

“Mom to Mom”

Hello, and welcome to “Tot Spot”. I am a proud mom to 3-year-old Jonah, and I have an important message to share about children and nutrition. I encourage you to read my article, and hope that you’ll find the “spark” that will open your mind to useful information to help you and your children become happy and healthy!

I have studied body work, Chinese medicine theory, and nutrition, and learned so much that is applicable to my own life, as well as Jonah’s. Even before having Jonah, I made a decision to be mindful of my own nutrition. Once Jonah was born, I knew that it would continue to be a big part of our lives. This was a major lifestyle choice for me and my son. It was a choice to live differently than most people; to resist the temptations that bombard us everyday from television, radio, and billboards. It’s not easy and takes a lot of energy and effort to make healthy choices and to stand firm in your convictions and not give in to the very effective marketing that is out there trying to persuade you that sugary cereal is a healthy breakfast for your child!

Every day is a challenge, but I continually see the positive results of my efforts. For example, in small group settings, Jonah is extremely well-behaved, much more so than other kids, and people often ask why. His good behavior is testimony to the fact that the long-term effects of my short-term choices are worth the effort. Every day I see parents “giving in” to the temptations, and I believe that many of them simply are not aware of how their children’s health is being compromised by the food and sugary drinks they consistently allow them to have. For example, we were at a New Year’s Eve party at a friend’s home and a mom, whose daughter was around 5 years old, was talking about how she thought her daughter might have ADHD – while handing her a bottle of Coke! Nutrition plays an important role in your child’s behavior and it’s worth paying attention to what you’re feeding your kids, and then noticing if there might be a connection to their negative behavior.

“You are what you eat”. I’m sure you’ve heard that saying before, and I believe it’s absolutely true! Jonah hardly ever gets sugar, or if he does, I make sure that it’s in a more natural form, such as unbleached, raw cane sugar, honey, or fruit sugars. He drinks mostly water and has his own water bottle. Because he has been eating so healthy all his life, he even enjoys eating very strong, fermented foods! I know that’s unusual for a 3-year-old, but you can see how kids will eat healthy if they are kept away from the “bad stuff” and offered the “good stuff” on a consistent basis. As parents, we must also role model our own healthy eating habits to our children. As Maya Angelou said, “When the mother decides, the child will follow”.

Of course, Jonah and I don’t live in a cave. We want to be out and about enjoying life, just like everyone else! As Jonah is getting older, he’s starting to notice the temptations that are out there to eat what is being marketed to our children. This challenge should be in the forefront of our minds as a major priority and, as parents, we need to begin paying attention. It takes energy, but we MUST! Parents need to be aware that kids are being tricked in to thinking that foods are good for them. The pace is so fast today, and we’re always looking for convenience. Companies are taking advantage of this, and they’re misleading adults, as well as children, to choose foods that are harmful to our long-term health. For example, the words, “low fat”, “low calorie”, and “no sugar” should be like warning sirens alerting you to something that, at best, is simply not nutritious and, at worst, is actually harmful to our bodies. How about the milk and dairy campaigns? After some of your own research, you might come to the conclusion (as I did!) that milk and dairy products are really not all they’re cracked up to be! Childhood diabetes, obesity, and attention deficit disorder are rampant in the U.S., and poor nutrition is one of the reasons why.

Do you feel responsible for a lifestyle change that will result in wellness for you and your family and good habits for your children that will last a lifetime? One of the simplest things you can do is to begin introducing whole foods in to your child's diet. This means fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains (such as oatmeal and bread made with whole, unbleached flour v. enriched). If your child is old enough to eat nuts and is not allergic, walnuts and almonds are also great sources of vitamins, minerals, and "good" fats. Moms – follow your intuition, stay informed, and don't just accept what someone is telling you without doing some of your own research first. Your children's health is your responsibility and the choices you make on their behalf should be a priority.

My hope is that my articles will be a stepping stone for you to become informed and to open your mind to different options, other than what mainstream advertising has been feeding us. I want to help support you along the way as we raise our kids together in a very challenging environment.

I'm proud to be a part of the Spirit Wings Kid's Charity and I know it will be a learning experience for everyone. My family and I are involved in our own personal projects and passions, but we all connect to each other through this charity and this website. Maybe you'll simply enjoy supporting us by regularly visiting our website; or maybe our charity's resources can help you if you're in a crisis. Either way, we want to be there for you!