



Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*

Want your kids to eat healthy? Start by setting an example

A LOT OF people ask me how I got my children to eat a variety of vegetables, because let's face it, when children cooperate outright instead of being forced to do something, it means everyone's life is happier, healthier and much less stressful.

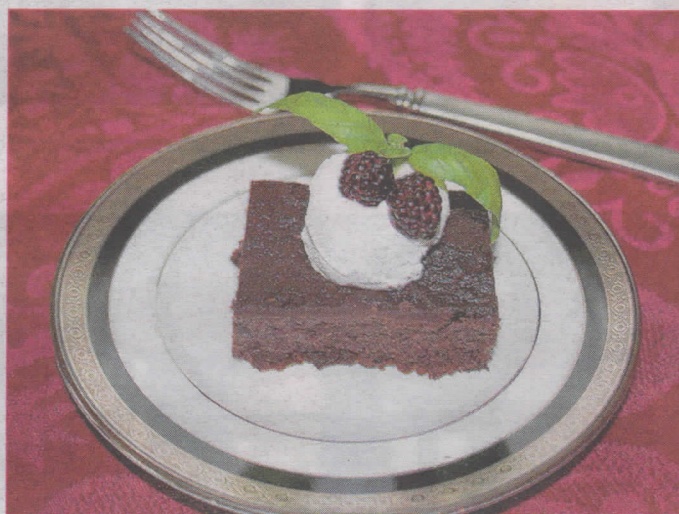
The key is to start early — really early. In the womb. It's kind of like when you're on an airplane and the flight attendants do their skit about putting the oxygen mask on yourself before assisting your child. You've got to pay close attention to your own health habits first. Take a good, hard look at what you eat if you want to instill those values into your children.

It begins when a woman is pregnant. Eating healthy foods your body craves will help you tenfold in the latter months. In fact, according to research, a woman's diet during pregnancy is a controlling factor, capable of preventing a host of behaviors, problems, even allergies in their unborn child.

Supplying the fetus with important nutrients from vegetables, fruits, grains and nuts is going to produce a better outcome than artificial ingredients such as dyes, processed foods and hydrogenated oils. Many times, these artificial ingredients are hidden in foods we eat every day like chips, pretzels, boxed brownie mix and many other packaged foods that contain refined sugars and flours. These foods are devoid of nutritional value.

So start with yourself and what you eat during pregnancy, and then continue those healthy habits while your children are babies. The child is exposed to what you model as the parent. If you eat a variety of vegetables and consistently talk about how eating the

Black Raspberry Brownie



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: KATE MURRAY

In this recipe, I used black raspberries (some call them mulberries) for their distinct taste. I picked several pounds of them at the local orchard in June and hoarded them in my freezer. You can choose any berry you want for this recipe, but I think the flavor of this berry is so intensely divine I can't imagine not using it. For the garnish, I used freshly whipped coconut milk to create the cream and a mint leaf to garnish.

INGREDIENTS

1 12-ounce bag mini-chocolate chips
 ¾ cup unsweetened applesauce
 ½ cup jam (i.e. raspberry, strawberry, mixed berry)
 ½ cup coconut sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup brown-rice flour
 ½ cup quinoa flour
 ¼ cup cocoa powder
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon baking soda
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 2 cups fresh or frozen berries

PREPARATION: Combine dry ingredients in a food processor. Melt chocolate over a double boiler. When the chocolate is ready, add wet ingredients to the dry, starting with the applesauce and jam and ending with the chocolate and berries last. Mix well. The mixture should be thick.

Line an 9-by-11-inch pan with parchment paper and pour in the mixture. Bake about 40 minutes in a preheated, 350-degree oven. Allow the mixture to cool completely and then refrigerate, covered, for several hours or overnight.

Since these brownies have no eggs, they are very moist and need to be refrigerated for several hours to solidify. The result is divine.

colors of the rainbow found naturally in plant foods such as cucumbers, sweet peppers, eggplant, carrots, radishes and tomatoes are tasty and make you feel good, then the child will accept it.

It takes consistency, and it takes modeling the behavior yourself. If you snack on foods that contain artificial flavoring, or consistently use a packaged mix of ingredients you cannot pronounce, then your child will want to eat that, too.

Let's dissect a brownie. Most contain flour and sugar that are refined, eggs, butter or artificial shortening, and maybe even icing made from the same shortening plus artificial dye. According to The Center for Science in the Public Interest, food dyes were originally derived from coal tar, but now they are derived from petroleum.

Dye is contained in everything from Popsicles to Jell-O, Froot Loops to sports drinks. The food industry reports more than 15 million pounds of dyes make it into our food supply each year. These dyes carry some profound risks, including behavioral problems in children, cancer and serious allergic reactions. For more information and a complete chart of the dangers of food dyes, visit my website, asilentcure.org.

Meanwhile, why not try baking a healthier option, a whole-grain, gluten-free, Valentine's Day brownie? It's still a brownie, but it's a "better" brownie made with pure natural ingredients, like black raspberries.

And the taste? Outrageous. ☺

Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at asilentcure.org.