

## Food Education in Times of COVID-19

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Junk food, low on nutrients and nutritional properties, bearing monotonous colors, with excessive amounts of sugar. These are, among others, the characteristics of the food that children are closer to.

The high supply of this type of food accompanied by large advertising campaigns both in channels dedicated to the family and in those exclusively for children is certainly worrying. Ultra-processed foods came to annihilate real foods and make us believe that we have practically no choice when it comes to choosing, since they choose for us. The traditions of cooking as a family with seasonal and REAL food, of drinking water and enjoying food are long gone.

This pandemic hit us without notice and forces us to stay at home, with our families, doing more sedentary activities. But actually, without even knowing it, we now have precious time: time to be at home, time to be with each other and time to revive those habits left behind. We have the power to make use of it and to change, which is why this opportunity can become an ideal environment for the family to learn, develop, implement and teach about food education to the youngest members of the family.

In order to best get through this stressful moment, we need to focus on the kitchen. Sticky dough-filled hands, colorful dishes and lots of love are the keys to incorporating habits, values and knowledge which are crucial to the future of children and adults. Within the food-related advices to face the COVID-19 crisis, the FAO mentions the importance of cooking as a family so that children incorporate healthy consumption habits.

Food and nutritional education are very important at all ages, but it is the youngest who must develop good habits from an early age in order to incorporate and apply them throughout their lives so that they can communicate them themselves. Acquiring healthy habits makes us more prone to trying and choosing new, healthier and more nutritious food.

It is essential that we, as adults, set the example so that everything we've mentioned so far comes to fruition.

¡Eyes off the screen and hands on the dough!

Carrying out activities with the children and making them feel part of these is crucial. These activities can range from cooking with them, walking them through process so that they get to know all the different foods, to setting up a small vegetable garden, so that they familiarize with the process of growing fruits, vegetables or aromatic plants such as basil.

Good habits last forever and adults must set the example. Knowing the varieties of fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereals and foods that exist is fundamental as it gives us a more diverse spectrum of options to choose from. We can educate our children through games as a family and learn to choose food for its taste and not as a prize or punishment.

Proposing games that involve different foods will help develop children's curiosity and inspire their imagination. Different colors, shapes, flavors and smells will provide us with an infinite number of combinations to use when playing and cooking.

Do you carry out activities that contribute to incorporating healthy habits? If so, which ones?

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