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Current Evidence in Age Specific Nutrition

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There is no other time in life when the provision of adequate and balanced nutrition is of greater importance than during infancy and childhood. The nutrition in childhood is very important for maintaining the optimal growth, gaining healthy dietary habits, and functional outcomes such as cognition and immune response, the metabolic programming of long-term health and well-being and preventing the health problems that may arise in adulthood. Some of the important problems in toddlers, preschool and school children are food allergies, atopic diseases, rejection of certain foods, child with poor appetite, caries, and obesity, whereas the problems seen in adolescence are obesity, vegetarian diets, and micro and macro nutritional deficiencies. Moreover, malnutrition is considered to be an important problem among children having chronic disease and/or hospitalized. The important problems seen in the childhood period and continuing in the adolescence are food allergies and atopic diseases. On this subject, the most current suggestions of American Academy of Pediatrics (2019) are very important. Delaying the introduction of certain allergens beyond the 7th month of life has no preventive effect and no is not recommended. The other important problems that might be seen in the childhood period are the child with poor appetite, child eating insufficiently, child eating one type of food, and child anxious about eating. The family, character, and culture have a significant effect on the child's dietary habits. Skipping the breakfast is very frequently observed especially among the school-age children and adolescents. It was reported that skipping the breakfast is related with poor lipid profile, blood pressure levels, insulin resistance, and development of metabolic syndrome, and obesity. World Health Organization (WHO) recommends encouraging the access of children to healthy foods, and interventions aiming to decrease the high-fat, sugar, and -salt foods (HFSS) and acidic beverages by children and young individuals. There is a strong relationship between the low level of fruit and vegetable consumption together with a high level of energy intake and overweight since the age of 1. This suggests that healthy dietary habits should be initiated since the early periods. The most important education to be given is the briefing about the amounts of sugar to be consumed and the content of snacks. In year 2017, the European Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN) published a guideline about the sugar intake of babies, children, and adolescents. Moreover, promising policies and strategies for delivering adolescent nutrition interventions include (focusing on healthy eating practices, physical activity and body image), improvements in the nutritional quality of the food supply and training and involvement of parents and teachers to successfully implement health promotion strategies and activities. Finally, the "multidisciplinary team" approach is very important; the families should be referred to a specialist dietitian and healthy diet programs should be designed.