

Tips for Fuelling and Nourishing active, growing bodies

- It is not developmentally appropriate to teach kids about nutrition and 'healthy' eating until at least the teen years. Even then – they don't need to know about kilojoules/calories, 'clean eating', or any form of dieting/restriction (detox, fasting, Weight Watchers etc)
- Growing bodies need fuel, moving and active bodies need MORE fuel
- Hunger tells us that our bodies need something, it's normal after a busy day at school for your child to get home and be REALLY HUNGRY! Snack options recommended by Sports Dietitians Association include -
 - Crumpets with sliced banana and drizzle of honey
 - Small bowl pasta with tomato based sauce
 - Fruit smoothie
 - Raisin toast with jam
 - Toasted cheese sandwich
 - Bowl cereal and milk/yogurt with muesli and fruit
- Before menstruation the body changes dramatically, hunger surges in preparation for a year or so before, and it's happening younger (10 years) than you may expect. Bodies can appear to have grown overnight, talk to your kids about this!
- Cutting a child or teens food intake back can be detrimental to growth, their future eating habits, performance and during injury recovery.
- We all respond to restriction with an INCREASED DESIRE! How instead can we teach self-regulation? Create a varied food intake and give kids the chance to learn how to make food choices.
- Be mindful of labelling foods as 'good' or 'bad'. Kids are also very suggestable and if overhearing conversations about dieting, disliked body parts, needing to eat less to lose weight etc they can internalise these messages.
- If you're concerned about your child's appetite and body shape – a helpful question is "would I still be concerned with how much they're eating if they were thinner?"

Eating disorders are highly prevalent in athletes, including gymnasts and dancers and can cause serious harm to future growth and health.

THINGS TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR:

- If your child develops earlier than their peers, is taller, or makes comments around body comparisons (increased comments of being 'fat')
- Starts to change their food intake e.g. restricting certain food groups, going vegetarian/vegan, becomes more rigid in their food choices
- Stops eating out with family/friends
- Excessive, ritualistic physical activity (and irritation if the routine is disrupted)
- An increased interest in health (social media, recipes, being 'fit', weight loss websites)



For a more detailed checklist - <http://www.feedyourinstinct.com.au/>

If you are after any helpful websites discussing how to talk to your children about bodies and food – here are a few good starters:

- The Feeding Doctor
- Kids Dig Food
- Ellyn Satter Institute
- Sports Dietitians Australia

