

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2012



BEST BITES

Skip the freebies

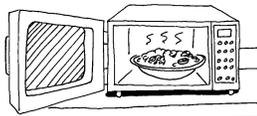
Eating out? Ask the waiter not to bring bread and butter, rolls, or breadsticks to the table. They can fill your youngster up with unnecessary calories and keep her from eating the meal that follows. Instead, consider ordering a small salad, a cup of broth-based soup, or a side of vegetables to start with.

Strong teeth

Show your child another reason not to drink soda. Have him put water in one cup and soda in another and drop half an eggshell in each. (Eggshells, like teeth, contain calcium.) Let the cups sit for several days. He'll see the eggshell in the soda crack, decay, and eventually dissolve.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the 1970s, only 1 out of 100 households had a microwave.



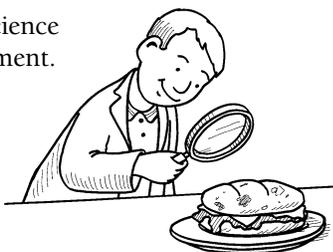
Today, just 5 of 100 don't have one.

Try to keep healthy foods on hand that microwave well, such as fresh or frozen vegetables. Or make extra for dinner so that nutritious leftovers can be zapped for an after-school snack the next day.

Just for fun

Q: What do you call a week-old sandwich?

A: A science experiment.



Central Islip Union Free School District
Lawrence S. Phillips, Director of PE, Health & Athletics

Colorful food adventures

Pssst... does your child know that "eating in color" can help him be healthy and grow strong? That's because the colors in fruits and vegetables each signify different vitamins and minerals. Try these ideas to encourage your youngster to eat a rainbow of produce.

Match. Let him take a box of crayons along when you shop for produce at the grocery store, farmers' market, or fruit stand. As you walk around, he can match fruits and vegetables with the colors in the box. Suggest that he pick out a new fruit or vegetable to take home each week. If he selects it, he will be more likely to eat it.

List. Have your child label a notebook "I Eat in Color!" Then, he could name a color to look for on each shopping trip and list the produce he finds. For example, if he's searching for dark green, he may see bok choy, broccoli, chard, collard greens, mustard greens, spinach, zucchini, and turnip greens. *Tip:* Look for produce in unusual colors. Your



youngster might get a kick out of—and be willing to try—purple potatoes or orange cauliflower.

Track. Your child could track his eating adventures to see how colorful they really are. Ask him to make a calendar, and every day he can color a small circle representing each color he eats. For instance, he would color a red circle for a tomato or a yellow circle for summer squash. How many different colors does he eat each week? *Idea:* Have him set a goal of, say, four colors a day. ♥

Hold the salt

Cutting down on salt consumption can keep your youngster healthier today and in the long run. Consider these tips:

- Cook with little or no salt. Your family will get used to the taste of food without added salt—and won't miss it.
- Limit packaged and canned foods. They can have particularly high sodium content because salt is used to extend shelf life. *Note:* Be cautious even of foods marked "low salt." They might have less salt than others, but still too much.
- Rinse canned beans and vegetables under running water to get rid of extra sodium.
- Keep salt off the dinner table. If it's not there, your child won't add salt to her food. ♥



Food-group fun

Learning about food groups can help your child follow the new MyPlate healthy eating plan. Let her design her own meals with these ideas.

Say a meal

This game for five people can help your youngster identify foods in each group (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, dairy) as she puts together a meal. The first player says her name, a favorite food, and the food group it's in ("Talia, bananas, fruits"). The next person repeats that and adds his name and a favorite food from another group. ("Talia, bananas, fruits, Charlie,



chicken, protein.") Keep going until the last person says five foods—and completes the "meal."

Draw a meal

Show your child a picture of MyPlate (choosemyplate.gov/download/mini_poster_English_final.pdf). Then, ask her to draw her own plate and fill in a meal she just had. Next, have her draw a new plate and design the most delicious healthy meal she can think of. Help

her compare nutrients in the meals by picking one (protein, fat, carbohydrate) and looking up how much is in each ingredient. How do the meals add up? *Idea:* Set a date for when you'll make the meal she designed! ♥

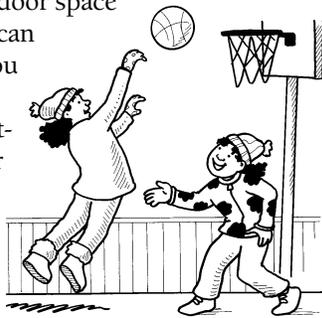
Q & A Too cold to play?

Q: The days are getting shorter and colder. How can I keep my children active?

A: Here's one idea: Let them play outside anyway! Unless it's raining hard or bitterly cold, your kids could still get fresh air and physical activity outdoors. Just make sure they dress for the weather. Wearing layers will help keep them warm and allow them to shed or add layers depending on the weather or how hard they're playing.

For days when they can't go outside, create an indoor space where they can be active. You might put a small basketball hoop or a tunnel to crawl through in the basement.

Or you could call your family room the "dance room" on rainy days or use towels from your linen closet for a "tumbling hallway." ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Reach for it

After running around or practicing a sport, encourage your youngster to cool down his muscles with simple stretches like these.

Reach up. Standing with his feet shoulder-width apart, he should stretch his arms straight up (palms facing up), lace his fingers together, and reach for the sky.

Reach down. Have him stand with his feet together, bend from the waist, and gently reach for his toes. (It doesn't matter if he can touch his toes—he'll stretch as he reaches.)

Reach back. Let him stand with his feet shoulder-width apart and hold his arms out to the side. Ask him to move both arms back toward each other.

Safety tips: Children shouldn't stretch cold muscles. Have your child stretch after exercising. Or he could warm up his muscles by jogging, marching, or walking briskly for 5–10 minutes, and then stretch before exercising. Also, youngsters this age should hold stretches for only 10 seconds. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

Salsa time

Made of fruits and vegetables, salsas are nutritious and naturally low in fat. They're a snap to put together, and they're good on everything from salads and burgers to burritos and baked tortilla chips.

Try these combinations. Just stir together, and serve chilled or at room temperature:

- 2 cups corn (canned and drained, or frozen and thawed), 2 tbsp. lime juice, 1 tbsp. olive oil, ½ tsp. honey, 1 diced tomato, and 1 minced jalapeno chile (seeded), if desired

- 2 diced apples, 2 tbsp. lime juice, ½ cup chopped oranges, ½ cup finely chopped onion, ½ cup finely chopped green bell pepper, 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar, and 1 tsp. canola oil

- 1 cup chopped fresh pineapple (or canned in its own juice and drained), ¼ cup chopped red onion, ½ cup chopped red bell pepper, 1 can black beans (drained, rinsed), ½ tsp. ground cumin, and ¼ cup orange juice ♥



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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