that when people feel sick and grumpy, they usually lose control of their emotions and can behave poorly. Tie it back to the choices your child made earlier so they can see that how they feel is a direct result of eating too much sugar. You may have to do this exercise again the next morning when your kid feels better. Not many of us remember lessons when we're feeling bad.

I'm a fan of giving kids choices when it comes to food. Give them two healthy options to choose from. If they don't want either, that's fine. Later in the day if they complain they're hungry,

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remind them that they chose not to eat the options you offered. They won't starve; have them wait until the next mealtime and then give them a healthy meal.

Teachable moments can have a far greater impact than any lecture about healthy eating. As my daughter likes to point out to me, it may seem like they aren't listening. Kids do that on purpose. The messages are still getting in, so stick with it!

## **2. Show, don't tell**

It's important to be a good role model. If you preach about the dangers of sugar and then your children see you eat a bag of cookies, you're not practicing what you preach. Instead, be sure that you are also eating healthy foods, and explain to your children why you choose to eat healthy. Make it about health, and not about body image or weight. Children get enough pressure to look perfect without it coming from their parents. When you do choose to eat something unhealthy, make sure your kids know it's a choice!

## **3. Media**

It can be hard to find, but positive media messages surrounding food do exist. We watched a lot of the Food Network when the kids were little, which opened up lots of conversations about food and health.

When someone your kids respect or trust is discussing health on TV or social media, share that message with your children. Share appropriate books, YouTube videos, or movies with them. The movie *Super Size Me* is a good movie for middle-aged children to watch.

When you talk about healthy eating to your kids, leave room for fun. Children understand the benefits of fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats. They also know that they like cookies, candy, and snacks. Help them make smart decisions by allowing occasional treats. They're more likely to grow into healthy adults if they're allowed to enjoy food, and appreciate its many benefits.



## *5 Strategies for Your Children to Get Their Fruits and Veggies*

It's tough making sure that your children get all the nutrients they need. This is particularly true if you have a picky eater. Picky eaters rarely like fruits and vegetables.

Here are five tips and ideas to help you get more fruits and veggies into the bodies of your children.

### **1. Smoothies**

This one is fairly obvious because kids love smoothies and milkshakes. You can add vegetables to smoothies without them knowing they're in there. Carrots, zucchini, yellow squash, and celery can be added. Avocados are good to add to chocolate flavored smoothies. You can also add leafy greens like spinach or kale, but the green color of the smoothie will be a dead giveaway. You may want to introduce leafy greens later when your child is accustomed to smoothies.

### **2. Snacks**

It's amazing what happens when you place a tray of vegetables and dip on the table during snack time. When children don't have to eat their vegetables, they're more likely to enjoy them. A low-pressure snack with celery, carrots, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes and other kid-friendly vegetables is a great way to get more vegetables into them. Good dips to consider include hummus made of chickpeas, or guacamole containing avocado and tomatoes. You can also

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switch it up with an occasional fruit and cheese tray, and fun fruit dips made out of yogurt or peanut/almond butter and pureed fruits.

### **3. Purees and Mashes**

It's sneaky, but it works. Like fruit purees, you can add grated veggies or purees to just about anything. You can add them to spaghetti, muffins, brownies, and even taco meat. Squash makes a great puree but so do vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, and even beans. Grated zucchini dissolves into sauces. I add it to stews and pasta sauce all the time, and the kids never know it's there.

You can mash or puree veggies like cauliflower or broccoli and serve instead of potatoes. If there are leftovers you can mix in egg and some breadcrumbs (or almond meal) and fry them into veggie pancakes. Zucchini pancakes are as good as latkes!

I sneak broccoli into mac and cheese by pureeing it into the sauce before I add the cheese. Green mac and cheese can become "Alien Mac and Cheese" or "Mac and cheese with boogers." Kids love it.

### **4. Serve two vegetables at mealtime**

One great way to get more vegetables into your children's diets is to serve two vegetables at mealtime. Serve a cooked vegetable and a salad, for example. If you're also being sneaky and placing purees in your food, then your children may even be able to get three or more servings of vegetables at dinner time.

### **5. Serve salsas, sauces, and vegetable dips**

Sauces and dips made from vegetables helps you get more veggies into your kids' diets. Serve salsas and vegetable sauces at mealtimes when appropriate. For example, salsa can be served with scrambled eggs, or give your kids hummus with celery stalks. Even apples and peanut butter can get a serving of fruit into your children. Consider making ants on a log, where you put peanut butter on celery, and then raisins on top.

With a little planning ahead, a bit of sneakiness, and a commitment to implement the above strategies, you can get more fruits and vegetables into your children's diets. It's important to take a relaxed approach to eating. If you force children to eat veggies, they're likely to resist. Instead, ask them to try their fruit and veggies.

Children have different taste buds than adults. It may take a few 'tastes' for them to learn to like a fruit or vegetable. Of course, don't reward them with dessert if they don't eat their vegetables, but forcing it may result in a backlash. Provide your children with plenty of opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables, and they will eventually develop healthy eating habits.



## *How to Reduce Your Children's Sugar Consumption*

Sugar is a habit that can be tough to break. Most people don't realize just how much sugar they eat every day. It's worse if your kids are sharing treats or swapping lunches at school. That makes it even more important for you to be vigilant at home.

### 1. Track What They Eat

The first step in reducing your kids' desire for sweets is to actually take a look at what they're eating. You may be surprised to learn how much sugar is in the foods they eat. Cereal, ketchup, bread, and of course snacks are all full of sugar. Track what your children eat, and read the labels. Make notes of how much sugar they eat, and then begin to plan how you can make changes.

### 2. Make Changes Slowly

Sugar is incredibly addictive. Our bodies become reliant on sugar for energy. Our blood sugar spikes and then crashes. When low sugar levels hit, you crave more sugar. It's a never-ending cycle. If your children consume a lot of sugar, they may be addicted. If you simply eliminate the sugar, they're going to experience withdrawal.

Sugar withdrawal can include symptoms include insomnia, stomach distress, headaches, and fatigue. It's quite unpleasant. Chances are you're going to see some very unpleasant behavior changes while your children are going through withdrawal. It's tough!

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Instead of quitting sugar cold turkey, start making small changes in your children's diets. Gradually decrease the amount of sugar. Replace sugary foods with low-sugar substitutes. Simple things like replacing jam or jelly with a low-sugar alternative, or buying bread or spaghetti sauce without added sugar are great starts. Replace juice with water, or better yet, begin by diluting the juice with water, and gradually dilute it more and more until it becomes nothing but water. Replace soda with diet soda or sparkling water. It's best to avoid sodas with aspartame in them. You may want to consider ones with stevia.

### 3. Notice the Change

As your children consume less and less sugar, you'll notice a difference in their health and behavior. They may even notice a difference. They may feel more energetic. They may feel more in control of their emotions, and they may be able to focus for longer periods of time. It's definitely motivation to continue reducing sugar in their diets.

Your kids will be resistant to the idea of reducing sugar. You may have to be covert about your sugar reduction plan. Take an inventory of what your children eat on a regular basis and how much sugar they're consuming. Replace sugary foods gradually with healthier ones. Little by little, you can reduce your children's reliance on sugar, and set them up to live long and healthy lives.

I hope you have taken away some practical tips that you can apply immediately to improve your family's health. Healthy societies start with healthy families, and it's my mission to improve our community one family at a time.

Reach out to me if you have any questions on how to implement these or if you need any other help. I am here for you! You can email me at [restorationchirosvf@gmail.com](mailto:restorationchirosvf@gmail.com) or text or call the office at (818) 661-6369.