

LIVING

Keeping Children Fit

by Sylvia Saleem

OUR civilisation draws its strength from the family circle. It has been so throughout history. Recent years have wrought wonders — children today are bigger and healthier than ever before.

Eating for Health

The recipe for health eating is a varied diet consisting of at least a pint of milk, and something selected from each of the following groups every day:

1. Meat poultry, fish, cheese. (In choosing meat, remember that the cheaper cuts are every bit as nutritious, and that liver — a rich source of iron — should be included once a week.)
2. Egg (including eggs used in cooking and custards).
3. Fresh fruit, salads, vegetables.
4. Butter, margarine.

These foods provide all the protein children need for growth and repair, all the essential mineral elements, particularly calcium and iron, and the whole range of vitamins A, B, C, D, E and K, for all except the tiny tots, who need a supplementary dose of vitamin D in cod liver oil up to school age.

In addition, children need a certain amount of carbohydrate — sugar and starch — to provide energy. This includes sugar, bread, potatoes, cereals, sponge puddings, pastry, cakes, biscuits, chocolate and all other foods made with sugar or flour. On the whole we are inclined to eat too much of these foods, and these are the ones that wreak havoc with our children's teeth.

Just as with adults, some children have big appetites and some have small. But no healthy child has ever starved when there is a good mixed diet available, and it is never necessary to try to make a child eat.

The best policy is to be fairly casual about food. There are genuine likes and dislikes, but they should not be made an issue. If, for instance, your child is refusing greens, give him something else from the same group to make up — fruit, for

example; if he will not touch meat, fish or cheese will do just as well.

How Much Sleep?

Children need sleep, as much for conservation of energy as for growth and repair. But how much sleep? This is largely a matter of personality.

Placid children present no problem. They are ready for bed when the time comes and sleep peacefully until morning.

Some active, determined youngsters resist sleep from the day they are born. Yet they remain perfectly well and with boundless energy — far too much for their sleep-starved parents!

Up to the age of two, you can safely trust your child to take as much sleep as he needs, regardless of time and place. Though it is clearly impossible and may be misleading to lay down hard-and-fast rules, it is usual to expect a two-year-old

to sleep twelve hours at night and an hour or two in the daytime. By three and a half, most children discard the daytime nap, or need it only a few days in the week.

Six o'clock bedtime is usual up to the age of six or so and from then on you can allow half an hour's extension for each birthday. Thus at the age of twelve a child should be in bed by nine o'clock. By seventeen, eight or nine hours' sleep is about average.

A Relaxed Atmosphere

Once decided upon, bedtimes should be pretty regular, though staying up can be permitted on special occasions. But bedtime should not be allowed to become a topic for argument every night, nor should the lure of television rob your children of sleep.

You cannot make a child sleep. You can provide a quiet bedroom, a warm, comfy bed, a happy atmosphere at bedtime.

Let him have a little light if it comforts him. You can make it easy for him to sleep by reading a bedtime story or talking over the events of the day so that any troubles, like Alice in Wonderland, grow smaller and smaller, and his mind gradually relaxes so that sleep can take over in the natural way.

Habits like these often start when a child has been ill and needs extra attention. They happen in the best of families, but a wise mother, realising that this is a habit which is hard to break, puts her foot down once the child is well again. Children are happiest when treated reasonably firmly — too much of their own way makes them insecure.

Fresh Air and Exercise
Germs cannot stand fresh air, so see that your children get plenty of it, indoors and out. Sitting still never comes naturally to children. Nature is constantly urging them to use their muscles, to co-ordinate and develop them by constant repetition — to touch, to feel, to walk and run, to skip and jump, explore and climb. You can help them to develop balance and control by encouraging their efforts, by providing sturdy playthings — a swing, a climbing frame or a slide, for example.

Children should spend some time out of doors in all weathers except fog and driving rain. No inducements are necessary on warm days and, as they romp, the sunshine on their skin forms health-giving vitamin D. But children are scarcely aware of the cold, and a brisk walk or chase with friends on winter days sharpens their appetites, puts colour into their cheeks, and gives them pep and vitality.

If you are a flat-dweller, take extra care to see that your children get this all-important fresh air by visits to local parks and gardens.

(to be continued)

Let Them Know the Truth

by Fayza Haq

A father in a family once lost his job. He sulked in the corners as if the doom's day had come and went moody and tempestuous with his child. The mother too was nervous and edgy losing her temper often, banging pots and pans, slamming doors, and snapping at her daughter. Neither the father nor the mother bothered to explain to Suhana as to what was the problem at home. The six year old thought it was her poor monthly school reports that made the parents so unusually short-tempered and edgy. The child burned within herself and even thought of running away from home. She went through a personal hell for six months till the father finally found a job and normalcy was restored.

The parents believed that by hiding the facts from the child, they could maintain harmony at home. They did not realise that the child was old enough to fathom that something was wrong with the state of affairs at home. Not being given any explanation, the child searched for a reason, and thought herself to blame.

Similarly, a mother was taken seriously ill with a liver problem and had to be flown abroad for treatment. Little Shehad was told nothing but simply packed off to stay at the grandmother's house for three months which he found insufferable as his grandmother was aging, and suffered from heart trouble, blood pressure, and arthritis, and had little inclination to pamper the lonely and forsaken child in a home, when there were no children to play with and no other adult to fuss over him. The domestic servants went their own way knowing that the little boy was only a temporary visitor.

Shehad often cried by himself and hugged his teddy-bear as his story books and other toys failed to warm his heart in the absence of his parents. In his grandmother's home he felt abandoned and marooned without his parents to fuss over

him. The child was totally bewildered and refused to eat or sleep properly. He would be restless at school and often got into trouble for his indiscipline.

too. If Arif stays with your father, Tuli, you will remain with me. We, your parents will not stop loving you or caring for you. Whenever you have a

girl who thought that she had a fatal disease when all that had happened to her was that she was entering her teens. Her mother had not cared to guide and explain to her the natural and inevitable changes in her body.

The fourteen year-old boy might be similarly bewildered with the new changes in his body and unknown feelings about his senses and desires. Just as a mother should not get hysterical about the love letters that her daughter maybe writing, so telephone calls from a female member of the class should not infuriate the father or make the mother besides herself. The father should take the son aside and tell him a thing or two about the facts of life instead of the child picking up distorted information in a surreptitious whispering session with his older cousin or class friend.

There should be a rapport between the children at home and the parents. Parents should not hide facts from the children or the children will come to warped and confused conclusions of their own.

When the young woman is being given in marriage, as is often the case in the east, the young woman should be consulted, amply warned, and a man should not be suddenly thrust into her life without her consent, even if the parents feel that what they are doing is for the college girl's own good. Thus, if the son refuses to marry the daughter of the father's friend, the young man's feelings should be carefully considered.

Constant dialogues between parents and offsprings make the home a warmer and more amicable place to live in. There should be no secrets or hidden and seek. Parents should know what is in the minds of the youth, just as children have the right to know about any crisis that may plague the family harmony.



It would have been so much sensible if the parents had taken Shehad into confidence and told him how his mother was ailing but that she would be back.

Then he would not have had the nerve racking empty days to cope with or the sleepless nights to fret over.

If there are misunderstandings between husband and wife and there are thoughts of separation, the children should be made to understand, "Your father and I are going through a difficult period. We are trying to work things out. Even if your father does not live with us you will go to see him on holidays and he will come and see you

problem both your father and I are available for you. You will not be cut off from your friends and neither will you be deprived of things dear to your heart. Your education will go on smoothly," the mother could explain. Children need to be told of situations at home. Letters presents, and telephone calls from a father living in a different country, and separated from the mother, still work miracles for them.

Children also deserve and need lessons about puberty. It comes as a sudden disaster to the twelve year-old girl who is suddenly faced with it at school where her school friends might tease her to tears. I once knew a



A well-cared for child

Maintaining the hygiene of your teeth and gums is an important part of your health care. Since you only have one set of teeth as an adult, taking the best care of them you can avoid the possibility of serious dental problems arising later. Good dental care includes daily brushing and flossing and regular check-ups at the dentist.

Regular brushing and flossing prevents the build up of plaque, the great enemy of teeth and gums. This sticky film that forms on teeth is made up of saliva and soft material that is formed from the saliva and bacterial cells themselves. Plaque formation is encouraged by eating or drinking sweet or starchy food. Plaque starts off soft but eventually hardens, forming a coating on the teeth around the gum margin. This build up can damage the tooth enamel and encourage tooth decay. Plaque also irritates and erodes the gum margin, causing gum disease.

You should have twice yearly check-ups at the dentist so that your teeth can be examined for signs of any problems; they can then be treated before they become serious. At the check-up

Dental Care

your dentist will also clean your teeth by descaling them and removing any calcium deposits from the gum, which helps to prevent gum disease.

Toothbrushes and toothpastes

It is important to choose the right toothbrush to get the maximum benefit from it. A nylon brush is preferable to bristle, as bristle splits and loses its shape quickly. Choose a brush with a small head so that you can easily clean the back teeth. A soft or medium bristle brush is best, as the harder brushes may damage the tooth enamel and the gums. Change your toothbrush regularly, about every month or so, as the bristles soon get soft.

There is a wide variety of toothpastes on the market. Some contain flouride, which helps protect against tooth decay, and the newer ones go some way to preventing plaque.

Brushing

It is important to clean your

teeth after every meal to remove food particles and prevent the build-up of plaque. Thorough cleaning helps to keep the breath fresh, as decomposing food can cause bad breath. Brushing helps to massage the gums, keeping them in good condition.

To brush properly, apply a small amount of toothpaste to your brush. Place your brush against your teeth at a 45 degree angle and gently brush from the gum margin upwards or downwards, depending on if you are brushing your upper or lower teeth. Be sure and clean the inner surfaces of the teeth, the back teeth, and the tongue. Don't press too hard, and don't push the brush down into the gums. To check on your efficiency, use a disclosing rinse after brushing, which colours any remaining plaque a bright pink.

Flossing

Dental floss should be used at least once a day to clean between the teeth. It should be

used delicately so as to not damage the gums. Unwaxed dental floss is probably more effective than waxed, but if you have a lot of fillings or uneven edges it may catch on the teeth; used waxed instead.

To floss, wind a short length of floss around the second fingers of each hand. Slide it gently down between each of the teeth, taking care to press it against the side of the tooth. Then gently slide it upwards out of the teeth, removing any food particles with it. Repeat until you have flossed between all of the teeth. Use a new length of floss if it snags or tears.

Bad breath

The usual causes of bad breath are eating, drinking, smoking, and tooth or gum decay. If you are brushing and flossing regularly and suffer from bad breath, see your dentist to eliminate the possibility of any gum disease. If you smoke you should stop or learn to live with smoker's breath. Remember, too, that certain foods can make your breath smell long after you have eaten them.

MS

Hunter's Pie (for 6)

6 mutton chops
A little butter
A little gravy
2 dozen potatoes
Pepper and salt to taste

Braise the chops. Boil and mash the potatoes and add pepper and salt. Butter a large pie dish, line with potatoes, put in the chops and cover with the remaining potatoes and bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes. Cut a hole in the top and pour in the gravy (made by thickening the water in which the chops were cooked).

Irish Apple Baskets (for 4-6)

Filling
1 lb cooking apples
3 heaped tablespoonfuls sugar
3 tablespoonfuls water

1 oz margarine
Pinch of nutmeg, mixed spice or cinnamon, or 1-2 heaped tablespoonfuls sultanas or stoned

Cookery

raisins
Short pastry
6 oz flour
Pinch of salt
3 oz margarine
3 dessertspoonfuls cold water, milk or water, and castor sugar to coat

Turn on the oven heat, and set to fairly hot. Peel, core, and slice the apples, and place in a saucepan with the other ingredients. Simmer gently until soft, and mash smoothly with a fork. Cool.

Make short pastry (see Pastry chapter), using the ingredients listed, roll out thinly, cut into rounds, and line 9-12 bun tins. Using the scraps of pastry to make narrow strips, put in the apple filling and arrange the strips in star or lattice patterns over the apples. Brush with milk or water, sprinkle with castor sugar, and bake for

20-25 minutes in a pre-heated oven on the second shelf from the top. Serve either hot or cold. (Makes 9-12 tartlets, according to size.)

Irish Cheesecakes

4 oz sweet almonds
3 oz sugar
A little rose-water
2 oz butter
Pastry as for Irish Apple Baskets
A little lemon juice and grated lemon peel
3 bitter almonds
3 eggs

Blanch and chop the almonds very fine. Mix in rose-water. Beat the eggs and add with melted butter, lemon peel, juice and sugar. Line 12 patty pans with pastry and fill with the mixture. Bake in a hot oven for about 15 minutes.

Irish Delight (for 4)

1/2 oz cornflour
2 eggs
A little vanilla essence
1 pint milk
A little fat
1 dessertspoonful castor sugar
3 oz breadcrumbs

Mix the cornflour to a smooth paste. With a little of the milk. Bring the rest of the milk to the boil and stir gently into the cornflour, boil for 10 minutes, stirring all the time. Add the vanilla and sugar, and pour into a shallow flat tin or dish. When quite cold, cut into oblong slices, dip in beaten egg, roll in breadcrumbs and fry a golden brown in a little hot fat. Salt, pepper and grated cheese can be used instead of sugar and vanilla.



Richard Lewis and Jamie Lee Curtis in "Anything but Love" on Star Plus

Are You as Honest as You Could be?

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

HONESTY is the best policy or so it's said. More or less everyone of us grew up hearing this age old saying. But in reality do we follow this saying? If so, to what extent? Well, up to a certain limit, perhaps. Frankly speaking, did you ever wonder what it would be like to be a straightforward, truthful person? Come to think of it, is it humanly possible to be blunt or direct all the time and at all costs, in all circumstances? Questions! Questions! Too many of them, it's starting to get irritating. Yet it's possible to be truthful all the time. It might be very uncommon but is nevertheless possible.

Some of you may think, what is so great about speaking the truth? But, in our every day lives, saying it like it is, is not as simple as it sounds.

Well, you sceptics, let's probe into the matter why people aren't straightforward and honest as they should be. Why? Actually for a number of reasons. We can separate, these people into five categories, such as:

(a) The first group doesn't want to hurt other people's feelings.

words, these people don't want to get into anyone's bad books.

(c) The third lot of people are cowards — who don't have the guts to speak out.

(d) The fourth group believes that a little white lie won't harm anyone, on the other hand, might save it from some predicaments.

(e) The fifth crowd wants to remain popular or be in good terms with everyone.

Well, then who speaks the truth?

(1) Those who aren't afraid or hesitant to state the obvious.

(2) Those who don't care about other people's feelings.

(3) Those who are truly honest (a rare breed). The words "lie" or "tact" don't exist in their vocabulary.

(4) Those who believe that speaking out one's mind or expressing what one feels is always the best way of tackling every problem.

Minus Points:

(1) As previously mentioned, you might hurt a person's feelings by speaking the truth. Think carefully, when your friend asks you, what you think

of her new outfit, which she thinks is positively smart while you think is terribly unflattering on her, do you just blast out the unpleasant truth? With a friend the truth might be appreciated, but what if the person asking happens to be a mere acquaintance? What then? Or, imagine the time when you were invited to a party, where the food was absolutely inedible and the hostess asked you what you thought of her gourmet cooking — did you give her a piece of your mind and tell her to take cooking lessons? No, you did not (if you did it would have only proved that you were a mean and uncaring person). What people normally do in these situations are either lie outrageously or tactfully avoid giving a direct answer — the latter definitely being the wiser of the two.

(2) You might make a lot of enemies. The truth can sometimes be harmful. Suppose you tell your boss that the so called "brilliant" move which was undertaken by him is no good, you might as well say goodbye to your job or get blacklisted. Some things can be said about

other vengeful people, so better watch out you gutsy people, it's a cruel world out there!

Plus Points:

(1) You'll be admired for your honesty. People might like your straight forward nature and often come to you for pragmatic, unbiased advice or opinion. In any case everyone will know that you're not the hypocrite who laughs behind her backs.

(2) You'll never have to feel guilty about lying or letting a person believe something wrongly, or constantly worrying that he/she might find out your true "opinion" and that alone is a great sense of relief.

When all's said and done, let's admit that truthfulness is an art, which one has to master from one's earliest childhood. This sounds somewhat philosophical, but can't be helped. But, if one isn't a born liar or basically a devious, unscrupulous person, one could, (if he or she tried hard enough) acquire the habit of saying it like it is — without too much of a trouble.

Then again, why bother? Because life would be rather boring without a little backbiting, lies and criticism.

To be more specific, be like Balki in the popular TV series "Perfect Strangers"



Deep toned kurta. Courtesy: "Anokhi"