



*Kids
Health*

*With Peter
Mullen*

Kids Health with Peter Mullen



A conversation with Kris & Peter on all things kids wellbeing and how you can better protect your babies health physically and emotionally

K: Peter, being that time of year where everyone seems to be battling a runny nose, or itchy cough. I wanted to come on with you tonight and chat about how we can support ourselves and our kids health. We know we to expose ourselves to the natural vitamins to support our wellbeing. Like spending sufficient time in the sun. Do you feel supplements are a necessity too? Or can we get enough support simply by exposing ourselves to certain lifestyle choices that will provide the natural vitamins.

P: As Naturopaths we believe in the body's ability to heal itself and keep us well, a healthy diet with as high a plant based diet as possible I believe is the ideal diet for us and our children.

Good quality, organic if possible, vegies, fruit and salad, with healthy whole grains, good quality meat fish and chicken, and healthy fats like olive oil and avocado.

1. Unfortunately, our food supply isn't always as fresh, eg coles and woolworths, you could be eating 4 week old fruit or vegetables.
2. Our mineral levels in our soils can be low as we are an old country, so low in zinc, magnesium, iodine, which we need to look at additional supplementation to support our children and ourselves.
3. and more and more a problem our children seem to be becoming more and more fussy when it comes to foods that they will eat. More and more children are being diagnosed with anxiety and sensory issues

I believe that our children's health isn't what it use to be...

Preschool children get at least six colds per year. It is common for healthy children to have up to 12 viral illnesses per year in the first few years of life. It is also common for children to get sick from one virus shortly after getting better from a different one, so it can seem they are sick all the time. As children get older, the frequency of catching viral illnesses usually reduces.

So I believe in Foundation nutrition and elements for our children and us adults will better support our families. I would suggest a kids multivitamin, in a tonic form would be great, a probiotic and a fish oil.

K: As you know, I'm mum of two and step mum of 2. Both sets of kids at very different seasons in terms of nutrient needs, what they are being exposed in terms of the junk food that's so prevalent socially today... and then what they will actually eat... Ie, one eats salmon happily and the other won't even put it near her mouth to try it. How can we integrate those micro nutrients and high fibre foods into their diets without force feeding them or creating a negative relationship with food.. any tips here?

P: We have a great webinar on our website by one of our practitioners Belinda on Kids and healthy eating. Belinda is our children's specialist at Mullen health and a wealth of knowledge

How to keep kids engaged in food and what they're eating (help cooking etc)

- Help with the cooking; Talk about foods - colour, smell, taste, texture, where they come from
- Make it fun - colours, patterns/make faces,
- Make healthier versions of unhealthy foods,
- Family meal times and set a good example - you have to eat it too
- Take them shopping and talk about foods, point them out
- Find out what their favourites are or ask them what they want to eat tonight
- Let them plan a menu and then compromise on things that they shouldn't have
- Get them to try new things - taste, think about it, then if they don't like it, its their choice - more empowered, they have more control.
- Compromise, barter, bribe - whatever works. Kids personalities are so different

K: How can natural supplements promote good behavioural health in kids?

P: Anxiety and behavioural challenges are so common in children these days.

We often see kids with symptoms of stress, anxiety, trouble concentrating, low energy, hyperactive, over sensitive emotionally, overwhelm, trouble sleeping, etc.

First step as naturopaths is to Identify the underlying causes/triggers of these behaviours

1. Poor gut health / Leaky gut - Gut immune brain axis
2. Poor sleep patterns
3. Food intolerances
4. Blood sugar imbalances
5. Nutritional deficiencies may be contributing to their symptoms:

If kids are settled on the inside, all their nutrient levels are balanced then they have a more stable place to come from.

Common deficiencies can include

- Zinc
- Magnesium
- Essential fatty acids
- Probiotics - microbiome and links to mood, stress response, emotion and cognition (neurotransmitter and hormone production)

K: What are your top tips for supporting our family to feel healthy?

P: One thing that I am really passionate helping mums and parents gain the knowledge and confidence in being able to understand their own children's health and what works for them as a family.

To know what they can treat and manage themselves using natural means and when they need to see their Naturopath or GP.

1. Learn to read food labels:

- Misleading and confusing children's food is packaging and marketing
- Sugary, overly processed breakfast cereals are packaged with bright, fun images designed to attract kid's attention, buzz words like "added protein, or calcium" or "no artificial additives or preservatives" - parents believe they are making a healthy choice
- General rule: less processed the better, if you don't recognise an ingredient or there are lots of numbers in the ingredients list, steer clear.
- Good tip: stick to outer isles of the supermarket - mostly fresh produce and less packaged foods.

2. Always good to reduce sugar (especially high fructose corn syrup), and processed food (esp. additives and preservatives) - affect children in so many ways

Parents notice variety of improvements in health and wellbeing when these sorts of foods are reduced or eliminated.

1. Always put new things on their plate - rule = must take a small bite to try then pressure off - its ok if they don't like it, they just have to try it - takes 8-15 exposures to new foods (Trav randomly started to like "leaves")

- Don't set them up to fail at meal times- always put something on their plate that they will enjoy. Take the pressure off.

2. Limiting screen time: A good starting place is no screen time after 7pm, and going on 'tech-free' family adventures like camping, bushwalking or the beach.

3. Reduce the pace of life - one family social event per weekend. Too busy = stressed, busy weekends with no quality time to enjoy each other's company.

Also, limit after-school activities to give kids (and yourself) enough time to decompress after a full day of school

Matthews story...

1. My greatest passion: empathic and open lines of communication + teach them about their bodies.

- Explain why you are asking them to eat or not eat a particular food, and the impact it has on their health.
- Get them involved in the shopping and cooking process.
- Children become aware of what they are eating and how it makes them feel = can reduce or eliminate so many health concerns for them.
- I've had so many children learn how to self-regulate what they eat based on how it makes them feel.
- Maintaining life-long good health really starts with having a good connection with how you feel in your body, listening to what it is telling you when symptoms do arise, and knowing what to do to feel better again.

Keen to know more? Contact Mullen Health 02 4961 4075

Consultation is available in clinic, by phone or by video

We also have our herb bar where you can phone at no charge and speak with one of our qualified Naturopaths at no charge - Belinda is often working on, and get prescribed practitioner strength, best quality natural medicines and lifestyle advice to get you started etc