



First Foods

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You don't have to make dramatic changes once you've had your baby. The idea is that you want your child to grow up and learn about health first foods. So in that first 6 months you will be choosing to (hopefully, if you can and it works for you) breast feed. Breastfeeding first of all is the best food that you can give a child but the other thing with breast feeding, in terms of you and maintaining a healthy weight, is that breast feeding actually assists women to return to a healthier weight in the longer term. So if you can breastfeed that's brilliant but there are also best practice around formula feeding if you choose to formula feed. And it may be worthwhile to have a conversation with your health practitioner about those practices.

When your baby hits around the 6 month mark you can start thinking about the first foods you're going to choose for your child. You as a parent are the best role model a child can have. So if you have a variety of foods around you, your child will learn to eat a variety of foods. Think about, "Am I actually choosing to have vegetables on my plate? Are they in a form that maybe I could offer to my child?" You are role modelling, "I'm eating them. How about you try some?"

You'll find that things like food fussiness do happen. But but you can actually help reduce some of the anxiety if the child sees that you're eating and you're not dying and they can try it and possibly they won't die either. They may spit it out but you have to expect that first foods are one of those messy things you have to do. On average it takes about 10 to 15 tries for a child to accept a food. Keep persevering. Keep offering, for example, the really well-cooked, mashed carrots if that's what you're going to choose. You keep offering it. Initially they might go "No. Not going in." but eventually you'll find that they take it on the spoon and go "Well all right." Then you may find that when they see the mashed carrots it's like "Gobble, gobble, gobble." My children loved avocado, it was the best thing ever. I'd mash it with banana as one of their first foods and they adored it. It was just one way of getting them to eat foods.

So thinking about yourself as a role model and choosing the healthier sorts of food - more fruit, more vegetables, more brown foods - actually makes a world of difference for your children in the longer term. It's better for their overall health and also for you to get you to a healthy weight and to being active to be able to enjoy your life with your child which is no doubt what most people really want out of having a family. So by choosing those things you're actually helping that to happen.