

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Albany Area Schools
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BEST BITES

Guess that food

Turn healthy eating into a guessing game for your child. Secretly put a different bite-sized food in each section of a muffin tin. *Examples:* raspberry, avocado chunk, pepper-jack cheese cube, edamame, pitted olive. Let her close her eyes and try each one. How many can she identify?

Cards + cardio = win!

Add physical activity to your next game of Go Fish or Crazy Eights. How? By doing a heart-healthy exercise every time you lay down a heart. The number on the card tells you how many reps to do (ace = 1, jack = 11, queen = 12, king = 13). You pick the activity. So if your youngster plays a 9 of hearts, he might do 9 push-ups or 9 sit-ups.



DID YOU KNOW?

While the best source of vitamin D is sunlight, it's hard for your child to get enough that way. That's because she needs sunscreen to protect her skin, blocking rays that would help her body make vitamin D. So be sure she eats plenty of vitamin-D rich foods like tuna, salmon, and eggs. Vitamin D-fortified milk, yogurt, and cereal are also good options.

Just for fun

Q: What kind of tree fits in your hand?

A: A palm tree!



Playtime nutrition

Kids learn a lot through imaginary play, and learning about good nutrition is no exception. These pretend roles mix food with fun—and give your youngster inspiration for healthy things to eat this summer.

Astronaut

Aboard the International Space Station, astronauts make sandwiches using tortillas, since bread falls apart in space. Suggest that your child imagine he's an astronaut and make a list of out-of-this-world sandwiches to try. What nutritious ingredients could he roll up in a whole-wheat tortilla? *Examples:* hummus and shredded carrots, nut or seed butter with banana slices.

Veterinarian

Let your youngster pretend he's a vet and you're a pet owner. Bring him a stuffed animal, and help him research what it eats. Then, he can write it a "prescription" for healthy meals and snacks. He might prescribe berries and sprouts for a hamster and spinach and papayas for a parrot. Now serve some of the foods



he read about—if they're good for humans, of course!

Chef

Encourage your child to write and illustrate a menu for a restaurant that serves healthy foods. Maybe his "Polka-Dot Pizza" has a cauliflower crust topped with diced tomato and green pepper. Instead of french fries, he could sell "Garden Taters"—baked potato wedges with broccoli and cheddar. Then, let him help you cook his menu items for your family. 🍷

Splish, splash!

"Marco!" "Polo!" Playing in water is a great way for your child to be physically active. Try these ideas.

● **Pool games.** Get a whole-body workout while splashing around. Teach your youngster a game you enjoyed as a child, such as Marco Polo or Sharks and Minnows. Or take a beach ball to the pool for a game of volleyball.

● **Water adventures.** Look for activities through the parks and recreation department. Your family might kayak (builds arm strength), paddle-board (improves balance), or sail in pedal-powered boats (strengthens legs).

Note: Always supervise your youngster in and around water. 🍷



Healthy ways to stay hydrated

Water, fat-free milk, and fresh fruit are your child's best bets for staying hydrated. Consider these thirst-quenching tips.

Keep it interesting. Let your youngster develop her own liquid creations. She might drop lemon slices in her water or sprinkle nutmeg into her milk. Or together, brew unsweetened herbal iced tea, perhaps



peppermint or mango, and add a sprig of fresh mint.

Offer fruit, not juice.

Fruit helps your child hydrate, and it provides her with fiber that juice does not. Set out watermelon wedges for a snack rather than giving her fruit punch. Let her munch on crisp apple slices if she asks for apple juice.

Involve the whole family.

Make it easier for your youngster to drink healthy beverages by joining her. Don't keep soda or sports drinks in the house. Also, have everyone take a refillable water bottle when you go out so you're not tempted by vending machines or convenience stores. 🍎

ACTIVITY CORNER

I'm an Olympian!

Celebrate the 2020 Summer Olympics by letting your youngster bring the games into your own backyard. Here are two for your family to enjoy.

1. Hurdle jumping. Gather items of different heights to use as hurdles. *Examples:* lawn chair placed on its side, recycling bin, small step stool. Let your child line them up in a grassy area with enough space in between to run and gain momentum. Take turns timing each other jumping over all the hurdles, and subtract 3 seconds for any you touch. Fastest time wins.



2. Javelin throw. Place two sticks on the ground, about 10 feet apart. Holding a "javelin" (pool noodle), run from one stick to the other. When you reach the second stick, throw the javelin as far as you can. The player whose javelin travels farthest wins. 🍎

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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Q&A Controlling portions

Q: My son tends to put too much food on his plate. How can I help him eat smaller portions?

A: A few tried-and-true strategies will make your child (and your whole family) less likely to overeat.

First, set out a healthy appetizer, like celery and carrot sticks, for your child to munch on while you cook. When dinner is served, he won't be starving and ready to pile on huge portions.

Also, downsize your dishes. Use kid-sized plates and bowls, or eat on salad plates. Put regular spoons (not ladles) into serving dishes so your son naturally scoops up smaller amounts. Finally, make it a tad harder to take seconds by leaving any extra food on the counter. That way your youngster has to get up from the table for seconds if he's still hungry. 🍎



IN THE KITCHEN

Fruity homemade ice pops

A frozen treat on a hot day is one of the joys of childhood. Keep your youngster cool with these recipes that contain less sugar than regular store-bought pops.

Note: Pour each mixture into paper cups. Freeze until slushy (about 2 hours), then add craft sticks and freeze until solid. Peel off cups before eating.

Peaches galore

Chop 4 peeled peaches and blend until smooth. Add the juice of 1 lemon, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. vanilla extract, and 1 tbsp. sugar.



Melon-lime treats

In a small pot, heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each of water and sugar to make a syrup. In a blender, puree chunks from 1 medium honeydew melon with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup fresh lime juice and the cooled syrup.

Berry pops

In a blender, puree 1 cup blueberries and 1 cup nonfat Greek yogurt. Stir in sliced strawberries and more blueberries. 🍎