

**Introduction**

The basics of caring for ourselves and our children are about building lifelong good health and resilience to disease. Following Living Medicine's safe and simple self care guidelines can become a way of life and a pleasure. They offer understanding about how our bodies work and evidence-based tools to feel better and build our immune systems.



**Self Care Lifestyle & Diet**

The key is to establish healthy habits right from birth. This makes a huge difference to a child's health all through life. Each habit has benefits: resilience to infection, managed weight, digestion, energy and mood, control of stress and inflammation to prevent ill-health and better control over long-term conditions.

- **Quiet self awareness** Be aware of your body, listen to it and identify early its needs and remedies. Sit quietly with your toddler for a while each day so they'll learn self awareness from you. Schools also teach mindfulness.



- **Eat a wide variety of colourful wholefoods with edible skin/seeds** for every nutrient, fibre and medicine. Main meals at breakfast and lunch to keep full all day. Small meal early evening when digestive function is lower to allow sleep and repair.
- **Eat more vegetables than fruits** with their edible skins/seeds/pith eg daily handful beans/lentils, nuts, seeds, cold-pressed oils, green leafy and root veg, herbs and spices.
- **Eat with children at a table** Share food and talk to feel good - children learn sharing with others and our digestion benefits!
- **Reduce sugary carbs** Refined, sweet carbohydrates - white/brown bread, processed cereals, fruit juice - raise blood sugar too fast, causing fat, diabetes, low immunity and disease.
- **Sleep in a dark room** Adults by 10/11pm for 7-8 hours after light evening meal for vital body/mind repair. Children by 6-7pm - they need 10-14hrs sleep for growth. Afternoon naps ideal for toddlers and give parents a break too. Rest and quiet are central to a healthy life.
- **Walk daily near trees and plants** Pant a little every day! Run around or walk fast with your children to strengthen heart, oxygenate and massage our hard-working organs. Breathe in plants' immune-supporting chemicals, microbes and healing beauty.
- **Allow yourself and your child to express feelings, love and be loved** It's healthy to do what gives us pleasure.

**Self Care Foods**

**A nourishing wide range of colourful plant foods**, and *optionally* some meat or fish, for babies, children and adults is the key to our health, immunity and behaviour. **Especially pre-pregnancy, breastfeeding and for 4-7 month-old baby**, eat many different food types so your baby gets used to and benefits from many tastes. This will widen their food choices and nutrients. Real whole food means eating the edible skins, seeds and pith. These contain fuel, fibre, minerals and vitamins, and key **phytonutrients** for the plant's defence and communication which act as vital everyday medicine in us. We and our children rely on the hundreds of these therapeutic plant chemicals - the colours or bitter tastes - for full functioning and immune resilience.

Key foods	Benefits
Whole foods: beans/lentils, wholegrains eg barley, spelt, red/brown/black rice, quinoa, green leafy & root vegetables	Fibre slows down rise in blood sugar and insulin – vital in children to prevent/manage infection, inflammation and chronic disease eg cancer. Keeps us full, improves energy, sleep, concentration and mood. Iron & calcium in leafy veg.
Skins, pith, seeds of fruits and vegetables 	Colourful b/carotene for eyes & immunity. Calcium, iron & many minerals. Antimicrobial & anti-inflammatory. Fibre helps excrete excess hormones. Plant skin microbes feed child/adult gut microbiome and immunity.

<p>Oatmeal best, oatflakes more processed</p> 	<p>Perfect for child - slow-release food with oils, protein and fibre-rich carbs to sustain energy and buffer stress. EFAs/essential fatty acid oils for growing nerves, brain, mood, skin. Betaglucan gel pro-gut microbes for immunity.</p>
<p>Flax/linseeds, chia seeds</p> 	<p>EFAs support mood and skin. Gel soothes gut for easy bowel function &amp; feeds gut microbes. Protective phytoestrogens moderate powerful hormones.</p>
<p>Nuts, seeds, oils, oil-rich avocado, tahini</p>	<p>Rich in zinc, calcium, iron. Oils vital as a/anti-inflammatory &amp; for growing brain/nerves and skin</p>

**Herbs & spices for immunity** Include some daily to support you and your child's immunity. These and wild foods like dandelion and nettles concentrate powerful nutrients and are anti-inflammatory supporting health and immunity.

Garlic	Antiseptic, pro circulation
Ginger	Warming digestive, anti-nausea, circulatory
Turmeric	Liver support, anti-inflammatory
Cinnamon	Warming antimicrobial
Parsley, mint, coriander	Mineral-rich, digestive, anti-bloating, anti-inflammatory

### Self Care Basic Breakfast 3-ways

Needs to be colourful! This provides a child with vital slow-release nutrients for morning-long energy, balanced blood sugar for concentration, calm behaviour and strong immunity.

#### 1. 3-minute smoothie 400+ml for adult+child Blend fruit and yogurt

- 2-3 tbs plain or Greek yogurt (*not* 0% fat), or oat/coconut/nut milk, kefir or just water
- 1/2 banana • 1/3–1/2 pear or apple+skin/core/pips
- Handful mix berries *good frozen, vitC to absorb iron*
- +/- another fresh fruit (eg plum, cherries, slice mango, 1/4 pomegranate with white pith, a prune or date for sweetness and/or ginger for warmth.

#### Add oat/nut/seed mix and eat with spoon

- 2 tbs medium/pinhead oatmeal (or oatflakes)
- 1 tbs sunflower+pumpkin seeds *best ground*
- 1 tbs brown linseeds *best ground*
- 1 handful mixed nuts including Brazils

#### 2. Easy hot porridge adult+child portion

Mix 1/2-3/4 cup medium/pinhead oatmeal (or flakes) with 1-1 1/2 cups water, 1/2-1 tsp cinnamon, a handful of frozen mixed berries, (or chopped apple or other fruit), optional pinch salt or cinnamon or ginger. Cook gently, covered, stirring occasionally, on very low heat for 10-15+mins, with more water if needed. Always add protein/oil-rich nuts & seeds.

#### 3. Muesli adult+child portion

Before bed, put in bowl 2-3 tbs oatmeal (or flakes), 2 tbs seeds, a handful chopped nuts, a handful of frozen mixed berries. Cover with water. By morning it's soft and creamy. Add chopped/grated apple or other fruit, yogurt, milk, cinnamon etc.

### Self Care Basic Pulse-Grain Dish

Combine pulses and grains as a base for protein-, fibre- and nutrient-rich, slow release energy lunches.

**Puree small amounts** for weaning child to provide good protein and fibre. Mix a few tablespoons with other foods - roast or cooked vegetables, salads, oily fish (sardines, mackerel, salmon), grass-fed meat, nuts, seeds. Toss with olive oil, cider/balsamic vinegar or lemon juice. Keep in a cold fridge to provide 3-4 lunches for child and adult. **Tinned pulses good too.**

The beauty of beans/lentils is that they include:

- **phytoestrogens** protect against excess hormones, breast, prostate and other cancers later in life
- **colourful flavonoids** feed gut microbes, support circulation, protect v. inflammation
- **fibre** feed gut microbes, regularise bowel function, reduce excess hormones (eg acne) in puberty/as adult
- **iron, calcium** for child's blood and strong bones
- **protein, slow-release carbohydrate, vitamins**

#### Ingredients

- Pulse eg black/green lentils, aduki/mung beans
- Grain eg short-grain brown/basmati/wild black/red rice, barley, spelt, quinoa, millet, amaranth, freekah
- 3 garlic cloves skins on, 2 bay leaves, black pepper
- *Optional* seaweed, mushrooms for immunity

Put 1/2 cup each of a pulse and a grain into saucepan with garlic, seaweed, bay leaves. Add approx double the water, cover and simmer very gently (a heat diffuser helps) for approx 40 mins. Add more water if needed - all should become absorbed. Mix in several handfuls of chopped parsley/coriander and other vegetables or foods as above.