

YOUR CHILD'S
NUTRITION



*Lesson Material on Care of
the Preschool Child
No. 4*



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YOUR CHILD'S NUTRITION

What should you look for as general indications of good nutrition?

If your child has good color, good posture, and firm muscles, is active and vigorous, has a good appetite, and shows a steady gain in weight, his nutrition is probably good.

How does your child's weight measure his nutrition?

Lack of fat is one evidence of undernutrition, but much fat should not be considered a measure of good nutrition. Increase in your child's weight should be due to increase in height and in muscle tissue as well as to addition of enough fat. If he is healthy he will have a good balance between fat and muscle.

How is your child's weight related to his height?

A tall child would have to weigh more than a small child to keep the same good proportion between muscle and fat. A healthy, active child with plenty of rest, the right food, and fresh air generally gains height and weight in the right proportion for his age. This does not mean that all children of the same age will be equally tall, because some children have small mothers and fathers and other children have tall ones. An underweight child generally weighs less than most other children of his height and age, and an overweight child weighs more than most other children of his height and age. A little underweight for his height may mean that your child should be watched but not worried about. If the difference between his weight and the average weight for a child of his height and age is about a tenth of the average weight, you should have expert advice as to what to do.

What are the causes of poor nutrition?

Your child can not build bones, muscle tissue, and fat without taking the right building materials in his food.

Some special cause may have slowed down his general growth. This may be a physical condition, such as having bad adenoids and tonsils, decaying teeth, constant colds, or some illness. It may be poor habits, such as not getting enough sunshine or fresh air, or not chewing his food properly, or not eliminating the body waste regularly.

A healthy child is not "lazy." He is always active. If care is not taken to see that he has enough sleep and periods of quiet play and rest, he may use up his vitality and fail to gain.

What can you do if your child is poorly nourished?

Study your child's habits and consider whether he is having plenty of rest for recuperation, whether he has vigorous exercise outdoors, whether he eats the right foods at the right times so that he will have a good appetite, and whether he has good habits of eliminating waste.

Take your child to your physician and have him make a thorough physical examination. This will be a safe start for a real plan for improving his nutrition. Although you can get your physician's help in deciding on the physical needs and in studying the habits of your child, it is your job to work out a plan so that good habits will be the natural, easy, and pleasant things for him.

Problems.

1. How would you have your child stand to get his tallest measure from the top of his head to the sole of his stocking feet?
2. Compare your child's height and weight with a standard table of average weights.
3. How much sleep does your child usually have?
4. How accurately do you know your child's habits in regard to eating and also in regard to elimination of waste?

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