

PENINSULA NEWS REVIEW
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School is out. The sounds of summer reverberate in the playgrounds, at the beach and in the parks. Those sounds belong to the keepers of summer energy: our children.

Happy children are usually healthy children. Yet today's child is challenged by non-healthy habits that can be life-altering. Did you know that more than half of Canadian children are not active enough for optimal growth and development? Almost 25% of children are considered obese, and that number is rising, according to the Canadian Paediatric Society. Lack of physical activity and poor eating habits are cited as primary contributors to the demise of children's healthy habits.

Susi McMillan is an SIWC member with Riverbank Design who is also a mother of two. She points to a key ingredient in establishing healthy routines for her kids: TIME. For her, it's finding those many little time frames that add up to a recipe for health, including:

- Using time wisely to prepare healthy, nutritious meals from scratch.
- Finding time to soak new clothes to wash out the chemicals.
- Creating more time to play a real game of soccer instead of an animated one.
- Taking the time to listen.

She observes that most of the ingredients in "standard" kids fare can barely be pronounced, so she chooses more wisely. In a world of multimedia where children call their mothers on cell phones, we need to make time to learn and hear our intuitive voice to discover what makes our kids healthiest and happiest.

Registered acupuncturist and Chinese herbologist Mikiala Christie recommends careful scrutiny of the three pillars of health: rest, nutrition and exercise. These three activities allow children's bodies to heal from disease, as well as strengthening the immune system to prevent illness. Mikiala shares a list of questions that parents should review:

- Are your children over-stimulated from living in the super-information age, where computers, TV and video games affect the nervous system?
- Are their meals pre-packaged and instant or are healthy, fresh ingredients used?
- How active are they? Exercise plays an important role in regulating metabolism, weight and our immune systems.

SIWC member Elizabeth Chambers – with the BC Association of Registered Clinical Counsellors – notes that our communications with our kids influences their mental health. When adults yell, children feel frightened; our lecture creates a sense of incompetency in youth. Making fun of our children leads to shame; our neglect leads to sadness. Our kids want to be seen as loveable, competent and trustworthy, so we need to use healthy choices to enable them to make responsible choices. Rather than

threatening them or commanding them and risking intimidation and feelings of worthlessness, we can use healthier choices ourselves by communicating one statement of appreciation each day. Your child's self-worth will grow, which fosters happy, healthy and wholesome families.

Do you have questions on asthma or allergies? Send it to brittafrombach@gmail.com and read the answer in my August column.

Britta Frombach, Registered Massage Therapist (RMT), is the president of SIWC (Sidney Integrated Wellness Community Society) and owner of Phi Massage Centre in Sidney. To learn more about SIWC members, visit www.siwc.org.