

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

December 2019

Stonington Public Schools Nutrition Services
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BEST BITES

Bulk shopping = savings

Shopping from bulk bins almost always saves money. Let your child help you fill bags with foods like rice, beans, pasta, and nuts. *Idea:* Tell him how much you need (say, 2 lbs.), then have him estimate that amount and weigh it to check.

DID YOU KNOW?

Physical activity is good for your youngster's brain. It can improve her memory, mood, and ability to focus. Help her get at least 60 minutes of exercise each day, keeping in mind that it doesn't have to be all at once. She might walk to school, run around the playground at recess, and play catch with you after school.

Fruit with a message

Send your child off to school or sports practice with a snack that's healthy *and* inspiring. Use a marker or pen to write an encouraging message on a fruit he will peel, like

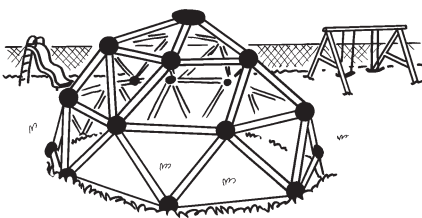


a clementine or banana. *Example:* "I hope your day is a-peeling!"

Just for fun

Q: Where does Tarzan work out?

A: In the jungle gym!



A healthier winter break

Special occasions can be learning opportunities when it comes to nutrition. Show your youngster that healthy choices are an important—and fun—part of any celebration with this advice.

Eat normally

Make sure your child has a healthy breakfast and lunch rather than "leaving room" for a big meal. She won't be starving by dinnertime, so she'll be less likely to overeat. If you're traveling, help her pack nutritious snacks to eat during the trip.



Add more nutrients

Look for ways to get more whole grains and vegetables into favorite dishes. Make macaroni and cheese with whole-wheat noodles, and stir in thinly sliced brussels sprouts or cubed sweet potatoes. For stuffing, use whole-grain bread, and add fruits and vegetables (chopped apples, diced onion, spinach).

Fill up on the good stuff

Encourage your youngster to put healthier options like turkey breast and salad greens on her plate first. Then, she could take small portions of richer foods like gravy or creamy casseroles. She'll learn to make good choices—and enjoy treats in moderation. ♥

M-O-V-E your body

Scientist Isaac Newton was right: A body in motion tends to stay in motion! Set your child up for a lifetime of being active with these tips.

Multitask wisely. Your youngster could balance on an exercise ball at homework time. Or while folding laundry, he might shoot balled-up socks into drawers to score "baskets."

Opt for activity. Walk to the store or playground instead of driving. When you do take the car, park as far from the door as possible.

Vary the exercise. If your child plays baseball, he could swim or bike on other days. Or a gymnast might play badminton with friends on weekends.

Enjoy yourself. Your youngster is more likely to stay active if he's having fun. Instead of telling him to "exercise," suggest some "fun" like riding his scooter. ♥



Kids in the kitchen

Cooking with your youngster will teach him valuable kitchen skills—and help him practice reading and math. Try these suggestions.

Read recipes. Ask your child to read a recipe aloud. Then, have him gather the ingredients and tools you'll need. Can he find dried oregano and a whisk? Next, follow the steps together. *Idea:* Build his vocabulary by explaining unfamiliar cooking words. (“Zest means to scrape off tiny bits of the lemon peel.”)



Use math. Put your youngster in charge of kitchen math. He can find the correct measuring spoons and cups, measure wet and dry ingredients, and read a food thermometer. He'll also learn about conversions—for example, that 4 tbsp. = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup.

Tip: Get your child in the habit of putting dishes in the dishwasher as he works. That way, there won't be a big sticky mess to clean up at the end. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

“I’m just not good at sports”

My son Andy plays soccer on a neighborhood team, but he often said he wasn't “good” at it. I wasn't sure how to handle this, so I talked to his PE teacher about ways to build his confidence.



She said that pointing out what Andy does well could help him feel better about playing soccer. For instance, I mentioned how he runs fast on the field and is always encouraging his teammates. The PE teacher also suggested that we focus on how much fun soccer is rather than on whether he scores a goal.

I've been using the coach's advice, and Andy seems really proud of his speed. In fact, he recently told me that running is his favorite thing about soccer. ♥

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.

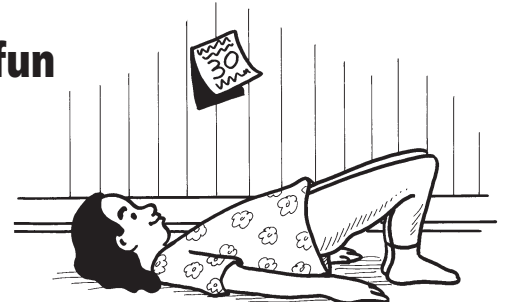
ISSN 1935-4630

ACTIVITY CORNER

Active indoor fun

When it's raining or snowing too hard to play outside and your child is full of energy, what can you do? These ideas will keep her active and entertained indoors.

- 1. Fitness stations.** Let your youngster write 10 activities on separate sticky notes. *Example:* “Hold a bridge pose for 30 seconds.” She can stick the notes around the house, then go to each station and follow the instructions.
- 2. Board game fitness.** Play a board game where fitness has a starring role. Have your child make a key that lists a movement for each number rolled or color space landed on (“Green = Leap like a lizard”).
- 3. Tic-tac-toe.** Your youngster could draw a grid and write an activity in each square. (“Do 10 jumping jacks.”) Players complete three in a row to win! ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

Seasonal snacks

Put a wintry twist on healthy snacks. Here are a few your youngster can make herself.

Veggie scene

Arrange broccoli florets in a large tree shape on a plate. Use a celery stalk for a trunk, and spread low-fat ranch dressing under the tree for snow. Your youngster could add carrot sticks as sleds in her scene.

Snowman on a stick

Cut a banana into thirds and push them onto a skewer to make a snowman's

body and head. Your child might use raisins for the nose and eyes, and pretzel sticks for hands. *Tip:* Use sunflower seed butter to make everything stick.

Winter hats

Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat cream cheese with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup nonfat Greek yogurt until smooth. Place spoonfuls of the mixture onto a plate to create hat brims.

Complete the hats by putting a strawberry (green removed) upside down on each brim. ♥

