Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

April 2018

Sauk Centre Elementary School



BEST BITES

Better sports snacks

Whether it's your turn to provide team snacks or your child is picking out his own post-practice snack, help him choose something nutritious. Browse the produce aisle for fresh fruit like oranges or grapes. Or look for a winning combination of protein and complex carbohydrates, such as string cheese with whole-wheat crackers.

Dance away

Hip-hop, tap, ballet…dancing strengthens muscles, improves flexibility, and gives your youngster's heart and lungs a workout. Put on music, and invite her to dance with you or with friends. Is there a style she especially enjoys? Consider signing her up for low-cost classes through your parks and recreation department.

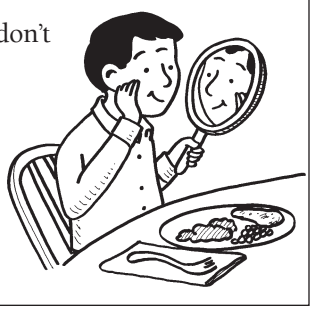


DID YOU KNOW? Asparagus is in season, which means it's at its height of flavor and low point in price. To cook, break off the tough ends, and toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast on a baking sheet at 400° for 10 minutes, top with Parmesan cheese, and cook 5 minutes more.

Just for fun

Mom: Eat your spinach. It'll put color in your cheeks.

Jack: But I don't want green cheeks!



Earth Day food and fun



Every April 22, we celebrate Earth Day—a time to focus on the planet's health. Get your youngster involved, and encourage her to focus on her *own* health, too, with these eco-friendly activities.

Enjoy a waste-free meal

Can your family eat an entire meal without wasting any food? One idea is to cut food into smaller pieces before family members serve themselves. For example, set out platters of grilled chicken strips, baked potato halves, and apple slices. Encourage everyone to take only what they think they will eat.

Throw a leftovers "party"

With your youngster, look through your refrigerator, and make a list of leftovers or other items that need to be eaten soon. Then, she could use her list to create a menu for a meal of leftovers. For instance, she might suggest a casserole with leftover rice and veggies or banana pudding made with overripe bananas for dessert.

Join a cleanup

Participate in a neighborhood or park cleanup, and enjoy a picnic afterward. Get trash bags and gloves for picking up litter. Let your child help you pack nutritious foods, such as turkey wraps and fruit salad, in reusable containers. After you've worked up a sweat cleaning up the trash, wash your hands, and eat together.

Easy-on-your-wallet protein



Protein is the building block of your child's bones and muscles. By choosing meatless protein more often, you'll save money and keep the choices healthy. Consider these ideas.

- **Eggs, cheese, and milk.** Combine these three protein-rich ingredients for a simple meatless dinner. You could make scrambled egg burritos, omelets, or even a quiche in a store-bought crust. *Note:* Try to use nonfat milk and low-fat cheese.
- **Beans and legumes.** Plant proteins like these are low in fat and cholesterol. Stretch your protein budget by mixing 1 can black beans (drained, rinsed) with 1 lb. lean ground beef or turkey for burgers or meatloaf. Or toss whole-grain noodles with peas or white beans instead of sausage.

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Join the (fit) club!



Starting a neighborhood fitness club can motivate your youngster to stay active with friends. Here's how.

Organize. Let your child invite friends over for a planning meeting. Encourage them to start by coming up with a fun name for their club like "Kids on the Move" or "The Fit Crew."

Brainstorm. They could think up fun activities, such as playing softball or kickball in their backyards, hosting activity "classes" in their homes, or meeting at the neighborhood pool.

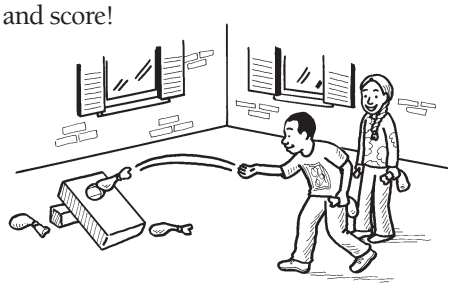
Plan. Suggest that they write a schedule that includes the time and place for each meeting, as well as who will lead the event. For instance, a member who has a badminton net might host a game. Or one who knows tai chi may teach a class in the basement.

Tip: Point out that they'll need parents' approval to host a meeting at home or for an activity that requires adult supervision, such as riding bikes or going to a playground.



ACTIVITY CORNER Beanbag toss

Here's a backyard game that's almost as much fun to make as it is to play. Together, follow these simple steps to create your own beanbag-toss set, then aim, throw, and score!



Make it. Turn a large, shallow cardboard box upside down. Give your child a small round paper plate, and have him trace a circle about six inches from one edge of the box. Cut out the circle. Then, prop up the target end of the box on a phone book or a block of wood. Make six beanbags by filling old socks with dry beans and closing them securely with rubber bands.

Play it. Give each person three beanbags. Take turns tossing one beanbag at the board. A player earns three points if his bag goes through the hole and one point if it lands (and stays) on the board. The first to reach 21 points 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 Making takeout more nutritious

Q: *On busy days, buying takeout often seems like our only choice for dinner. How can I make it healthier?*



A: Together, collect or print out menus from places that offer nutritious items. Then, help your child circle or highlight the healthiest choices. On a pizza menu, she might circle *thin crust* and toppings like *spinach* and *pineapple*. For a sub shop, she could highlight *whole-wheat bread*, *lean turkey*, and *lettuce*. That way, she'll see at a glance what to order when you're in a rush.

Better yet, plan ahead when possible so you won't need takeout. Have easy-to-cook items on hand like frozen vegetables, instant brown rice, or turkey meatballs. Or make a double batch of soup or a casserole on the weekend, and freeze half to defrost on a busy weeknight.

IN THE KITCHEN Healthy homemade condiments

Store-bought condiments often come loaded with sugar and sodium. Try making these healthier versions with your child. (*Note:* Refrigerate each condiment in a jar for at least 2 hours before serving, and keep for up to 2 weeks.)

Duck sauce

Combine ¾ cup each no-sugar-added preserves (apricot or peach) and applesauce. Stir in ½ cup rice vinegar, 2 minced garlic cloves, 1 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce, 2 tsp. minced ginger, and 1 tsp. chili powder. Serve with chicken or fish.

Honey mustard

In a small bowl, whisk together ¼ cup Dijon mustard, ¼ cup honey, and 1 tsp. lemon juice. Your youngster can dip in whole-wheat pretzel sticks or spread on a ham sandwich.

Ketchup

In a blender, combine 8 oz. tomato paste, ¼ cup apple cider vinegar, 1 cup water, and 2 tbsp. brown sugar. Add ½ tsp. each garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and allspice. Blend on high 2–3 minutes. Use on turkey burgers or with sweet potato fries.

