



Better food for kids, please

Something has been bothering me for a long time, and I want to get it off my chest.

I'm the father of two active children, aged seven and ten.

Over the years, we have eaten out in various places – restaurants, hotels, cafés, airplanes, amusement parks, and even petrol stations – both in Finland and elsewhere in Europe.

Eating out with the family is always something special. What bothers me is that children's menus are often made up of junk food: French fries, chicken nuggets, hamburgers, hot dogs, pizzas, or fish sticks.

If you're lucky, there might be a side dish of vegetables or fruit. Yet, more often than not, kid's meals are rounded out with a portion of ice cream for dessert.

IT'S NOT THAT I'M A FOOD FASCIST (well, perhaps just a little bit), but I think that these menus are an insult to children and their tastebuds.

Why do children have their own menus? Do you cook separate meals for your children at home?

Probably not. A child can easily cope with smaller portions from the adult's menu, which means healthier combinations and generally tastier food.

EATING HABITS are formed at an early age. There's no need to teach children to eat junk food. (There's plenty of time to do that later.) Many health problems are linked to being overweight. And some of the reasons for obesity have to do with what we get accustomed to eating when we're young.

There is, of course, a time and a place for everything. A movie without popcorn isn't worth watching; an outing to a hamburger restaurant can be fun; and eating a hotdog at a baseball game is an essential part of the experience. But these

are not the only food options for children when eating out.

As parents we naturally want to ensure that our children grow up happy and healthy. Let's all revolt together. Next time you eat out with your kids, demand better quality food. ●

WHY ARE CHILDREN'S MENUS OFTEN MADE UP OF JUNK FOOD?

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