

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2014



Crescent Elementary School
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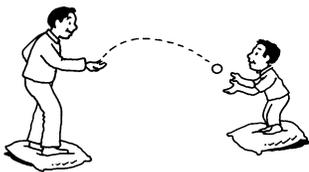
BEST BITES

Frozen fruit

It may be November, but your children can still enjoy the fruits of summer if you keep frozen fruit on hand. Top breakfast cereal with thawed berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries). Or mix frozen peaches or cherries into plain nonfat yogurt for a naturally sweet lunch or snack.

Balancing act

Here's a fun way to help your youngster develop better balance—a key element for sports and other physical activities.



Have a game of indoor catch with a

lightweight ball. But here's the trick: Stand on a pillow or on another uneven surface. As he throws and catches the ball, he'll have to steady himself to maintain his balance.

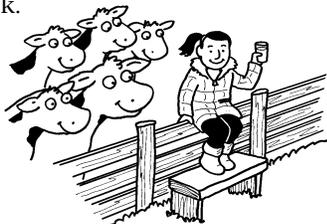
DID YOU KNOW?

Families that eat together at least three times a week are more likely to have children who eat nutritious foods. Try to schedule regular family meals, whether they're breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Keep the food healthy and the conversation light—and you will all benefit from your time together!

Just for fun

Teacher: Name five things that contain milk.

Olivia:
Five cows.



Reality check: Portion control

Nutritionists often say it's not so much *what* you eat, but *how much* you eat that counts. Get your child used to eating right-sized portions now, and you'll be doing her a lifelong favor. Try these ideas.

Plate perceptions

The amount of food on a plate—whether it's really one serving or three—is the amount your youngster will think is a normal serving. Pay attention to serving sizes on packages, and become familiar with healthy portion sizes for meats and other foods that aren't marked (look online for guidance). Then, serve plates with those portions. Over time, your child will learn to take that amount when she serves herself.

Packaging decisions

People tend to pour more from large boxes or jars than from smaller ones. You could still buy in bulk to save money, but repackage cereal or nuts into smaller containers when you get home. Likewise, put snacks into little bowls—or



directly onto your youngster's plate—rather than placing a box of pretzels or a bag of deli meat on the table.

Mini treats

Healthy eating doesn't have to mean an end to sweets. Let your child enjoy treats in small doses, and she'll get to satisfy her sweet tooth without all the calories. Cut brownies into bite-size pieces. Put a few spoonfuls of ice cream into a cup. When you bake, make mini-muffins rather than full-size ones, or drop cookie dough from a teaspoon rather than a tablespoon. Then, have one or two, and freeze the rest for another time. 🍪

Make TV less important

Often, watching TV is just the easiest thing for a youngster to do. Keep TV from being your child's first choice with these ideas:

- Does he have a TV in his bedroom? Move it out, and encourage him to do other things with his free time (play outside, read).
- If **Olivia** has several televisions, consider donating one so there aren't as many rooms with sets.
- Put a basket of "TV alternatives" (art supplies, games, books) by the set. Post a sign on the TV with an arrow pointing to the basket and the words, "Try these instead!" 📺



Food allergies

If you have a child with food allergies, you may wonder about the best way to handle school situations. This advice will help.

Have a plan. Get your youngster involved from the start in managing his allergies. Together, write down a plan. Be specific about the foods he can't eat, and list symptoms to help him recognize that he's having a reaction (hives, swelling, nausea, dizziness, trouble breathing).



Tell school officials. Notify the office staff, his teachers, the school nurse, and the cafeteria manager about your child's allergies. Provide them with your emergency contact information.

Discuss school meals. Read the menu with your youngster, and talk about what he plans to eat each day. Together, highlight items he should not have.

Practice situations. Go over what to do if a reaction begins. He should ask a teacher or staff member for help—or tell a friend right away to get help. Also, role-play how he should respond if a classmate wants to trade food. (“Thanks anyway, but I have allergies, so I have to eat my own food.”) ●

Q&A Upbeat about nutrition

Q: Nagging my kids about eating healthier hasn't seemed to make much difference. Are there fun ways for them to learn about nutrition instead?

A: Definitely! Try setting up a play grocery store (a big cardboard box will work just fine). Stock it with empty packages of nutritious foods, such as brown rice, almonds, fat-free milk, and whole-grain cereal, and add plastic fruits and vegetables. Then, take turns being the cashier and the customer, and talk about the yummy foods you're ordering or ringing up.



Another idea is to read picture or chapter books about farmers and gardening, as well as children's nonfiction books about where our food comes from. You could ask the librarian for titles.

Also, check at your library or community center for children's or parent-child cooking classes. Getting into the kitchen is a truly fun way to learn about making good food choices! ●

ACTIVITY CORNER

Take a hike

Hiking just might be the perfect family physical activity. You don't have to go fast, and you don't have to go far—you just have to go! Put hiking into your family's plans with these ideas.

Redefine hiking

Sure, you can hike in the woods. But you can also hike on city sidewalks, by country lanes, or in suburban neighborhoods. Do a little research so you have a goal in mind, whether it's reaching a pond or looking for the tallest building downtown. *Idea:* Get headlamps, and take a night hike—your child will think that's really cool.



Pace yourselves

Kids like to make stops. Build in frequent times to stop and enjoy your surroundings. Let her jump from a tree stump, crawl through a hollow log, or walk through a historic site. *Tip:* She might enjoy taking pictures, too.

Pack healthy snacks

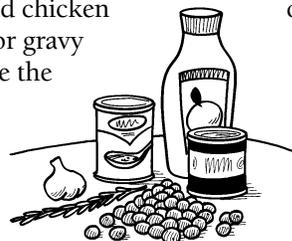
Hiking takes energy, so bring along nutritious snacks that don't need to be kept cold. *Examples:* nuts, dried fruits, apples, and plenty of water. ●

IN THE KITCHEN

Healthier holidays

The November and December holidays can bring lots of joy, but also lots of calories and extra pounds. Make your holiday meals a little healthier with these tips.

1. When using canned chicken broth or beef broth for gravy or stuffing, first freeze the can for 1–2 hours. Open it, and remove the layer of fat that has solidified at the top.



2. Use fat-free evaporated milk rather than cream in casseroles.

3. Add flavor with herbs and spices instead of salt. Season potatoes with garlic and rosemary, or add a pinch of cayenne pepper to macaroni and cheese.

4. Skip the canned cranberry sauce with its added sugar and sodium. Instead, puree cranberries (fresh or frozen) in orange juice and water. ●

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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