

mother's day



When I look back at how my mom raised me—and my five siblings—I'm truly amazed. She was living the KIWI lifestyle long before there was a KIWI magazine.

She nursed her children at a time when it was commonplace to use formula and she used cloth diapers—with six kids! She also ensured we ate fresh vegetables and fruits, bought at a local food stand, daily along with heart-healthy grains. Plus, we were some of the only kids eating whole wheat bread for our bagged school lunches.

She took a holistic approach to health, too. She used natural remedies—like vinegar for sunburn (yes, we smelled like a salad, but it worked)—because it was more affordable and made sense to her. Instead of using cleaning products with a lot of chemicals, old-fashioned soap and water with some elbow grease was her way.

My mom didn't read magazines or books about this lifestyle, nor was it in the news or a hot topic at that time. Part of my mom's natural ways were due to cost. It was cheaper to nurse than buy baby formula. It was less expensive to use soap and water to clean, than to buy fancy products. But mostly it was that my mom wanted to raise six healthy kids, and she did so by feeding us well and nourishing our bodies. We hardly ever ate any processed foods, and the nightly dinner table was attended by all six kids and both parents.

She was also a big believer in getting "fresh air." Family vacations were all about experiencing the outdoors. Every summer, for two weeks, we took a big trip. We visited national parks across the country and stayed in campgrounds. We went hiking, biking, and exploring. Those trips are some of my favorite childhood memories.

Fast-forward a few decades, and I'm now the mother of two young boys, ages 4 and 2. With two working parents and two high-energy kids, it's always a juggling act (how my mother dealt with six without any outside help, I'll never know). I try hard to give my kids healthy meal options (lots of fruits and vegetables, buying local and organic whenever possible), but some days are better than others. It can be a tough sell to convince my 2-year-old that organic carrots really are better for him than the Goldfish all his friends are eating. I don't win every battle. And dinner doesn't always happen as a family, either, since late work nights do pop up.

But I try to remind myself that parenting isn't "all or nothing." It's about doing the best you can, given the situation. Small things do make a big difference (like limiting TV).

I'm fortunate in that my mom is an amazing role model and I try to follow in her footsteps: Eat healthy, get outside, enjoy your kids.

So, thanks, Mom, for showing me the ropes. If I'm even half the mother you are, I'll be truly grateful. Happy Mother's Day to you—and to all our amazing KIWI moms!

P.S.

Find out how one family made having dinner together a top priority in our Challenge on page 38.

Judy Koutsky
Editorial Director



Growing families the natural and organic way.

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hwhite9611@aol.com
508.984.5085
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- director, eastern sales** Maxine Leventhal
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asagee@maymediagroup.com
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- director, moms meet sales + marketing** Kim Biddle
kbiddle@maymediagroup.com
856.753.3800 x111

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