



detoxing our kids

Here's a wake up call for all of us. For the first time in 2 centuries children may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

A report published in The New England Journal of Medicine, says the prevalence and severity of obesity is so great, especially in children, that the associated diseases and complications - Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, kidney failure, cancer - are likely to strike people at younger and younger ages.

I must confess, I don't read the newspaper or listen to talkback radio so perhaps I'm behind the times in catching up with this little snippet. But when I heard it my reaction was one of sadness, then anger (with a good dose of that old friend- Motherhood Guilt!)

I then made time to search the Internet (where would we be without it?) Amongst other depressing statistics I found...

- 41% of children have a long term disease
- 1 in 6 children have a developmental disorder
- 25% of children (and 60% of adults!) are obese
- Diabetes has increased 300% in the last 20 years.
- 40 years ago, autism rates were 1 in 20,000. It's now 1 in 100.
- Asthma rates have doubled since the 1980's - now 1 in 10.
- By the time our kids reach 20 years, 60% of them will be sick.

So is this the legacy we leave our kids? Something is really wrong. Our society is so advanced we now have i-phones, navigate by GPS and can book a ticket on the first leisure flight to space (\$240,000 a ticket - I think I'll wait...) - but we can't ensure our kids have optimum health!

So what does it all come down to? Well, scientists and doctors may have complicated answers, but put simply it seems to be...Chemicals.

Our lives are saturated with synthetic chemicals that were never meant to be in our bodies. They have been introduced into our environment only in the last 2 generations and our internal mechanisms are simply not evolved to cope with them. Chemicals are added to our food, fill our body care and "health" products, and are touted as the solution to cleanliness and hygiene. Look at almost anything you care to pick up - processed food (laden with additives), shampoos, toothpaste, baby wipes, cleaning products. You'll find the ingredients are largely a long list of chemicals you can't pronounce.

Our bodies try to protect us from these foreign threats, by storing them away from our vital organs in our fat cells. So more chemicals,

more fat cells. Too many fat cells - obesity - and all the health complications that brings.

Sadly, our children's bodies are less equipped to deal with these chemicals than we are. Small daily doses of exposure from all these sources are taking a toll on their long term health.

So how can we reclaim our health?

Eat organic - if it seems expensive, then choose just 1 or 2 items, but make a start!

Eat Real Food - reject processed food and go back to the basics. Check out www.changinghabits.com.au for a refreshing re-evaluation of what is really "healthy" and what's not.

Watch what chemicals that sneak into your home and body through body care & cleaning products. Run some of your favourite brands ingredients through the database at www.cosmeticsdatabase.com

Look for the Certified Organic logo when purchasing - not just fresh produce - these days beverages, snacks, wine, body care and household products can all be found with the Australian Certified Organic (ACO) logo.

Talk to our kids about marketing and "greenwashing". A great website is the British Heart Foundation's www.yoobot.co.uk - where kids can play and see the effects of their food choices on a virtual version of themselves.

Get active with your kids! Exercise is not only good for us physically - it also raises the levels of certain mood-enhancing neurotransmitters in the brain ie. makes us feel good!

So let's ditch that old friend Motherhood Guilt and empower our kids to make positive changes and good health choices.

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