

FOOD & MOOD CHANGES MADE DOABLE · WITH LOVE & AWARENESS

GUT HEALTH FOR KIDS

A parent's field guide to a strong microbiome and a calm, regulated nervous system — building gut and brain health one whole-food choice at a time.

“My mom sat me down at age ten to encourage me to go on a diet. I thought there was something wrong with me. The truth is: I had a gut-health problem — not an overeating problem.”

— Chandra Zas



ZEN ODYSSEY

THE ADVENTURE OF AWARENESS

CHANDRA ZAS · SOMATIC COACH

The easy, cheap thing to reach for is processed food – not only for ourselves, but for our kids, too.

THE COST

- A kid who can't yet self-regulate.
- Under-nourished development – body and brain.
- More work for you, the parent, managing a dysregulated kid.

GUT MICROBIOME CARE

- Feed the good bacteria with fermented foods – kraut, kefir, kombucha, and kid probiotics.
- Starve the bad guys – don't feed them sugars or flours.
- Eat organic as often as possible.



IF YOU LET THEM, KIDS WILL PERFECT YOU.

As my little one began wanting to share the food I ate, I reached a crossroad. If I believe sugar is something to protect my kid's gut and brain from, why would I ever eat it myself? Believing fully in the sugar-free, gut-brain foundation I wanted to give my little one, I committed to cutting it out. My own health has improved because of it.

Feed your kid foods today that set them up for an easier life.

Getting off processed foods, sugars, and flours is the single most important step toward a kid's healthy gut and brain.

GUT HEALTH FOR GOOD

When I became a mother, I knew I wanted to set my child up with the best gut health possible. I read a couple of books to figure out how to translate my own gut-health knowledge into kid language. (*I suffered from poor gut health as a child.*) Everything clicked – and even cemented – for me.

Here are the cliff notes, for my fellow parents who want to give their kid the best in life.

The best gift we can give our kids is health.

How do we do that? A strong microbiome and a nutrient-dense diet is the goal.

- **Feed and support** their good bacteria, and starve the bad.
- **Load them up** on nutrient-dense foods that support brain and body development.



SETTING THE NEXT GENERATION UP FOR AN EASIER LIFE.

To help a kid out, feed them predominantly **oils and proteins**, so their internal chemistry stays steady – more like a train than a rollercoaster.

Give a kid some sugar and watch: they go bonkers with a surplus of frantic energy, then shortly after they crash – physically and emotionally. Learn to manage your toddler's brain (and your own) to nurture a healthy gut and brain. The result: a stable, regulated kid.

Marketers intentionally label processed foods “healthy” – because they know you care... and they want you to buy.

FOODS TO FOCUS ON

PRIORITY — OILS & PROTEINS

The building blocks of body and brain.

- Eggs
- Ghee
- Dark meats, like dark-meat chicken
- Ground red meat
- Fish
- Full-fat yogurt

SECONDARY

- Avocados
- Whole grains like quinoa and rice (with lots of oil)
- Seeds and nuts (buy them raw and roast them yourself)

FROM THE COACH

Kids under eight don't yet have the enzymes to digest raw veggies — especially greens. The best way for them to get the omegas found in greens is through the butter or ghee of grass-fed animals. Let them try greens, and slather their food in ghee.

— Chandra Zas



SNACKS — IN A PINCH

Beef sticks · seaweed · whole fruits · nuts & seeds. And we love packing **leftovers** for food on the go the next day — school lunch or a trail adventure. Leftovers make eating well the easy choice.

STARVE THE BAD GUYS

AVOID: PROCESSED FOODS

The hardest – and most important – foods to avoid are processed sugar, flour, and trans fats. These three man-made calorie sources (**not food**) are the addictive hooks that pull humans onto the merry-go-round of disease.

- Processed foods create over-desire – a kind of addiction – so there's always a craving for more, which leads to over-eating, imbalance, and eventually disease.
- They get chosen by default over the nutrient-dense foods bodies and brains actually need – leaving kids addicted, depleted, and dysregulated.

Parent regulation of these foods is required. Kids can't self-regulate them on their own. Adults struggle too – and our brains are at least capable of self-regulating.

SUGAR & FLOUR

Flour is processed in the body the same way as sugar. Both feel really good to eat – a big dopamine hit – but the cost is enormous. Together they create a rollercoaster of chemicals in body and brain. The other dark side: **they feed the bad bacteria of the microbiome.**

WHY WE USE FOOD FOR COMFORT

The cultural norm is to use food to feel better, to distract, and to reward – especially processed foods like sugar and flour. Food doesn't just fail to solve those problems; using food this way actually *creates* gut problems.

Gut health is feeding kids the nutrient-dense foods they need – and limiting the processed foods that undermine health, regulation, and development.

Processed foods are engineered to be addictive. So let's normalize something: every human brain reaches for the high-dopamine hit — and a kid's brain wants it most of all. That's not a character flaw. It's biology.

Un-hijack your brain off processed foods.

Parent regulation was never about willpower or shame. It's about **un-hijacking the brain** — clearing out the engineered foods so real, nutrient-dense food can satisfy again. Once the noise quiets, a kid's body starts asking for what it actually needs.

TREATS, ON PURPOSE

And conscious treats? Totally fine. There is nothing bad or wrong about enjoying a treat on purpose. The goal was never restriction — it's *awareness*.

QUALITY IS THE DIFFERENCE

It was never treat versus no treat. It's whether the treat is made of real ingredients — or the low-quality, hyper-palatable kind designed to keep you coming back.

HAVE FUN WITH FOOD

That's exactly why I built a recipe blog full of treats I invented for my own kid — so we can keep having fun with treat foods, without the low-quality ingredients.

zenodyssey.com/recipes

MEAL IDEAS

What we put in our kids' mouths is one of the biggest impacts we have on their developing gut, brain, and life. Think oils and proteins — the building blocks of body and brain.

BREAKFAST

- Yogurt with berries or banana
- Eggs with ghee or grass-fed butter

LUNCH & DINNER

- Animal protein, whole grains, kraut, olive oil, seeds
- Cooked root veggies, animal protein, kraut, olive oil, avocado

NOTES ON FATS

The human body can't use trans fats — they're unusable, toxic, and they take the spots of healthy fat-building blocks. Avoid margarine, vegetable oils, and hydrogenated oils like the plague. Toxins are stored in fat, so it's very important to eat **organic** animal fats — non-organic animal fats are loaded with toxins.

Oils to consume: olive oil (with an expiration date), ghee, avocado oil, and animal fats.

ORGANIC & THE MICROBIOME

The pesticides that kill the bugs on fruits and vegetables also kill the microorganisms of the body's microbiome. And the antibiotics routinely given to factory-farm animals negatively affect the human gut microbiome, too.

SUMMARY

- Get you and your kids **off processed foods** – all sugars, flours, and trans fats.
 - **Minimize pesticides and antibiotics** – including the non-organic foods that carry them.
 - **Eat whole foods** that support gut and brain: organic oils, proteins, fruits, and veggies. Eat fermented foods.
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GUT HEALTH IS MY PASSION.

As a somatic coach, my approach takes the impossible out of diet, stress, and lifestyle change – and puts the *fun* back into health.

TALK WITH ME

Have questions, or want more resources after this guide?
You can book a one-time call with me – we'll talk it through,
and I'll point you to exactly what you need.

[Book a call · zenodyssey.com](https://zenodyssey.com)