

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

April 2019

Darien Public School District 61
Wellness Committee



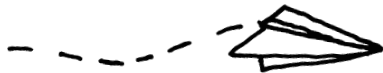
BEST BITES

Healthy fats

What do avocados have in common with tuna? Both contain healthy fats that your child's body needs. These unsaturated fats, also found in olive oil, walnuts, and sunflower seeds, give her energy and help her absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K. Plus, they keep her full longer, which may prevent overeating.

Paper airplane contest

Throwing paper airplanes—and running to retrieve them—will get your family's hearts pumping. Let each

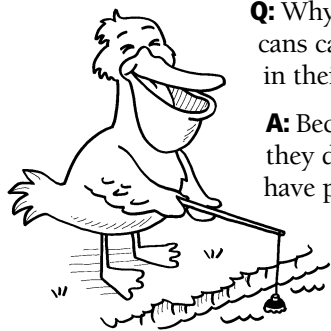


person fold sheets of paper into planes, then go outside and see whose flies the farthest. Your youngster can run to the spot where his plane lands and throw again from there.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gluten can hide in foods like rice mixes, canned soups, soy sauce, and salad dressings. If your child's doctor recommends a gluten-free diet, read food labels so your youngster learns what to avoid. *Idea:* Together, make a list of words to look for, like *wheat, barley, durum, semolina, and rye.*

Just for fun

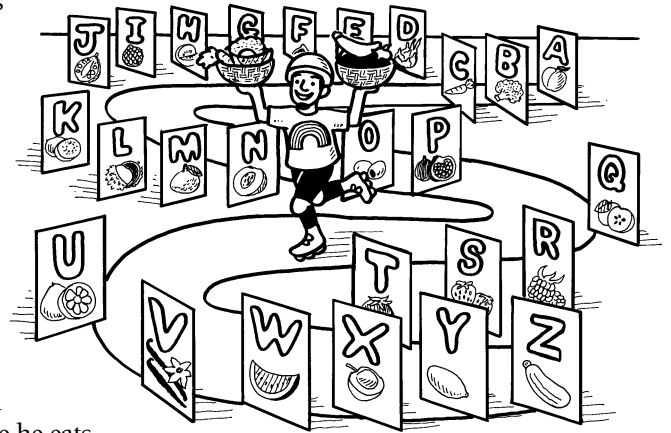


Q: Why do pelicans carry fish in their beaks?

A: Because they don't have pockets!

From apricots to zucchini

Do fruits and vegetables come in every color? Does the name of any produce start with Q? Motivate your youngster to learn about fruits and veggies—and eat more of them—with these fun activities.



Rainbow book

Different colors mean different nutrients—that's why it's important to eat a "rainbow." Have your child make a book of the produce he eats. Help him staple together red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple construction paper. Each time he eats a fruit or veggie, he can draw or glue a picture on the page matching its color. After a week, he'll have a record of the rainbow he ate!

Produce trading cards

Encourage your youngster to experiment with produce prepared in different ways by making trading cards. A sweet potato card might say, "Delicious with: Baked apples and cinnamon. *Also seen:* Standing in for french fries." Let him

help you plan meals by drawing a card and deciding how tonight's vegetable should be cooked.

Memory game

This game introduces new produce for your child to try. One player says, "I'm going to the store for *apricots*" (or any fruit or vegetable starting with A). The next person adds a B food: "I'm going to the store for *apricots* and *broccoli*." Continue until you get to Z. (Look online if you get stuck.) Now, put a few new items on your grocery list. 🍎

March to the beat

Let your child invite her friends over to play marching band. They can whip up homemade instruments and set a workout to music with these ideas.

Instruments

• **Trumpet:** Blow through an empty paper towel tube.

• **Drum:** Turn a metal pot upside down, and bang on it with a wooden spoon.



• **Tambourine:** Fill a paper plate with dry beans. Staple a second plate on top, and shake.

Marches

• **Shapes:** Spread out to form a large triangle, and march toward the center to create a small one. Repeat with squares and circles.

• **Flock:** March in a "V" formation—like a flock of birds.

• **Single file:** Have the drummer lead the way. Trade instruments (and leaders). 🍎

Know the right portion size

Keeping portion sizes reasonable will help your child maintain a healthy weight. Guide her with these tips.

Look at your hand. Your child can use her hand to estimate healthy portions. Her palm is about the portion size for lean meat like chicken or fish. A serving of whole grains (rice, pasta) is roughly equal to the size of her fist. Whatever fits in her cupped hand is a good rule of thumb for snacks.



Downsize. Eat on salad plates, and serve soup in a teacup. Your youngster will naturally take smaller portions. Or consider making sliders rather than full-size burgers and choosing taco-size tortillas (not those labeled “burrito” or “fajita”).

Listen to body cues. Talk to your youngster about what it feels like to be hungry, full, or too full. If she

hasn't eaten in a while, her stomach might growl and she could get cranky. When she's comfortably full, she'll be satisfied but not stuffed. And if she eats too much, she may feel bloated or get a tummy ache. She'll learn to read her body's cues and be more likely to watch portion sizes. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Garden-themed yoga



Use nature to inspire your youngster's fitness with a “garden yoga” session that boosts his strength and flexibility. Try these poses together.

1. Seedling: Curl up, and pretend to be a freshly planted seed. Sit on your heels, and bring your forehead toward the floor. Reach back, resting the tops of your hands on the floor beside your feet.

2. Flower: Stand straight and tall. Bend your left knee, putting the bottom of your foot on the inside of your right leg, just below or just above your knee. Reach toward the sky with your arms. Switch legs, and repeat.



3. Butterfly: Sit up straight, placing the soles of your feet together. Pretend your legs are butterfly wings, and flap them slowly up and down. ♥

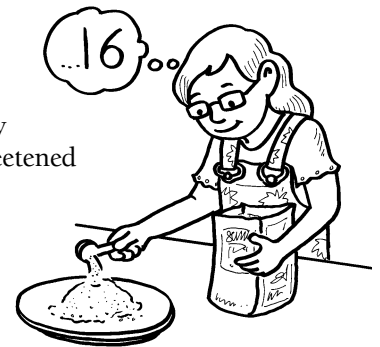
Q&A How much sugar is in that?

Q: I'd like to cut down on the sugar my daughter consumes. Where should I start?

A: Limiting sugar is a good idea, since it's full of empty calories and leads to cavities. You can help by encouraging your child to avoid soda and other sweetened drinks and also by shopping carefully.

Your daughter might not know how much sugar is in soda—most people don't! Here's a great way to show her: Ask her to scoop 16 tsp. of sugar onto a plate. That's the amount in a 20-oz. soda—more than 5 times the 3-tsp. daily limit for kids.

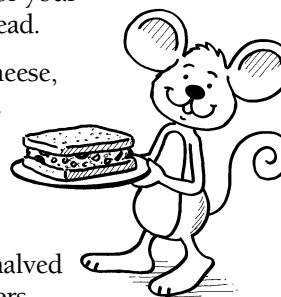
Also, sugar is added to many foods that you or your child may not think of as sweet, like pasta sauce and salad dressing. Choose varieties labeled “no added sugar,” or better yet, whip up your own. You'll find that basic recipes often take less time than running to the store. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN Celebrate grilled cheese

April 12 is National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day. You can enjoy healthy versions of this classic comfort food all month—and year—long. Here are combinations for your child to try on whole-grain bread.

- **Breakfast melt.** Cheddar cheese, scrambled eggs, fresh spinach.
- **Cheesy chicken.** Provolone cheese, cooked chicken, zucchini rounds.
- **Greek griller.** Feta cheese, halved black olives, roasted red peppers.



- **Cordon bleu.** Swiss cheese, lean ham, arugula.
- **Apple pie.** Brie, thin apple slices, a sprinkle of cinnamon.

To grill, place sandwiches (lightly buttered on the outsides) in a skillet over medium heat. Cook, pressing down on the sandwich with a spatula, until the bottom is golden brown. Flip, and cook until the cheese melts. ♥

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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