



- Dr. Briana Sinatra: It's a toxic world...we have to live in it. And we make decisions for ourselves to stay as healthy as we can — but how do we raise our kids in a healthy way?
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: And that's why we're here. We're both naturopathic doctors and parents of young children.
- Dr. Briana Sinatra: Today we're introducing a special series called “Ask Dr. Mom and Dr. Dad.”
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: We'll be doing this series frequently, and Briana will join me to discuss what you need to do to take care of your family.
- Dr. Briana Sinatra: Today, we'll be dispelling some common health myths about kids, like whether or not vitamin C will help keep a cold at bay.
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: And we'll discuss whether it's possible we're being too clean with our kids. Are we short-changing their immune systems?
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: I'm Dr. Drew Sinatra.
- Dr. Briana Sinatra: And I'm Dr. Briana Sinatra. This is **Be Healthistic**.
- Narrator: Welcome to **Be Healthistic**, the podcast that is more than just health and wellness information. It's here to help you explore your options across traditional and natural medicine, so that you can make informed decisions for you and your family. Health isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, everyone has their own needs to **Be Healthistic**. This podcast illuminates the whole story about holistic health by providing access to the expertise of Drs. Steve and Drew Sinatra, who together have decades of integrative health experience. They'll share with you the best that traditional and modern medicine has to offer, so that you could be more productive and more proactive in managing your overall health. **Be Healthistic** is powered by our friends at Healthy Directions. Now, let's join our hosts.
- Dr. Drew Sinatra: Hi, folks. Before we launch into our discussion today, I wanted to encourage you to be a proactive member of our **Be Healthistic** community. If you like what you hear today and you want to listen to future conversations on all things integrative and holistic health, subscribe to our podcast on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you download your favorite podcasts. Also, check out and subscribe to our YouTube channel, which will feature video versions of our episodes, plus video extras you won't want to miss. And finally, we have more with me, Dr. Drew Sinatra, my dad, Dr. Stephen Sinatra, and other Healthy Directions experts, as well as a robust library of health and wellness content over on the Healthy Directions site. So visit **HealthyDirections.com** to explore our database



of well-researched content and information. And of course, you can always follow us on our social media channels.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Welcome to the show, Briana. For those listening, this is my wife, Dr. Briana Sinatra.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Hi, thank you so much for having me.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Can you tell our listeners a little bit about yourself and your practice?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Sure. So, I'm a naturopathic doctor. I'm practicing in California. And my practice focuses on supporting mainly women, kind of at all ages and stages of their life, supporting them with hormonal balance at all those different stages. I also have a special passion for supporting couples in the pre-conception stage, women throughout pregnancy and postpartum, as well as supporting the pediatric population.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: All right, well it is so good that you're here today, because we're talking about immunity and children, and their immune systems. And we have two young boys, we have a seven year old and a four year old. And thank goodness that you're there as the doctor in our family to help these little ones, because sometimes I'm more of the treating adults, really, and it's so good to have your expertise in this area. So thank you for being on the show.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Well, thank you. Do yourself some justice. You play a very important role there, too.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Thank you. Thank you. Well, let's start off with a common myth that we've all heard before. This expression called "feed a cold, starve a fever." What does that mean and is there truth to it?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I think that's a really important question. And researchers have actually looked into this a bit. They did a study with, mind you, this is a mouse study, but they infected mice either with bacteria that causes food poisoning, or a virus such as the flu virus. And all mice ate less after becoming sick. But in some instances, they force-fed some of the mice, and sometimes they gave them this glucose syrup. And so interestingly enough, after being infected with a bacterial infection, after 10 days, all the mice who continued being fed died. And those that avoided food, over half of them lived. So that's interesting. And they found that the opposite was actually true in those infected with the flu virus. Over 75% lived if they had been force-fed food, while only about 10% lived if they hadn't. They went through and teased this out, and they found that actually it was the



glucose — and not protein and fat — that was the dangerous aspect of food during the bacterial infection.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: So with all that being said, I think it's really important to think when our child comes down with a fever, we don't really know if it's a virus or a bacteria that's causing the fever. So I think it's always important to watch your child and their own hunger cues and act accordingly. If they are not hungry, don't force-feed them. But that being said, as our body temperature increases when we have a fever, we get hot, we can get dehydrated. So you always want to make sure that they are staying well-hydrated, that if you are giving them foods, you're giving them something like soup or soup broth that has well-cooked veggies in it for all those good vitamins and minerals and nutrients. If there's some chicken in there, again, it's going to be well-cooked, easy for their body to digest and assimilate.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And so for the listeners, really, having a fever in our children is not necessarily a bad thing, right? It's helping train their immune system.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. I mean, a fever is our body's innate, first reaction to any foreign invader in our body. And it mounts that fever not only to kill off what's going on, but that fever itself also helps support our immune system. It helps to increase the circulation of our white blood cells, and increase the kind of anti-viral aspects of our immune system.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And every child is different. So we may have a child that has a fever of 101 that's really lethargic, and we might be really concerned about this child and that's when we might want to bring them in to see a medical doctor or something like that. But also, there may be a child that has a fever of 103 — and they're thriving and they're playing outside. Can you explain that difference and what our listeners should do in case that happens?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, remember that your child mounting a fever is exercising that child's immune system. So you want to give them some play in order to do that on their own, and exercise their immune system and develop their own immune tolerance. So it's always important to take their fever or take their temperature, see if they have a fever, because that kind of indicates whether you send them to school the next day or not. You don't want to send them somewhere when they're contagious. But it's also really important to know your own child, and how they normally act and how they're acting right now.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: If they are, you know, have a minor fever but they are really lethargic and they're not themselves, and they're sleeping a lot, or they're in excess pain, or



have a really strong headache or stiffness in their neck, those are all warning signs and listen to your mom and dad parental intuition and take your child in and get them evaluated. Versus if your child spikes are really high fever like, you know, our children usually have pretty high but pretty quick, robust, and efficient fevers. And so it might be scary getting that reading on a thermometer of 103, but if your child overall is seeming well-hydrated, they're responding, they're otherwise showing quite vital signs of handling the fever well, then I think it's just important to use those supportive therapies and just support their body through that fever. So hopefully it can be quick and efficient, and they can get back to their normal health.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And like what you were saying before, if our child isn't hungry, we're not going to force-feed them, or anything like that. Like at dinner time, it's always important to say, "Hey, please finish your plate." Right? But when they're sick, they may not want to be eating at that time and that's okay.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's important to make sure that they don't get dehydrated, especially if they have vomiting or diarrhea or they have that really high fever. It's important to keep their electrolytes balanced, but you don't want to force-feed them food. And usually we've seen that in our kids. If they are really sick, they're not that hungry. They're usually sleeping. They're usually taking it easy, they want more gentler foods and in smaller amounts.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: The only time I've really found where sometimes they might feel hungry, but it's not the best thing for them is when they have the stomach flu. I'll find sometimes their stomach doesn't feel very good, so they feel like they need to eat to make it feel better, but then it triggers them to throw up. And I find even if we try and do it in small amounts, they'll keep throwing up. So that has been a time where I've said no to some foods, made sure that they are drinking liquids. But even sometimes too much liquid in one go can be enough to trigger them to throw up. So I think it's really important in that situation. You want to keep them hydrated, but you don't want to give them so much water that it causes them to throw up. So giving them small, frequent sips of water, or broth, or an electrolyte can be really helpful instead of letting them gulp down a lot of fluids.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: That's a great point. And what are your thoughts on over the counter medications like Tylenol for reducing a fever?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I think so often when our child is sick, we come from this really pure desire of just wanting to have them feel better, and get better faster. And I think sometimes we go to Tylenol, thinking that it will do that — when we also want to use that type of medication judiciously, and not overuse it in instances where



the child can actually do really well managing that illness on their own. Because the over the counter medications don't come without risks.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And for example, with Tylenol, it's liver toxicity, correct?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. Unfortunately, liver toxicity is a huge issue with Tylenol. It accounts for actually many emergency room visits, especially for young children, primarily because it has a very low toxicity point. And so anytime we ingest Tylenol, in order to break it down and metabolize it, our liver breaks it down into the toxic metabolite. And in order to clear that toxic metabolite out, it requires glutathione from our body to help do that. And glutathione is an antioxidant that our body makes, and it's super important. It's also really important when we're sick, to mop up all those free radicals that are naturally formed as our body is working to fight that virus or bacteria. And so taking a medication that can compromise our liver function, and also decrease something that's also working to help our body as we're sick, again, we just need to be mindful about how frequently we use it and when we choose to use it. Similarly, I think it's really important as parents to be mindful about how often you're using antibiotics in your child, and when that is beneficial and when maybe it is not.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Yeah, and this can be tough too, because sometimes our children may have an ear infection, right? And they may get a high fever during that time. They may feel very uncomfortable, they're in discomfort. We just want to soothe them and help them get through this. And it's easy to jump to antibiotics in that situation. But unfortunately, a lot of ear infections are actually viral in nature. And by taking an antibiotic, you're really not going to do much in terms of speeding up the process, and maybe you buy a couple hours to perhaps half a day, at best. But then you're really doing damage to the microbiome of your child, which really isn't a good thing. So I believe, as you do, with Tylenol, that antibiotics, they can be an amazing drug, but they're definitely overused and we should really reserve them for times that are needed.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So another thing about antibiotics and reason for having concern around them is antibiotic resistance. And this is something that is happening very quickly these days, where antibiotics just aren't working anymore. So someone comes in and they have a big infection, perhaps they're in a hospital, they develop MRSA. And these super-bugs, these super-infections that start to form, they unfortunately aren't being treated effectively with antibiotics anymore, because the bacteria have built up resistance against the antibiotic. So as a culture, we really need to be very careful about when we prescribe antibiotics, and only prescribe them for conditions that are absolutely necessary.



Dr. Briana Sinatra: Absolutely. You don't want to use them too frequently for things that maybe it wasn't quite necessary, and then take away your option to use them effectively later on.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So we talked about ear infections a little bit. What else do you recommend if a child has an ear infection? Is there anything that they should avoid in their diet? Is there anything that they can take to help with that?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I actually find, especially in children when they're getting repeat ear infections, it's really important to look at what is a possible underlying cause for that child that's making them more vulnerable to getting an ear infection? You know, as kids, the main defense system is to get all mucousy and snotty in their respiratory and then even in the back of their throat, everything is so joined. And so, being really mindful of things like milk and dairy products that are naturally more mucus-producing. Even as an adult, I imagine you find this too, you have some milk and there's a little bit of clearing your throat after. It's a naturally mucus-forming food. And when that happens in kids, anatomically, their eustachian tube, which is the tube that goes from the back of their throat to their ear, is more horizontal and it's wider. So any amount of mucus in the back of their throat really easily can go into their inner ear. And then that can cause an inner ear infection. So anything we can do to reduce that mucus exposure on a regular basis in kids that are really sensitive, but also, especially once they're starting to get sick and you've seen more mucus forming, anything you can do to reduce additional mucus can really help prevent it maybe leading to an ear infection for that child.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And is there any supplements or nutraceuticals or herbs that you like for children, in terms of boosting immunity?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. I mean, I think looking at their vitamin D level, vitamin D is a great immune support. Probiotics are fabulous, zinc is fabulous. I really love something like elderberry, which tastes delicious for kids. It's naturally antiviral. It's naturally very respiratory supportive. So elderberry is a great one, and it can also be used very nicely to hide or be a chaser for not-so-great-tasting tinctures.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, the other day you actually made an elderberry syrup.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: I did. Yeah. It was fantastic. We were able to...

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Our kids loved it.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yes. And I loved it. Yeah, we were able to get fresh elderberries, which you might not be able to get, but you can order dry elderberries and then you can



do a little recipe at home with your kids, have them be a part of it, where you cook it, you mix it with water and then you cook it down and then you add honey. You can add some really yummy spices, like cinnamon and all of that. And the kids loved being a part of it. And then they really were more motivated to take it on a regular basis, because they know their hard work went into help making it. So that was really fun.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: So at the beginning, we alluded to vitamin C and that question of, is it good or is it not good for our immune system? So let's talk about that a bit.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Yeah, I'm a big fan of vitamin C. I mean, I personally take it during the cold and flu season, and we give it to our kids, as well. I mean, we know that the vitamin C has immune boosting properties to it. It's an antioxidant. And what I like about it is that you can get it in food form, as well. So you can take it in a supplement form like for kids, like a chewable or a liquid or something like that. And then you can also get it more through the food.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I love the idea of getting it through food, because I think there are a lot of supplements that have vitamin C in it, but it might be in a gummy that also has sugar. And so if your child is sick, is that how you want your child to be getting it? And so yeah, let's talk more about how we can get vitamin C into our kids when they're sick, but also during the cold and flu season, just to help keep their immune system strong and robust.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And obviously people listening, you probably know about citrus foods, like oranges or grapefruit or lemon, that has high vitamin C count in it. We also like to give our kids bell peppers, right? These red and green and yellow bell peppers have vitamin C in it, cauliflower, broccoli, and surprisingly, our kids actually like those foods. There's different fruits that have vitamin C in it as well. Raspberries, papaya, and other fruits. So there's lots of different variety that we can give our kids.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, a smoothie is a great way to do it. I mean, we usually think of berries as something that you can put in a smoothie, but you could, if you have a high power blender, you can put some peppers in there and it'll still taste good.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And they won't know it's there.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. When you talked about citrus, do you want to share with them the recipe that you make — that cold and flu buster citrus drink? I think it's always best to have fruits in their whole food form, because then you have the fiber in it too, but this is a really lovely drink that you can make that is in liquid form, easy for



your digestion. But it's a great way, either preventative or when you're starting to get the sniffles, for you or your kids to make at home.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Yeah. Thanks for bringing that up. There's two different recipes, really. There's the child recipe and the adult recipe. I'll share the child recipe first, and I'll talk about what we add into the adult recipe. So for kids, what I like to recommend is we can juice an apple or two in a juicer, take that juice, heat it up on the stove, add some fresh orange juice to it, freshly squeezed orange juice, and some lemon juice, as well. And we like to add a little honey to that, right? Because honey has some antibacterial, antiviral properties to it and can actually help soothe a sore throat. And heat that up on the stove and give it to our kids. And they actually do like the taste of it.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Now for the adult version, I like to add in some cayenne pepper. And we can add in either a pinch, or if you're really aggressive, about an eighth of a teaspoon of cayenne pepper and that really warms things up and gets your body temperature elevated, which is a good thing.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Be a good thing to do before the Warming Socks Treatment.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And I should share a little story here. Every time that I get sick, Briana wants me to do this Warming Socks Treatment. And it definitely works for our kids. And you can perhaps talk a little bit more about that. But as an adult, it's always hard for me to put on cold socks. And then to put some wool socks over that. So can you kind of tell our listeners a little bit more about this Warming Socks Treatment and what it does?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yes. It is so easy to have resistance. And I would lie if I said that I don't have resistance while I'm feeling sick, but I have recommended it enough times and done it enough times myself and been completely blown away at how effective it is. And it is one of those things that when you're starting to get sick or you see your child starting to get sick, it's a way to doctor your family and do something that is really super-supportive and something as simple as hydrotherapy.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: So what it involves is a pre-heating phase. You get in the bath and...well, first of all, they're socks and they need to be cold. So you take cotton socks, you wet them in water, you ring them out to get that extra moisture out and you put them in the freezer. And then you get in a nice hot bath. You can add some Epsom salts in there. You can even have some tea, bring some ginger tea to help increase your body temperature. That pre-heating phase is really important, so you want to be in the bath until you start to perspire a bit. Then you get out of the bath, dry yourself off, and bundle up. So either your pajamas, and maybe even an extra sweatshirt or some sweatpants, however you'll be comfortable.



You get those frozen socks from the freezer. Give them about 30 seconds to not be stiff like a cardboard, so that you can actually put them on your feet. But then you slip them on each of your feet, and cover them with nice, warm wool socks, and then you hop into bed and bundle up. And it feels cold when you initially put them on, but they actually warm up really quickly.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: And what those cold socks do is it helps to increase your body circulation, so it's increasing your white blood cells throughout your system to support your immune system. It can help drain congestion from your sinuses, from your mucus membranes, from your lungs. There's a bit of a reflex action that occurs. And it also can help facilitate your body's immune system if you do have a fever, as well. And people actually report that they sleep really well and really deep with it. And it's something that you can even do with your young kids, right? We've done it with our kids since they were babies.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: There's some protesting in the beginning, but they eventually get it.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Easier as they're babies. When they're toddlers, you might need to put them to bed and then slip them on when they're asleep. But yes, it is something that you can really do for your whole family at all ages and stages. You can even do it when you're pregnant, and it can be a nice go-to therapy.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, there's a whole topic in medicine about being too clean, right? Are we not allowing our children to play out in nature and get dirty as much as they should be? And there's a whole hygiene hypothesis, which really states that we're not having these exposures to elements in nature, whether they be pollen, or dirt, or even like a dog that's been around, or a cat or something like that. We're not getting these regular exposures to help train our immune system to function properly. What do you think about this whole hygiene hypothesis and really allowing our kids to get dirty?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. I think it's really tricky being parents in today's world, because there's so much fear about bacteria, and sterilizing everything, and using hand sanitizers and soaps that have antibacterials in it, antibacterial this, antibacterial that. And we look at it like a good thing. But I think there are a lot of cases where it's actually hindering the development of our own healthy flora and our own healthy immune system.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And what can happen is later on in life, you can develop more allergies or asthma or eczema or atopic conditions of the skin, because the immune system really doesn't know what to do. It doesn't know how to react to different antigens in the environment. And so certain conditions can arise from that. Now let's talk about when we talk about getting dirty with our kids, allowing them to



get some dirt on them, play in the playground, et cetera. When is a good time for them to wash their hands compared to, let's say, being on an airplane, or a subway, or Grand Central Station, or what have you that's more of a dirtier place?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, it's true. I think as a parent I'm much more concerned if we are in an indoor play center where kids are sneezing and wiping their hands on everything and then my kids are following them after, or if we're in an airplane, or places that are much more filled with those types of germs and then having them eat some food. I definitely want to make sure that they're washing their hands really well versus if they're outside playing in the garden, or at a playground. I'm not quite as concerned if they have a little bit of dirt on their hands before they grab a snack. That being said, I still like to wash their hands with soap and water when it makes sense to and before eating. I feel like it makes sense to. But I don't like the idea of using hand sanitizers, especially something like a hand sanitizer that then is going to have a scent and, except if it's an essential oil, but leave a residue on their hand that they're then going to be ingesting or licking off their fingers. I would take the dirt over a residue of a hand sanitizer any day.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So do you recommend those hand sanitizers that really have, like you said, essential oils and some alcohol in them?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I think there's some great spray ones that there are some that are alcohol free, that just use a blend of different essential oils — and there are some that do have a little bit of alcohol in them, but again, have some essential oils in them. I much prefer those. I always had those in the diaper bag for myself after changing a diaper. And I've kept it in my purse ever since just to have on hand as we're leaving a play center, if there's not a place to wash their hands. And again, if I forget about it, I forget about it. But I think it's nice to have it on hand. Not overly concerned about Purelling everything, but there are some that I really like that I feel like are more natural, that don't leave a residue on their hand.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And what about, because as parents we fly a lot and we bring our children with us, what do you do on the airplane? I want our viewers to get a little bit of a visual of what you do on an airplane when we sit down in a seat.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yes. So I'm not taking out Clorox bleach wipes or anything like that. But I do think that it's mindful, especially when you have young kids, they're going to be touching everything and they do clean down a plane, but you don't know what they just cleaned it down with. So I like to use one of our essential oil alcohol sprays, and then take one of the water wipes or something like that, and just wipe down everything because I know they're going to put their snack on it, I



know they're going to be touching it and then putting their hands in their mouth. So I think it's just nice to do that. Often we're going to visit family, and the last thing we want to do is show up with a sick kid.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: I think it's important also to not have that recycled air vent pointing air right at you. Not just for that air circulation, but also there's something to be said for having cold air blowing on you and making you more vulnerable to getting sick. You know, in Chinese medicine we talk about that and that wind gate. So that could be a whole additional topic, but suffice it to say that I think when you are in close quarters with a lot of people breathing and coughing, it's nice to not have that additional vulnerability of cold air being blown on you or your children.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So it sounds like we're really having a conversation here about good bugs versus bad bugs in the sense of I look at the environment in nature. Our kids are playing out in a stream, they're getting dirty, they're getting wet. I look at that as an exposure to good bugs. Then I look at, conversely, in an airplane where there's all sorts of bugs that are on the tray table, and the door handle to the bathroom, and wherever on the plane that the kids are playing or walking near. I think of those as exposures that are not necessarily the best for them, and so that's when we tend to be a little bit more proactive in cleaning their hands regularly with soap and water in the bathroom, or like a spray hand sanitizer.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. Again, you want them to be exposed to that because that is our environment. You don't want them to be completely immune to those bugs that are in a child play center on a daily basis. You do want some of those exposures, and if they get sick you want to support them through it. It's not convenient when our children are sick, they have to stay home, but it's part of developing a healthy immune system. So how can you do this in a balanced way?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Is it really a proper way to wash hands? And any tips we have for kids?

Dr. Briana Sinatra: I think it's important to get your kids to wash their hands, because of the number of times I see our kids go to the washroom and try and beeline it out of the door.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, it's within one second they're done.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yes, pretty much. And hopefully it actually gets in the toilet. But no, I think it's really important just to have that routine with our kids. They go to the washroom, they wash their hands. Or before you eat, you wash your hands. And so sometimes singing a song can be helpful. So have them wash their hands for the duration of the song. You can do the happy birthday song, you can do



“wash, wash, wash your hands,” like to the tune of “row, row, row, your boat,” whatever song they know and they like, make up a hand-washing song. And then I think it's important to wash their hands, rubbing the fronts, rubbing the backs, putting their fingers together, getting in between, and just washing really well to then get all that soap residue off. I don't recommend an antibiotic containing soap. Something as simple as Dr. Bronner's can be really great, and has really clean ingredients. Again, we don't want residue on their hand that they're then ingesting when they're eating. So we talked about washing our hands before you eat, but what about if food drops on the ground? What's your thought there?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, there's that whole “five second rule” thing that we've heard before, and I really don't think there's much truth to that. I think that it really depends on where you are. Like if we're in our kitchen, if we're eating at the dining room table and some food drops on the floor, if it's been four seconds versus six, that to me is really not going to matter. I'll still have my kids pick it up and eat it. Now look, if we were at an airport, on an airplane, or we were in Penn Station or Grand Central Station, where there's tons of people walking around with shoes, because we never know what's on people's shoes, that's where I'd be a little bit more cautious if we dropped some food. And I would say, “You know what, let's just pass on that little cracker that fell down there, and let's get a new cracker.” But when we're in our home, in a safe environment that we know is generally pretty clean, I feel okay about allowing our children to eat some food off the floor that's been there for five seconds or more.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: I even find at the park, too. Right?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Right.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: It's not like it's on the street where cars are going over, and all the different exposures that you can get. So I think being mindful of where it is makes a big difference. I think that's important. So what are some ways that we can encourage healthy bacteria growth in our kids, to support their immune system?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Right. At least for our children, we're very fortunate in the fact that they like fermented foods. And I think that's because we've given them fermented foods from such a young age. There's a little funny story I'd like to tell, if you don't mind.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, go for it.



Dr. Drew Sinatra: I don't know if you remember this, but when we were living in Seattle, this is before we had kids. But we were in Seattle and your sister visited, and we had to actually leave a sign on the door that said, "There's not a dead animal in this room. We're fermenting foods." And what we were doing is we were making sauerkraut. But it smelled so bad, because it had some garlic in there.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, I think it was kimchi.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: It was kimchi, actually. Thank you. So it was kimchi. And there was so much garlic in there that we actually put a warning sign on the door, because we thought it smelled terrible. And they agreed after they stayed there that it did, in fact, smell very bad. However, with that said, there's such potential for bacterial exposure, good bacterial exposure, when eating fermented foods because we know that fermented foods are really rich in different bacteria, and yeast, and other species of microorganisms. And I really encourage our listeners to allow your children to experiment with fermented foods from a young age, because then they'll develop the palette and be able to enjoy it later on in life.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, absolutely. And we eat fermented foods a lot, even in places where you wouldn't think to add it. Like we'll add sauerkraut with our eggs in the morning. And we've made lacto-fermented veggies and put it in our kids' lunches. And so they've gotten used to that sour flavor, and then kind of crave it. Even pickles that are actually fermented, choosing those over pickles that are maybe made in vinegar, and might have some food coloring and other things in it. There's a way to choose foods that are really health promoting, and like you said, add that good bacteria. I think that's so important. Our poor kids didn't have a chance. They were exposed to it and just eating it from the get-go. But what about for our listeners who the adults are trying it for the first time? How do they get their kids to try it and eat it?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, right. Some people just don't like fermented foods. And if they don't like the taste of fermented foods, there are other options like probiotics or even prebiotics, which are substances that are going to help feed the good healthy bacteria in your gut. So in terms of foods, looking at prebiotics, there's garlic and onions, which a lot of kids probably won't like, unless you're really cooking them down very finely. There's artichokes, which our kids actually love and we've been doing a lot of artichokes lately. There's also leeks, and also asparagus. And our kids actually really do like asparagus, as well. So there are some prebiotic foods that you can have your children eat, and if they don't even like the prebiotic foods, well then you can try giving them some probiotics and that might help.



Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah, you can also do like yogurt, even if they don't do dairy. I remember we made that coconut yogurt that was delicious. And I think the problem can be a lot of kids' foods have sweeteners in it, like cane sugar, to make it more palatable. But we found that you can even just take the yogurt and add fresh berries to sweeten it up, or add a little bit of honey, and that's going to be a lot more immune supportive and maybe a sneaky way to get some good, healthy probiotics into your kids, too.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: And for children that don't have a dairy sensitivity or allergy, regular yogurt or kefir can be really helpful for introducing probiotics into the body.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: Yeah. Okay. We had a great discussion. So what are some key takeaways that our listeners can use in their lives?

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Well, number one, you want to limit antibiotic use. And like we've talked about earlier, it's really only using them when absolutely necessary. Number two, vitamin C gets a thumbs up. Number three, let your kids get dirty, but "wash, wash, wash your hands." Have some fun with that. And lastly, get them to eat fermented foods and take probiotics.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Before we wrap up, I wanted to share our **Wellness Wisdom** for the day. We've talked a lot today about our kids and their exposure to the elements and the world around them. How do you know where to draw the line when it comes to dirt and germs, so that your kids can build immunity without getting sick? We've heard a lot in recent years of the hygiene hypothesis, which states that some exposure to germs and microorganisms in early childhood is good for us, because it helps develop the immune system, especially regarding the development of asthma, allergies, and eczema.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: So in keeping with that, just remember what Briana and I were discussing today. Of course, it's important to keep your indoor environment clean and healthy, but a little dirt and some limited exposure to different types of bacteria will actually go a long way in helping your kids become healthier adults, with better immune tolerance and the potential for less allergies.

Dr. Drew Sinatra: Remember everyone, if you liked what you heard today and you want to be an active member of the **Be Healthistic** community, subscribe to our podcast on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you download your favorites, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. You can also find more great content and information from us and the Healthy Directions team at **HealthyDirections.com**, as well as on our social media channels. Check it out.

Dr. Briana Sinatra: I'm Dr. Briana Sinatra.



Dr. Drew Sinatra: And I'm Dr. Drew Sinatra. And this is **Be Healthistic**.

Narrator: Thanks for listening to **Be Healthistic**, a health and wellness podcast powered by our friends at Healthy Directions, with Drs. Drew and Steve Sinatra. See you next time.