

Perspective on Childhood Eating Habits among Rural and Urban Children in Saudi Arabia

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This discussion will be addressing the perspective about Childhood Eating Habits among Rural and Urban Children in Saudi Arabia, it has been discovered that healthy eating habits in children is becoming more difficult to achieve for mothers due to the more changing times and busy working schedule for modern mothers. It has been noticed that mothers are facing difficulty in providing their children with adequate nutrition as they have minimal control over what and how much their children are eating. Most urban children in Saudi Arabia are proving to be mischievous, an observation has been made on feeding habits and it has been noticed that children are skilled at convincing their nanny to serve them on food they like when their mothers are not available. This has made urban children to feed on foods that its nutritional value is not balanced. This has led to the deterioration of children's nutrition in Saudi Arabia. Urban children in Saudi Arabia will always opt for food like chips, chocolate and biscuits rather than eating healthy foods that are freshly prepared. This has been influenced by the long time the mothers spent away from home, peer influence from older children and mostly the tasty tempting fast foods advertised the children watch, which sends a message to them that they are the best foods to eat. Generally, it has been observed that urban children in Saudi Arabia have unhealthy eating habits leading to weight gain and dental problems. The most important factor in childhood nutrition is the quality of food consumed, and not the quantity. Most nannies measure the amount of food a baby has had by quantity without keeping in mind the quality of food that

was taken. Mothers should closely watch their children's nutrition to make sure they are getting enough of those important vitamins and minerals.

Compared to the rural children in Saudi Arabia, it is complete opposite, as most children stay with their mothers most of the time, and the mothers are responsible for what they eat all the times. Rural foods are easily available fresh from farm, as a results food that is prepared has more nutrients. Rural children mostly have no choice of food because snacks are not easily available. This controls the amount of junk foods they take, generally eating habits among rural kids Saudi Arabia is encouraging and highly nutritious. The eating practices and lifestyle patterns of the rural children is not confused because the mother herself is responsible for the foods taken by the children, unlike modern mothers who have to hire different nannies most of the time whereby everyone has her own feeding style that end up confusing the children. There have been observed that diversity exists in childhood feeding patterns in Saudi Arabia. This diversity is brought about due to industrialization and economic growth that has been brought about by rural to urban migration, and market structures. Local beliefs such as the notion that animal foods lead to putrefaction in young children's abdomens has influenced eating habits thus making children lack some of the essential nutrients in Saudi Arabia because of several beliefs that exist about children food [1-3].

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