

- Obesity / Nutrition / Food

Feed your family healthily for less

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OBESITY levels among children are soaring and more of them are getting diagnosed with type 2 diabetes – and the cost of living crisis could make it worse in the future, a charity has warned.



Diabetes UK (diabetes.org.uk) says high levels of obesity have led to a “concerning climb” in the number of youngsters diagnosed with the type 2 condition.

Healthier diets could help, and feeding a family nutritious food doesn’t have to be expensive, stresses Aisling Pigott, dietitian and British Dietetic Association (bda.uk.com) spokesperson.

Aisling says: “The first thing is increase the amount of fruit and vegetables we’re consuming.

“That often feels like it could be expensive, but there are lots of really affordable ways of doing it. Simple swaps can be made, that don’t have to be painful for families.”

Here are Aisling’s tips on how to eat well for less..

Fruit and veg don’t have to be fresh

If fresh fruit and veg seem a bit pricey, go for frozen or tinned versions. They’re often cheaper, and are just as nutritious – sometimes even more so, says Aisling.

“Vegetables maintain quite a lot of nutrients,” she says, “and frozen veg can contain more nutrients than fresh produce, because it’s often frozen at the point of picking or production.”

Look for food packed with fibre

The more fibre we eat, the fuller we feel. Aisling says: “Fibre in food makes it more satisfying, so we’re less likely to overeat.”

Fibre can be found in frozen and tinned veg, and you can choose cheaper wholegrain options of bread, rice and pasta.

Swap in a fibre-filled cheap breakfast cereal

Aisling says high-sugar breakfast cereals “can often be changed for cheaper, high-fibre options, which can contain two or three times the amount of fibre, and much less sugar.”

She suggests trying supermarket own brand wheat-based cereals, adding: “They often match branded products nutritionally and are fortified with vitamins and minerals, at a fraction of the cost.”

Get kids involved in choosing food

It’s no use buying cheaper healthy food if your kids won’t eat it, so Aisling suggests parents get children involved in helping choose food at the supermarket – challenge them to find the cheapest healthy options.

Snacks don’t have to be pre-packaged

Pre-packaged snacks – such as chocolate bars or biscuits – can end up costing a lot over time, and be a source of extra fat, sugar and salt.

Aisling advises: “Things like yoghurt, a little bit of cheese, a piece of fruit, some wholegrain toast – there are lots of healthy and appropriate snacks that don’t come out of a packet.”

Have rules on sweet treats

Aisling recommends having rules on when children can eat sweet treats.

This “doesn’t necessarily mean restricting them, but having them at a certain time of the day or week” could mean less is eaten – and you won’t need to top up the biscuit tin quite so often.

Aisling adds: “A really simple trick lots of families find helpful is putting treat foods in a cupboard that’s not accessible to young children.”