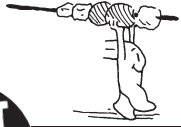


# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

January 2019

Stonington Public Schools Nutrition Services  
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## BEST BITES

### Popcorn party

National Popcorn Day is January 19! You and your youngster can enjoy this treat with a healthy twist. Instead of topping your popcorn with butter, sprinkle it with chili powder or cinnamon. Or drizzle with melted dark chocolate and add coconut flakes. *Tip:* Choose air-popped or plain microwave popcorn to avoid oil and salt.



### Spring activity sign-up

Get a head start on spring by signing your child up for sports and activities now. Talk to her about sports she's interested in, and then check registration dates. You might look into T-ball, soccer, roller hockey, and lacrosse leagues. Or she may want to take tennis lessons, join a running club, or try cheerleading.

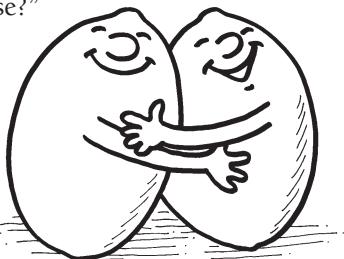
## DID YOU KNOW?

Your youngster's stomach is roughly the size of his two fists. That image can give him (and you) an idea of how much food it takes to fill him up. Help him control portion sizes by serving smaller meals and snacks that will satisfy his hunger but curb overeating.

### Just for fun

**Q:** How does a lemon ask for a hug?

**A:** "Can you give me a squeeze, please?"



## Healthy winter traditions

Start 2019 off with new and fun family traditions that will motivate your child to eat healthy foods. Try these ideas.

### Cold-weather cookouts

On a clear day, fire up the backyard barbecue or head to a park that has grills. Take along lean burger patties, whole-wheat buns, and fixings like lettuce and tomato. Also, fill a thermos with hot apple cider, and pack nutritious side dishes like mashed sweet potatoes or steamed green beans in insulated containers.

### Cozy "summer" picnics

Add variety to winter meals with indoor picnics. Spread out a blanket on the living room floor, and enjoy summer favorites from the frozen food aisle. *Examples:* corn on the cob, strawberries, sliced zucchini. Frozen fruits and vegetables are

just as nutritious as fresh, and they're available year-round.

### Themed potlucks

Take turns hosting healthy potlucks with relatives or friends. The host gets to pick the theme! Maybe all foods must begin with C, such as carrots and celery sticks, vegetable chili, and cornbread. Or choose an ingredient (say, oranges) that every dish must include (orange-glazed chicken, spinach salad with mandarin orange slices). ♥



### Five-minute circuit

In just five minutes, your youngster can complete his own "fitness circuit" and build endurance and strength. Have him post instructions around the house and do his circuit a few times a day. Here are suggestions.



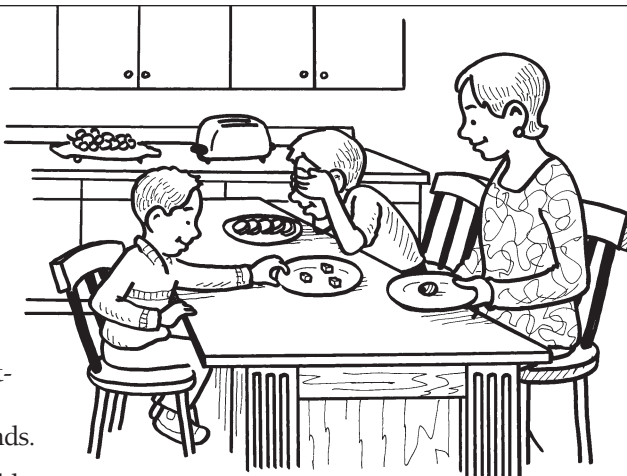
- 1. Basement:** Jump rope while singing your favorite song.
- 2. Foyer:** Throw a ball straight up, clap three times, and catch the ball.
- 3. Living room:** Pretend you're a soldier going under a fence. Lay on the ground, and use your elbows to "army crawl" under a table.
- 4. Kitchen:** Line up chairs, and skip around them.
- 5. Laundry room:** Jump back and forth over an upside-down laundry basket. ♥

# A sensory feast

Your child can explore his senses while he eats. The following activities will encourage him to pay attention to the tastes, scents, and textures of food.

**Sweet and salty sort.** Give your youngster a serving of trail mix, and ask him which items taste sweet (raisins, dried cranberries) and which taste salty (pretzels, peanuts). He could sort the ingredients into piles according to taste and graph his finds.

**Scent guessing game.** Encourage your child to identify familiar foods by their scents. On separate plates, serve items like cheese cubes,



banana slices, and olives. Have him close his eyes, smell them one at a time, and tell you what's on each plate. How many can he guess correctly?

**Texture combo.**

Together, make sandwiches or salads that incorporate as many textures as possible. Then, talk about the textures as you eat. For

a sandwich, you might use *soft* bread, *tender* turkey, *crunchy* sprouts, and *smooth* avocado slices. Or toss salads with *crisp* lettuce, *firm* radish slices, *crumbly* feta, and *creamy* dressing. ♥



**PARENT TO PARENT**

## Recipe suggestion box

Pizza, tacos, chicken nuggets...our family tended to eat the same things, and I couldn't find the time to search for new, healthy recipes everyone would like. When I mentioned this to my sister, she showed me her "recipe suggestion box." I loved the idea, so we created one for our kitchen.

I asked my family to collect interesting or unusual recipes. We snipped some from newspapers and food packages, copied



recipes from cookbooks, and printed some from our favorite websites. We even clipped recipes from our *Nutrition Nuggets* newsletters!

My son Tyler decorated a box to store our clippings. Now before we go to the grocery store, we pluck out a couple and buy any ingredients we need. On the menu this week: portobello mushroom shepherd's pie and chickpea gyros! ♥

**ACTIVITY CORNER**

## Music and movement

Music is a great motivator when it comes to physical activity. Use these tips to encourage your child to be active and build large motor skills.

● **Songs with a twist.** Let your youngster create her own versions of familiar songs. For "The Hokey Pokey," instead of "turn yourself around," she might sing, "Do a forward roll" or "Run up and down the stairs." Or sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," and change the actions to "hop on one foot" or "touch your toes."



● **Make up dances.** Together, choreograph a dance routine using different combinations of moves. Each person could pick a dance step (leap, twirl, jump). Then, have your child use the steps to create a pattern. *Example:* Jump, twirl, twirl, leap, jump, twirl, twirl, leap. Put on music, and let her lead you in performing the routine. ♥

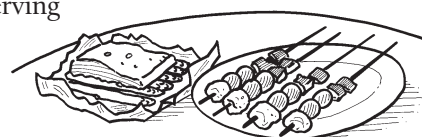
**IN THE KITCHEN**

## Kid-friendly fish dishes

Hook your youngster on healthy fish with these flavorful recipes.

### Tilapia foil packets

Your child can wrap these servings up like presents. Set out 4 foil squares. On each square, have her line up 6 asparagus stalks and top with a 4-oz. tilapia fillet. Let her sprinkle each fillet with 1 tsp. lemon juice and add 1 lemon slice. Now she should fold the foil tightly around each serving and place on a baking sheet. Bake at 400° until the fish flakes and the asparagus is tender, about 15–20 minutes.



### Salmon and veggie kebabs

Invite your youngster to put together these colorful kebabs. In a bowl, gently toss 1 lb. of salmon chunks with 18 cherry tomatoes, 1 cup cubed red onion, 2 tbsp. olive oil, 1 tbsp. lime juice, 1½ tsp. thyme, and 1 tsp. minced garlic. On separate skewers, your child can thread 1 salmon piece, 2 tomatoes, and 2 onion cubes. Bake at 350° for 15–20 minutes until the fish is cooked through. ♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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*Nutrition Nuggets*™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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