

CRUNCH BITES PODCAST

BITE SIZED CHILDREN'S NUTRITION INFO

Episode 4: Reaching for rainbow foods with Dr Preeya Alexander: making healthy food in the home fun.

Mikala: Hello, and welcome to Crunch Bites, a podcast for parents where we discuss all things children's nutrition and inspire you to build those healthy habits in the home. Join us as we chat about picky eating, reaching for rainbow foods, packing school lunches that actually get eaten, and so much more. Brought to you by Crunch and Sip and presented by Qualified Nutritionists. This podcast is packed with goodness and full of fresh ideas.

Hi, everyone, and welcome to this episode of Crunch Bites. I'd like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians and owners of the land, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, as well as pay my respect to their elders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people living and working across the lands.

Today's episode is brought to you by tomatoes. Tomatoes are a really versatile veggie, one that we love to buy bite-sized and throw in the lunchbox, and a great one for growing at home for little hands to be picking. It's my pleasure today to introduce our guest, Dr. Priya Alexander. Dr. Priya is a practicing GP in Melbourne, a mother of two, and the author of Eat, Sleep, Play, Love, and the children's book, Rainbow Plate. Dr. Priya is very passionate about helping families understand why what we eat is so critical when it comes to our physical and mental health, and has developed an exciting range of simple, adaptable, veggie-packed recipes where rainbows are often the hero. Dr. Priya is also a TV presenter and has hosted two episodes of Catalyst, as well as co-hosting two seasons of Good Chef, Bad Chef. So welcome, Priya. It is wonderful to have you on our little podcast series.

Preeya: Thank you for having me. Very excited.

Mikala: And we picked tomatoes today because they're one of your faves.

Preeya: They're one of my faves. And I know by definition, if there are any botanists listening, they might panic and go, but it's a fruit, but it actually counts in your veggie intake. So, I love tomato on everything. And every time I have it, I'm like, yes, I'm bumping up the veg, but even though it's a fruit.

Mikala: Yeah, absolutely. And in our house, we always make sure we store them outside of the fridge because then the flavour is so much more rich and full because the cold of the fridge actually really dampens down that yummy flavour.

Preeya: I've got to say, we have a veggie patch at home and we eat the tomatoes as they come up in summer off the vine.

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And they are the most beautiful, juicy, sweet tomatoes of your life. And once you've had one of those, no tomato compares.

Mikala: Yeah, yeah. No, I'm quite keen to actually try my hand at growing some because they do often look amazing.

Preeya: They are amazing, amazing.

Mikala: Yeah. All right. So today we are really excited. We're going to be chatting to Dr. Preeya about healthy eating in the home, about rainbow foods, and about how we can use entertainment across a range of mediums to introduce veggies to kids. So, I thought we'll just kick off. If you want to just tell us a little bit about yourself, about your journey to date, what you've been working on or, you know, all of your exciting projects that you've been involved in.

Preeya: Sorry, that could, gosh, that's a big question. Yeah, it is a big one. So I am, I think my defining role is that I'm a mum of two. So, I've got my eight-year-old and my four-year-old, and I'm constantly cooking with the children. We are in the veggie patch. We are gardening. We are cutting and chopping and smelling and tasting. So, I'm a very big, you know, rainbow lover, I would call it. I love getting the kids involved, but you know, my primary role is a mum. And then I'm also a GP, so I work in Richmond in Melbourne. I see a vast range of patients. I'm in the clinic two days a week. And then I do, as you've mentioned, all these other things like being an author, TV presenter, and I've also started a podcast, Happy to Health. So, I do do other things, and that all really started because I developed a social media platform on Instagram. I just wanted to get out, Mikala, really simple, reliable, evidence-based information for people so that they could kind of sift through all the noise on social media platforms. A lot of health misinformation and disinformation on there. And so, it all started with me just posting to basically nobody, and it's grown to this. And so, I talk about everything from, you know, mental health and pelvic pain in people and irritable bowel syndrome, everything, vaccination, anything. But I do focus a lot, as you've mentioned, on why what we eat is so important for physical and mental well-being. I talk a lot about getting rainbows into kids' diet and sharing a lot of recipes and simple, easy ways that I do it as a busy mum of two. And I also just talk about simple stuff like why getting good sleep quality is important. Why moving the body is important. Why getting your flu vaccine is important. So really simple science-backed stuff, but in a very fun way. So that's kind of how it all grew, I guess, into what it is now.

Mikala: So, do you still find time within all of that to actually, are you still clinically working?

Preeya: Yeah, two days a week. Yeah. So

Mikala: Wow. That's impressive.

Preeya: I'm in the clinic. Yeah. Thank you. But look, at the end of the day, I always, I'm a GP. That's what I'm passionate about. I love being in the clinic and seeing my patients. And I think it also keeps me, you know, up to date with information and credible. I think you've got to be on the ground and seeing people and doing the polycystic ovarian syndrome and managing these things to be able to go out and speak about it in the media. So, I will always, I say to my patients, they're like, are you going to leave? There's another book. Are you doing this? No, I'll always be a GP. I love it.

Mikala: Well, that feeds really beautifully into one of the topics that we're desperate to hear about today. And that is how your lovely children's book, The Rainbow Plate, came about.

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Preeya: Well, that came about because I really have my mother to thank. And she has said to me, darling, I'm pretty sure you took my idea. I think she's always referred to them as rainbows. And I just went, I'm going to like develop this into a book. And really where it came from is there's a lot of research, as you would be aware, that suggests that repeated food exposures, particularly for kids aged under three, essentially increases the chance that children will accept a particular target food. That's the kind of, you know, the long, the long version of it. But really, basically what it means is, is that it can take young kids up to 11 to 15 food exposures before they go, oh, I might try the broccoli. Oh, I might have a go at the pumpkin today. 11 to 15 times, it's repeated food exposure. And that food exposure, I do a lot of consults in the fussy eating space. And I often say to patients and parents, the food exposures don't just have to be on the plate. I think everyone thinks you've got to put the pumpkin and the broccoli on the plate for that to count as a food exposure. But what we know is that singing about the rainbows and touching them in the garden and chopping them in the kitchen and top and tailing the beans so they can go into the soup, reading about them are also food exposures. So, all of these little interactions children have with rainbows increases the chances that they might actually have a go and try it one day. And so that's where the book came from. Really, Rainbow Plate, it was like, that's a food exposure. It doesn't have to be fruit and veggies and have one more bite. It can be fun, and it can be filled with magic. And so that's where the concept kind of came from. And I was really lucky that I got Annabelle Cutler, the illustrator, to bring the magic to life in the book. If you've seen it, like, it's really, you know, there's a duck, which is based on my husband, which my, my, my kids' friends absolutely love because it makes sense for them because he's a bit of a funny dude.

Mikala: Oh, that's adorable.

Preeya: But it's, it's bringing fruit and veggies to life. And so many parents will say to me, do you know what I put, you know, this stuff on the plate and my daughter said, because Wilbur the duck loves pumpkin, they'll have a go at it. They've become familiar with pumpkin or whatever it is. And so, yeah, that's the that's where the kind of the idea was born.

Mikala: Yeah, no, I really love this concept. And I totally agree because I feel like it's those exposures and the, and, and finding the way that, that it has value for the particular child that you're dealing with and, and finding their currency. And, you know, in some of our sessions that we do around fussy feeding, we talk about that. It's when they start to sort of seek out, well, I'd like to run fast. How do, how do I build muscles? Or I'd really love to grow my hair long. How do I have healthy long hair? So, it's, it's finding also those, those inroads with kids that then develops that interest in that willingness to give things a go as well.

Preeya: Absolutely. And I think also finding, you said the currency for kids, like some kids, are going to respond better to rainbows in a book. Some are going to love listening to like the teeny tiny Stevie song. You know, I had a rainbow. Some kids are more musical. And I say to patients all the time, it's about finding what works for your child and just keeping that exposure up and the, and, and not kind of, you know, it can be really easy as a parent or caregiver to go, oh, Johnny doesn't like the broccoli. Forget the broccoli. It's too hard. I can't be bothered with the debate.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: And that's where I say, you know, bring the broccoli in other ways. It's okay to play with your food. If if, you know, your child wants to make a broccoli forest and bring in a dinosaur, that's actually awesome. You know, they're playing and touching the broccoli and they're getting excited about it. And it means one day they might actually try it. So, it's finding, as you said, the currency and actually working with the child.

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Mikala: Yeah. I think that a lot of that thinking has been really motivational on our end with the resources that we've been developing for the school space as well, because we've recently put together some sort of interactive sensory play mats where kids can cut out and slice and use different veggies to create a picture and then optionally choose to eat them at the end if they want to or not, but, you know, removing that pressure. But then as you say, providing that space for exposure so that it isn't just about food in the mouth.

Preeya: That's it. And I always say this to parents. I'm like, the wind is if a child is doing that activity, which actually sounds amazing, I'd love to see this mat. But I mean, if the child is even touching these fruits and veggies, I say to parents all the time, that is a win. If they actually pick it up to their nose and that honeydew smells interesting, that's a win. And I say to parents, try so hard to go, just take a bite, just try it. You'll love it. Just put it in your mouth. Because without the pressure, that's where that really organic, authentic food familiarity builds.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: And that's when you start to see results and maybe six months down the track, they lick the honeydew and you're getting closer. Like it's all the win.

Mikala: And then on top of that, there's, and your, some of your other books that we'll chat about shortly really lend to this. There's the positive modelling. There's the being in a space as the adult in the home without applying that pressure to the child, but you yourself thoroughly enjoying and showing how much you, you know, love to eat all those different fruits and veggies as well.

Preeya: Mikala, if you're in my house and my kids sometimes say to me, they're like, oh, mommy, like I am over the top with the role modelling. Cause of all the research that I've read, positive feeding practices, you know, setting up that really stress-free, calm, fun environment for meals, sitting together. We eat the same thing. I eat, you know, if my husband's operating late and I'm at home with the kids, we, I eat with them at 5:30/6 o'clock. And I'm going, Whoa, who chopped these mushrooms? These are amazing. And I know my son did with his little blunt plastic knife. You know, I'm talking about rainbows in tummies and it's, I'm role modelling, I'm eating with them. So, they know it's the norm, but also it's really positive and exciting chat. And I can tell you, my kids will be like, mummy, look at the rainbow tummy, even my eight-year-old. It's just building the fun and the magic and having, you know, a little bit of fun at mealtime. It is okay for mealtime to be fun. And upbeat and enjoyable with a bit of magic.

Mikala: Absolutely. I couldn't agree with you more. And we also know kids are so visual. So, a rainbow is just your perfect in road because, you know, it's, it's something that doesn't love a rainbow.

Preeya: Who doesn't love a rainbow?

Mikala: Exactly, exactly. So obviously Rainbow Foods has been a huge motivator for you. It's something that seems to be heroed throughout your website. Tell me why Dr. Preeya, why is, why are Rainbow Foods something that you have heroed so, you know, so loudly throughout all of your works?

Preeya: So loudly, I love that. So, I think we often don't realize the impact that really simple stuff can have on our health. I think particularly in the current world that we live in, there are so many things marketed to us and supplements that we don't necessarily need. And quick fixes that really, the key pillars of health, the things that I yap on about every time I'm in the consulting room, when I'm in the media are getting plenty of rainbows into the diet, fruit, and

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veggies, moving the body, getting enough sleep and staying up to date with things like vaccinations. That's really the stuff that it's not very sexy or marketable, but that is the stuff that really yields a lot of benefit for the body and the brain. And so, when it comes to rainbows and eating, what the recommendation is, as everyone's probably heard is two-thirds of fruit and five serves of veg a day for an adult in Australia. That's a recommendation that varies for younger children and as they grow, it also varies, but you can go to eat for health. That's a really good site to see the table nicely laid out. But we know that if you can, as an adult now, the two and five and get lots of rainbows into kids, it has huge health benefits. So, it can reduce the risk of some cancers. We're talking about bowel and breast cancer. We know that bowel cancer is on the rise at the moment in young people, twenties and thirties. We're seeing more bowel cancer. Eating rainbows can reduce risk of some cancers. It can reduce the risk of some chronic diseases, type two diabetes, fatty liver. These are the things that I'm seeing in the consulting room all the time. It can help with weight management, and we know that obesity and obesity-related disease is on the rise in adults and in children in Australia. And getting the two and five per day, getting lots of rainbows in the diet can help with weight management. Also, though, I'm getting very passionate here, but also the immune system, you know, getting into the cooler months now and everyone's doing, what do I do to reduce my risk of getting sick? How many supplements should I be eating and swallowing? A lot of them, by the way, which lack evidence, save your pennies would be my take home. But, you know, getting in the two serves of fruit and five serves of veg a day, lots of whole grains, and iron-rich diet, those nutritional building blocks support the immune system. You know, getting enough sleep, moving the body. That's the stuff that supports the immune system. It's not very sexy, but if you're getting lots of rainbows in the diet, you're reducing the risk of contracting lots of viral illnesses, which we know for preschoolers is six to 12 viral infections a year. It's a lot.

Mikala: Wow.

Preeya: Yeah, that's normal. That's considered normal, but getting lots of rainbows in their diet reduces the risk of them having that many. And then the other interesting thing is that there's now a lot of emerging research about gut health, the gut microbiome, the zoo in the gut, and the relationship with not only weight management but also mood and brain. And so, we know that what you eat can impact your mood. So, there are studies, particularly in adolescents, which show that having a diet high in salt and processed foods confers a higher risk of depression. So, what you eat, there's a lot of research now impacts your mood. So, you know, I've just said in that very, not short time, I've kind of gone on and on, but, you know, we're talking about chronic disease risk, reducing the risk of obesity and obesity-related disease, the immune system and supporting it, mood, the benefits are endless.

Mikala: And I think what I really like about the reference of rainbow is it then naturally lends you to variety. And then by reaching for variety, you, you vary all those nutrients up a little bit. So, then you're getting this lovely picture of, you know, of different input and another really interesting thing I read was that those gut benefits are enhanced by all of those different veggies rather than just sticking to the same.

Preeya: Correct. So, the gut health, you're right. The gut microbiome, when we talk about supporting it and reducing artificial sweeteners and all of the recommendations, one of them is eating a varied range of fruit and veg.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: You know, the purple eggplant, the green cucumber, the red apple. Yeah. I say to people and I say to kids in the consulting room, your bug guts love it when you eat the rainbow, you know, making it really visual and exciting for kids. So, yeah, you're right. You get all the different nutrients, and it also supports the gut zoo, the gut microbiome.

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Mikala: Yeah. And such a lovely, simple, accessible way to communicate that to young people.

Preeya: Yeah, to young people. And I would say to adults and caregivers as well. I think for all of us, sometimes just going back to basics, Mikala, like it just gets so confusing. I think people get so stuck on minutia sometimes and I see it on social media in particular where people get stuck on minutia, but the end of the day, we should all be eating the rainbow. And it can all be magical and fun for all of us and making it a bit of a challenge. Like I have patients who are cooking for themselves who go, I just love the challenge that you've set me of just, you know, fitting it and I'm cutting my onion and I go, that's a rainbow. Dr Preeya would love that. That wouldn't have frozen spinach and it's only a dollar a packet. You know, you can make it fun for all of us. It should be fun for all of us.

Mikala: Yeah, absolutely, and also, colourful lends beautifully to seasonal because if you're reaching for that variety, then hopefully you're reaching for different things that are in different season across the year. So, there's this lovely flow on of the sustainability of that as well and the low carbon footprint. And yeah.

Preeya: And also saving pennies. Yeah. I say to patients all the time, there's no point buying zucchinis when they're \$12.99 a kilo.

Mikala: Absolutely.

Preeya: Eat them in winter when they're, you know, growing out of the garden everywhere. But you might substitute with the bag of carrots later in the year and just, you know, mix it up depending on what's cost-effective and what's in season.

Mikala: Yeah. I love it. I love your holistic approach as well because it's, you know, health is about such a broad picture and food is a wonderful and important component of it. But I like the way you also bring in sleep and, you know, mental health and, you know, the, all the other components of being a healthy and a well person, because it's, it is a bigger picture than just what goes in our mouth.

Preeya: It's a very big picture and I'm very passionate about saying to people like I'm a GP and I don't, can't tell you really what healthy is because it is such a nuanced thing and take so many things into account. But, you know, as a GP, there are so many things that I think about when I think about well-being and that's sleep quality and it's mental health and it's how much you move in your body. And I really do feel like we lose sight of just how powerful and, and kind of how much impact the simple stuff can have. So, eating the rainbow and, you know, I say to people having baked beans, ideally low salt, canned baked beans. My daughter loves that on toast sometimes in the morning. And I say to her, I'm like, you're smashing a rainbow in the morning, baby. Like this is exciting times.

Mikala: Your household sounds fun.

Preeya: It is fun. It is fun. And we have high fives and all the rest and my son wants to get in on it. So has some baked beans too. But, you know, it's, it's actually going that can of baked beans at a dollar a can is changing her health trajectory and mine because I'm eating them too. And I love them with an egg, yum.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: It's, it's the simple stuff and we sometimes lose sight of it, but just going right back to basics can have significant positive health outcomes.

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Mikala: So, feeding on to your other book, cause I happened to sort of jump on your website and have a bit of a look. And I really loved, you know, the eat, play, sleep, love.

Preeya: eat, sleep, play, love,

Mikala: I don't know. It just felt like a really lovely little manual for parents in that early phase. It felt like it had some really, you know, accessible, approachable content in there. So, I'd love to hear a little bit more about that. If you, if you're happy. Absolutely.

Preeya: So, eat, sleep, play, love is essentially the guide for parents and caregivers for the first two years of life. And what I really wanted to do was create the book that I wanted to give my patients and also, the book that I wish I'd had as a new mum, even with all my GP knowledge. I just felt like everything I was reading was either really just stuck on sleep or one particular element of the first two years. Or it felt like it was telling me that there was a right option and a wrong option. And I had to choose one. And if I didn't nail it and my child didn't nail it, there was something wrong with one of us. And so, what I've done is written what I think is the guide and it contains everything from milk feeding, starting solids, stuff like fussy eating and setting up positive feeding practices, baby sleep, skincare, everything. And it's got a bunch of expert voices in there. So, I've got pediatrician, pelvic floor physio for the postpartum patch, some surgeons, lots of voices in there. And so, what I've tried to create is really this evidence-based nonjudgmental guide. It's a platter of the options. Do what suits you and your child. When it comes to sleep, when it comes to feeding, you might want to do baby-led weaning, you might want to do purees. Everybody's different. Every child is different. And so, it's plus it's the pros and the cons and the evidence. That's what I've tried to create. And so far, I mean, people have said it's really quite helpful, which is nice.

Mikala: Yeah. Well, it definitely sounds like it strikes that lovely balance of being informative and helpful where you would like to draw information out. So, you know, it's like a guide without being some kind of a directive or a Bible that people have to live by. Yeah.

Preeya: Correct. That's the idea. You've got options and choose what works for you.

Mikala: Yeah. Lovely. And so, I noticed on your website, you've got quite a lovely little collection of recipes there. So, are they your own making? Are they your own creation? They are my own creations.

Preeya: Yes. So, I'm a big cook. I love cooking and creating. And over time, again, this all stems from my mother, Mikala. So, you know, I was always in the kitchen with my mum and that's exactly what I do with my kids. It's all that healthy habits start early, which is, you know, based in evidence and research. But I have always loved cooking. And I think when I became a mum, I just went absolutely into overdrive and passion about chucking rainbows into things, but also creating meals, which were quick, yummy, and packed with rainbows. That's really, that's my brief.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: And so, I have, you know, over time really streamlined a lot of recipes like tuna mornays and lasagnas and things to really pack a veggie punch, but also be really easy and quick to whip up. And so that's really where my cookbook was born from as well, which kind of incorporates all of that budget-friendly, easy feeding the whole family with one meal, fussy eaters, people who have allergies, people who have intolerances, but also packing in a pile of veg. Or just, you know, making swaps, which can make a health difference. I try to really avoid any food morality, like labelling of foods, because of all the evidence that it can certainly be contributed to things like body image issues in later life. So, I don't talk to the

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kids about good food, bad food, and all of that and I don't use terms like that in the book, but I do say in the book, you might use a white sauce to bind your tuna mornay, but I actually just use a tin of creamed corn, which is corn mashed. No saturated fat and increases the veggie intake even more. And so, the book is all about, you know, it's called full plate and it's for people with a full plate. Who just,

Mikala: Oh, lovely.

Preeya: Yeah. So, it's called full plate, which I think is aptly named.

Mikala: Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, I like, by the sounds of it, there's some consideration as well for cost, low cost. So, you know, bringing tin corn in is a great, long life, accessible, can be in the back of the pantry for a long time. You can reach for it for those emergency moments or when the fresh stuff's not so available. So, yeah, that's, yeah, that's quite broad-reaching and accessible in itself as well.

Preeya: I've tried to keep it very budget-friendly because as a GP in my consulting room, people are telling me that they're struggling. Yeah. And when I go to the supermarket and you tap the credit card, you're like, wow, things are certainly climbing in cost.

Mikala: They sure are.

Preeya: So, a lot of the meals are, you know, canned beans, you know, canned beans, people forget 80 cents a can. And they count in your veggie intake and you add them to either something like a bolognese, like a can of lentils. Or I made this bean that I constantly put on social media that now people go bananas for and, you know, kids everywhere are eating it, and adults. But beans are a great way to get in a bit of protein, get in some veg, and 80 cents a can, you can get a whole meal for, you know, under \$10. It's amazing.

Mikala: Well, just last night I made a bolognese sauce using 50% of it was kangaroo mince, which we often reach for because it's really affordable and got such great iron and such low fat. And then two cans of brown lentils went in there. So that's the way I'm speaking my language because, yeah, it's, it's how we try to cook. And actually, my kids are now 17 and nearly 15. And it's really lovely watching them now take that role on in the kitchen and prioritize the colourful veggies or incorporating the veggies and, you know, seeing them like the joy of passing the baton because you've invested that time in those early years.

Preeya: Yeah. And I think I see that with my kids too. So sometimes they'll be eating meal, and they go, mummy, did you put carrots in this? Is this a, this is a slightly different tuna slice to last time. And my heart wants to explode, Mikala, because I'm like, these kids know it's different. They've picked the rainbow correctly. And they're like, it's a beautiful thing. And they're only eight and four. And I can't imagine when they get to that age, if they say to me, mum, I'll take over the baton and make the meal. Holy mother, I.

Mikala: yeah. It absolutely fills your heart to the brim, especially because, you know, similarly having a nutrition background and having that be something that that's been so important as well. Yeah. There's, there aren't many more things that, that, that you can feel more proud about for me personally, as a, as a mum of emerging young adults.

Preeya: Yeah. Amazing. And so, I'm really curious with your experience in the medical field and then coming into this nutrition space. Was that a really useful background or foundation for understanding allergies and how to navigate, you know, what seems to be a growing reality for families trying to sort of deal with healthy food, but also deal with food allergy?

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Preeya: So, food allergy is something I see a lot of in the consulting room. And I think most GPs, we've had to really upskill on lots of things, even the whole, a GP, a medical doctor getting into talking about rainbows and all the rest. I think people don't realize how much we actually do in the consulting room. And it's just not feasible for all of my patients, Michaela, as beautiful as it would be, but it's not feasible for all of them to go and see a dietician or a nutritionist. It's just, cost is a barrier. They're simply not the supply of people in the community who could see all my patients. So, I've had to upskill really on my own and do my own learning behind the scenes on, you know, reducing salt intake, the cardiac and the kidney risks of that, salt intake in children. How can you get protein in with a plant-based diet if people follow that? I had to really do my own learning and the stuff on allergy is really what I see in the consulting room. As you've said, food allergies are climbing. Every second patient is, you know, either a celiac or, you know, non-antibody mediated gluten intolerant or they're struggling with lactose intolerance or there's a peanut allergy. So, this is my every day. And so, it's been really easy when I'm doing the recipes to actually go, oh, that patient in my consulting room couldn't have this. What would I tweak? So that's what's coming to full plate, the book. It's really, you know, my love of cooking, but also all the medical stuff is dotted in. I've got so much stuff in the cookbook actually about feeding kids.

Mikala: Yeah.

Preeya: Cause that's what I get asked about, you know, this is how you prepare it. If your child is studying solids to reduce salt intake, do this. If you're trying to introduce the common allergy-causing foods to reduce the risk of food allergies in kids under one, sprinkle sesame seeds on top. You know, like I talk a lot about feeding kids because I think people are now going, there's a lot now. You know, in terms of starting solids, when do I do that? Reducing the risk of food allergies, getting in rainbows, getting in iron-rich foods, and it can get a bit overwhelming. So, the book is designed to be like, hey, you've got this, here's the easy ways to do it all.

Mikala: Yeah, absolutely, cause the science is so constantly evolving as well. That's some of the stuff I've read recently about the sort of the backflip on when to bring in some of those foods that are commonly causing the allergies. And it's really interesting because where it was advised to wait, it seems like it's now being advised to actually develop those exposure moments earlier on.

Preeya: Correct. So, we used to say, you know, but back before I was a GP, it used to be, don't introduce things like peanut and egg because you don't want to cause a food allergy. And that's been completely flipped on its head with now NHMRC major body saying, no, we really want to get in those common allergy-causing foods. Things like peanut protein, sesame, cow's milk. There's lots of others fish, shellfish, but you want to ideally get them into the diet before the age of one and consistently keep them in the diet. If there's no reaction to reduce the risk of food allergies developing. And so, the other thing that's really evolved is, you know, food proteins and skincare. Yeah. We now say, gosh, if, if, if a cream or an oil or anything has anything that you are eating or should be eating, it shouldn't go on your infant skin. Because that can increase the risk of food allergies. Basically, the body should be meeting those foods through the gut and not through the skin. If it makes it through the skin, it's much more likely to get what we call sensitized and food allergies develop. So, these are the things that have really evolved. That's the stuff that they need sleep, play, love the parenting guide or I've had grandparents read it go, oh, it's completely different to what I did for the update. So yeah, things have certainly changed, as you said.

Mikala: Yeah. And actually, really great for those carers to get the update because they are tending to be quite hands-on in the home and helping families where parents are having to, you know, work or be outside of the home while kids are young.

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Preeya: Correct. Yeah. So, I think everybody needs to be on the same page, particularly with stuff like safe sleeping and common allergy-causing foods and choke risk and reducing that. You want everybody on the same page and things have certainly changed.

Mikala: Mhm. Yeah. So, we tend to use rainbow plate go out to schools which were really. Yeah. We really love. It's just such a vibrant colourful book. And it also it's got the messages in there that are what we are trying to preach in our program. So, it's a book that we're really familiar with and we often handed out as a prize, or we put it in welcome packs to primary schools. Yeah. So, we have a bulk stash of them out the back, but the Full Plate cookbook is is yet to hit the shelves. Is that correct?

Preeya: It comes out on the 1st of May. So, pre-orders are open now and 1st of May is out in the world.

Mikala: Wonderful. Well, we are hoping to get our hands on a copy to give away as a prize for our launch of this podcast. So

Preeya: Amazing!

Mikala: Yeah, I can't wait to have a bit of a thumb through myself. And so, what comes next? What's the future hold? What comes next?

Preeya: That's an interesting question because there's kind of a lot on the horizon. I think what comes next is. The plate is very full, as the book suggests, the book suggests. And so, at the moment, I think it's about rationalizing. And so that's what I'm doing. I'm actually saying no to things, which is which is a learned skill for me, I have to say. But there is another book coming that's, you know, that's in development at the moment. I've just released a podcast, Happy to Health, where I kind of get on health professionals and we, we kind of dissect complex medical topics and make them really digestible. It's fun, it's conversational. So that's a really exciting project at the moment. And there are other things on the horizon. Hopefully, some more books in the kid space, let's say. Yeah, let's say,

Mikala: All right, Doctor Preeya, I'm going to set you a challenge to wrap up a lovely interview, which has been so fun. If you obviously, you know, people are busy, information is only really available or accessible, I should say, in Bite-sized because we know that people are so time-poor. So, what is your elevator pitch? If you've only got a little moment with someone and you really want to leave them with the nuggets, the important bit. What's your elevator pitch to families?

Preeya: So, it's what I say. All this. I've been asked this so many times over the years, and I say it in the consulting room and it's really what I've already said, but it is that the most simple of things can positively impact health. And getting in plenty of rainbows, it doesn't matter what they are, whether they're frozen, whether they're canned, whether they're fresh, we don't care. They all come in the intake just the same and impact your physical and mental health in a positive manner, moving the body however that looks for you. It doesn't matter if it costs money. You don't need a membership. Walking to school, walking to the bus stop, all of it as part of positive impacts for your brain and your body getting enough sleep. It's so non-sexy and boring but really supports immune health, weight management, mood, all the rest of it. And managing stress in the modern world we know that chronic uncontrolled stress and it really negatively impact health, heart health, blood pressure, the immune system. So, learning when you're stressed and actually managing it well with whatever tools you have, be that meditation, mindfulness, physical activity, going and speaking to someone, whatever it is, is critical. But the elevator pitch is the simple stuff makes a big difference. And nailing the simple stuff can really help the body in the brain.

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Mikala: Wonderful, I love it. That's very, very lovely little summary. So, thank you so much. It's been such a pleasure talking to you. I feel like there's lots of really exciting bits and pieces that we can throw in the show notes today, because we've covered a few, and we'll definitely have links to all of your books. Throw in the links to the resources that I mentioned that we're developing for classrooms. Um, and, you know, I'll have a little, maybe a link to the Eat Health website as well, because as you said, that's a great place to go for some very accessible information that that's tailored to all the different ages of the different stages. So, thank you. We are very grateful for your time. If the listeners liked this as much as I did, then please make sure that you like, comment, and share, and enjoy the rest of your day and we'll chat to you next time.

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