

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

April 2011

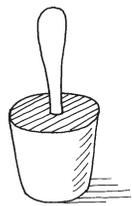
APS Health & Wellness Department
Partnering to Enhance Student Success

BEST BITES

All tangled up

Here's a fun game for a family or group of children. Stand in a circle. Each of you reach across and grab someone's hand with your left hand and someone else's hand with your right hand. Once everyone is connected, say, "1-2-3, untangle!" Players have to step over or wiggle under to get back into a circle. *Note:* You need an even number of players.

pudding pops



For an occasional sweet treat, try this idea. Make a box of sugar-free pudding, and mix in a small container of fat-free whipped topping. Put the mixture into paper cups, stick a plastic spoon in each one, and put them in the freezer. When they're frozen, your child can tear off the paper cup to eat the pudding pop.

DID YOU KNOW?

Consuming too much sodium can lead to weight gain and other health problems. While shopping, look for packages marked low-sodium or low-salt. Try to find foods containing servings with less than 200 mg sodium. *Note:* The daily recommended sodium limit is 1,900 mg for children ages 4–8 and 2,200 mg for ages 9–13.

Just for fun

Q: What is black and white and has 16 wheels?

A: A zebra on roller skates.



Around the dinner table

When families enjoy meals together, they often eat healthier food and develop stronger relationships. Try these ideas to make eating together a part of your family life.

Keep a routine. Having meals at set times lets your children know what to expect. Together, look at your schedules, and pick a time that will work most days. You might make adjustments for the seasons—for example, meeting for a picnic after Lisa's soccer practice on Tuesdays or eating later on the day Brad has play rehearsal.

Keep it simple. Sometimes the pressure of cooking a meal keeps families from sitting down at home together. The idea is to eat together, not to have a fancy meal. Make sandwiches, grill hamburgers, or pick up a rotisserie chicken. Add a salad, or microwave fresh or frozen vegetables to go along with the main course. *Idea:* Serve certain favorite meals the same day of the week (Wednesday = pasta).

Don't sit still!

Your child probably has to sit quietly in class, and he may have to sit to do his homework, too. Make sure he gets some time for active play after school with these ideas:

- When your youngster gets home, you might offer a healthy snack and then go outside with him so he can ride a scooter, shoot baskets, or play tag with neighbors.
- Let him invite friends home from school, and encourage them to play outdoors. You might suggest that he get together with kids you know are active, such as those who play on sports teams or ones you see biking or playing outside.
- If your child is in an after-school program, check on how much time the kids get outside. You can also ask about rainy-day alternatives, such as access to a gym or a room for active games. ●



Keep it fun. Share a joke or tell a funny story. Play a game like "Two Truths," where you describe three things that happened that day—two are true, and one isn't. Everyone guesses which one isn't true. Can you stump each other? *Note:* Save discussions of money or problems at school for another time—keeping the conversation pleasant will encourage kids to stay at the table.

Note: Meals are a time to enjoy each other. Turn off TV, cell phones, laptops, or handheld video games. ●

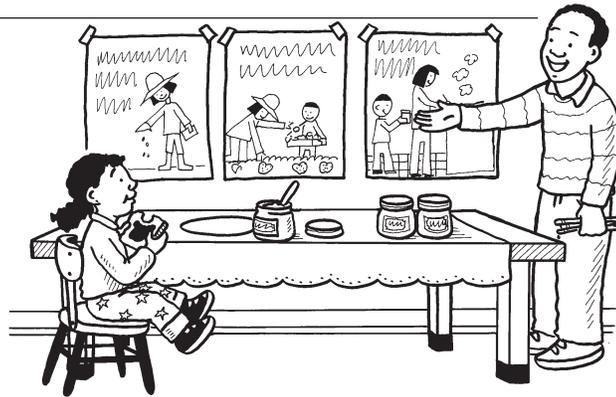


Farm to table

Learning about where food comes from can help children make healthier food choices. Use these ideas to teach your youngster more about the food he eats.

Find the source

As you have breakfast, discuss each food. For example, cereal may contain corn or wheat that grew in a field, and sausage may be from a pig or a turkey. *Idea:* Let your child see for himself that orange juice comes from fruit, not cans or cartons. Cut a few oranges, and have him squeeze them into a glass. Does fresh orange juice taste different?



Write a story

Ask your youngster to write the “life story” of a food he eats often (strawberry jam). Together, list the steps involved (plant strawberries, pick the ripe fruit, make the jam, put it into jars). He can use the list to write an autobiography for the jam (“I started out in a strawberry patch”).

Take a trip

Try to visit a nearby farm or orchard to see food growing. Or go to a dairy where your child can watch cows being milked. Have him sketch pictures or take photos. Then, he could make a scrapbook showing where different foods come from. 🍓

PARENT TO PARENT

Cutting out soda

As I heard more about childhood obesity, I got worried about how much soda my daughter Sophie was drinking. I asked the school nurse about ways to cut down, and she gave me some good ideas.

First, she suggested that I explain to Sophie why I don’t want her drinking soda. I showed her how much sugar is in each can of soda—10 teaspoons! I also explained that soda doesn’t have any vitamins or minerals that will help her grow strong.

The nurse also said we could simply make soda less available—if we don’t keep it in the house, Sophie won’t

be able to drink it. I’m trying to have her drink mostly water or fat-free milk now. But to help her get used to the change, I’ve been giving her seltzer water mixed with juice—that way, she still has the “bubbles” she was used to. 🍓

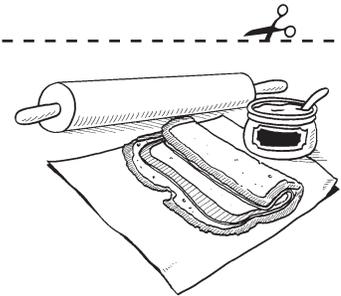


IN THE KITCHEN

Roll it up

Roll-ups are fun for kids to make and eat. Try these healthy ideas for snacks and meals:

- Spread a thin layer of marinara sauce on a tortilla. Cover with fresh spinach leaves and sliced mushrooms. Sprinkle on shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese. Microwave until cheese melts (30–45 seconds). Cool slightly, and roll up.
- Use a rolling pin to flatten a slice of whole-grain bread. Spread with honey mustard. Add thinly sliced turkey, low-fat Havarti cheese and avocado, and roll up.



- In a skillet, sauté tilapia with paprika and lime juice until the fish flakes easily (about 3 minutes per side). Cut into bite-sized pieces, and place on a tortilla. Add a thin layer of salsa, and roll up.
- Place a stick of low-fat string cheese on a slice of lean ham. Top with grape halves, and roll up. 🍓

ACTIVITY CORNER

Fitness challenge

Want to increase your family’s fitness levels? Try stepping up to the challenge!

Together, choose a different exercise each week. Hang up a tracking sheet with each family member’s name, and write in your daily total (example: 25 sit-ups). Then, see who can win each week’s challenge. Here’s a plan to get you started.

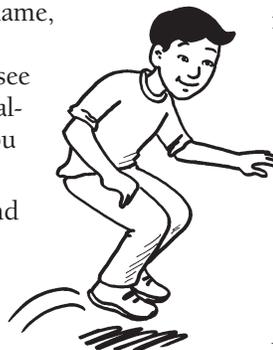
Week one. Ski jumps: Stand with both feet together, and jump from side to side.

Week two. Star crunches: Lie on your back with your legs and arms stretched out

at your sides (in a star shape). Lift your left leg, and touch your foot with your right hand. Alternate (touch left hand to right foot).

Week three. Lunges: Step forward with your right leg, and bend both knees until your back knee almost touches the floor. Stand up, put your feet back together, and repeat with your left leg.

Week four. Jump squats: Stand with feet hip-width apart. Lower your hips toward the floor as if you were sitting in a chair. Jump up into a standing position. Repeat. 🍓



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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