

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Central Islip Union Free School District
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BEST BITES



Activity reminder

Ask your youngster to draw or paint pictures of herself playing sports or doing other physical activities. She might sketch herself playing soccer or riding a bike. Or she could paint a playground scene, featuring herself going down the slide. Hang her pictures up as a reminder of active fun.



Introduce new grains

You might already buy whole-wheat bread or whole-grain cereal—but have you tried barley, quinoa, spelt, or buckwheat? There are all kinds of interesting whole grains in your grocery store's bread, rice, and pasta aisles. Consider trying a new one each week. Then, look for easy recipes on packages, in cookbooks, or online.

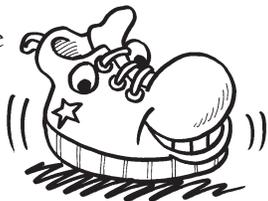
DID YOU KNOW?

Only about 10 percent of children walk to school today, compared with more than 50 percent 40 years ago. Consider letting your youngster walk if there's a safe route and the distance is manageable. You might walk with him, or you could help him find other children to walk with. He'll get a daily dose of exercise without even realizing it!

Just for fun

Q: What plays and runs around all day, comes home at night, and stays in the corner with its tongue hanging out?

A: Your sneaker.



Practice portion control

Eating sensibly often has more to do with *how much* your child eats rather than *what* he eats. Use these tips to help him learn what healthy portions look like.

Create a book. Help your youngster make his own booklet of serving sizes. Have him look at food labels on favorite foods (cereal, cheese) or check a reference guide like <http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion/servingcard7.pdf>. Then, on separate sheets of construction paper, he can write the name of the food and draw a picture showing the portion. For example, he might trace around a ½ cup measure for cooked rice or draw a deck of cards to show the size a serving of chicken should be. Have him design a cover, and staple the pages together so he can refer to his book when he's choosing portions.

Make single servings. The larger the package, the more your child will tend to eat. When you unpack groceries, let



him help you divide big bags into smaller containers. For example, he could put individual servings of pretzels (3 rods, 20 minis) or vegetables (12 baby carrots) into snack-size baggies. Then, when he wants a snack, he can easily grab one portion.

Measure food. For a week, have your youngster measure his food onto his plate. Turn it into a game by having him take handfuls or spoonfuls to estimate portion size (for instance, 12 crackers or 15 grapes). He can count to check his estimate. Soon he'll be able to see at a glance what healthy portions look like. ♥

Climb and carry

When it comes to exercise, every little bit helps. Here are two easy ways to incorporate more physical activity into your youngster's day:

- While you're doing errands, going to the eye doctor, or visiting the library, ask your child to spot the stairs. Then, make it fun to take them. You might have her keep track of the number of stairs she climbs each day or week. Or see if she can take two at a time when she goes up or jump from the bottom step to the landing.
- Help your youngster build strength by being a "designated carrier." She can tote bags in the mall, carry clothes hampers to the washing machine, or bring groceries into the house, for instance. ♥



World foods

What do children like to eat in Thailand, Mexico, or New Zealand? Use these steps to get your youngster thinking about other cultures as she discovers healthy foods to enjoy here in America:

1. Let your child choose a different country each month. Help her locate it on a map and look in library books or online. She can find foods that grow there and snacks that are popular.
2. Look for a healthy recipe to make together. For example, children in Nigeria enjoy rice and beans, youngsters in Iran have cream cheese and green grapes rolled in pita bread, and kids in Korea eat pickled cabbage called *kimchee*.



3. As you eat, talk about the similarities and differences between their foods and ours. Your child might see, for instance, that children in Japan rarely eat cheese. You can also discuss the different customs and even try eating foods the native way. For example, scoop up meat and vegetables

with bread instead of utensils as in Ethiopia, or use chopsticks for Chinese food.

Tip: Look for specialty food markets or restaurants where you can find ingredients or sample foods from the country you're exploring. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

My own pyramid



Suggest that your child build her own food pyramid, and she'll get a better idea of which foods to choose for a healthy diet. Here's how.

Have her draw a large triangle on paper or poster board and divide it into five sections. Help her label each section with the name of a food group: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat and beans. The grains section should be the largest and the meat and beans section the smallest.



Then, let her cut pictures from grocery circulars and glue the foods where they belong. Encourage her to include variety, such as fruits and vegetables of all different colors or different kinds of milk, cheese, and yogurt. ♥

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 Choosing a sport

Q: My child wants to sign up for a spring sport. How do I know which one is right for him?

A: Start by asking him what he's interested in. He might like playing soccer at recess or enjoy tumbling at his best friend's house. Or perhaps classmates are signing up for baseball and he wants to join them. Having friends on a team can make him more excited about going to practices—and help you with carpools.



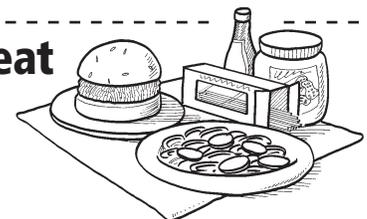
At this age, it's a good idea to let your youngster try different sports. But consider letting him do only one sport per season so he's not overscheduled. In addition, you'll want to check the time and money commitment to make sure it's reasonable for you.

If this will be your child's first experience with organized sports, try to set him up for success. Look for a program that gives kids equal playing time and emphasizes fun and instruction instead of winning. Also, realize that your son is likely to go through a few sports before settling on the ones he likes best. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Meals without meat

Whether anyone in your family is a vegetarian or not, you may want to serve meatless meals from time to time. Everyone will benefit from healthy vegetables and high fiber—and you'll save money, too. Here are a few recipes to try.



Black bean burgers. Sauté 1 cup chopped onions and 2 cloves minced garlic. Purée in a food processor with 1½ cups canned black beans (rinsed and drained), 1½ cups cooked brown rice, and 1 cup whole-wheat bread crumbs. Season with salt and pepper, and shape into patties. Broil until heated through.

Peanut noodles. Cook very thin spaghetti, and drain. Whisk together

½ cup creamy peanut butter, ½ cup warm water, 1 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce, and 1 tbsp. sesame oil. Toss with the noodles, and top with sliced water chestnuts and scallions. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Barbeque mix. Separate 1 head cauliflower into florets, and peel and slice 2 carrots. Cut 1 container extra-firm tofu into cubes. Stir the cauliflower, carrots, and tofu with ½ cup barbeque sauce, and spread onto a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 25 minutes. ♥