

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Worcester County Public Schools
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BEST BITES

Go "whole"

Eat healthier by selecting foods that are as close as possible to their natural state. For example, instead of canned fruit cocktail in syrup, give your child a fruit salad of fresh blueberries, raspberries, and kiwi. Or offer him homemade chicken nuggets made from boneless, skinless chicken breasts rather than the pre-made frozen ones.



Tumble together

Want to fit in more exercise at home? Have your youngster take a tumbling break. On a carpeted area, challenge her to do a few forward and backward rolls. Join in the fun—seeing Mom or Dad do somersaults will encourage her to do more. *Note:* Tumbling is a weight-bearing exercise that helps children build bone density.

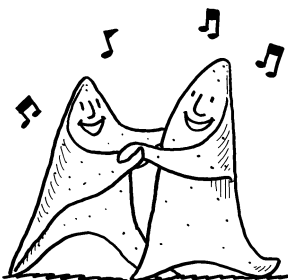
DID YOU KNOW?

Frozen fish is a bargain. It's nutritionally the same as fish that has never been frozen, it often tastes fresher, and it's usually cheaper. Select fillets without spots or blemishes and that are frozen solid in vacuum-sealed packaging. Store in the freezer for up to five months. To use, thaw in the refrigerator overnight.

Just for fun

Q: Why did the tortilla chips start dancing?

A: Because they put on the salsa!



Food + games = picnic!

A picnic is a terrific way to mix yummy food and active games over the nice summer months. Here are some fun combinations.

Bunnies in the grass

The food: Chow down on a bunny feast. Try carrot sticks with a side of hummus or a cold salad made with whole-grain pasta, chopped vegetables, and a lemony dressing.

The game: Race like a bunny. Each person holds a ball between her knees and hops toward a finish line. Drop the ball, and you have to begin again.

Burgers and bowling

The food: Enjoy hamburgers—deconstructed! Thread skewers with cooked turkey or lean beef meatballs and all the fixings—cherry tomatoes, lettuce, sliced cucumbers, and chunks of cheddar or other cheese. Bring mustard and ketchup for dunking.

The game: In a grassy area or on a sidewalk, set up "bowling pins" of partially



filled water bottles. Play a few rounds, using a softball to knock down the pins.

Beach time, anytime

The food: Pack "fish" (tuna salad sandwiches), "sand" (a salad of corn, red onion, and crumbled cotija or feta cheese tossed in lime juice and olive oil), and "sails" (triangle-shaped watermelon wedges).

The games: Play badminton, toss a Frisbee, or fly a kite. Or try this version of volleyball: Lob a beach ball over a "net" made from a rolled-up beach towel or blanket placed on the ground. 🍷

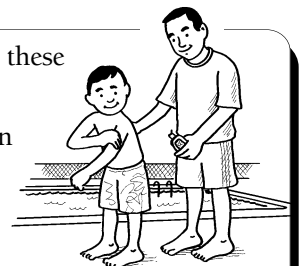
Summer safety

Playing outside is one of the best parts of summer. Use these tips to keep your youngster healthy and safe as he plays.

Stay hydrated. Children often forget to drink fluids when they're having fun. To prevent dehydration, remind your child to take frequent water breaks.

Avoid sun damage. Exposure to sun now can increase your youngster's risk of skin cancer later. Help him apply sunscreen 30 minutes before he goes outdoors. Reapply every 2 hours. *Note:* Clouds don't block all of the sun's harmful rays, so use sunscreen even on cloudy days.

Beware of bugs. Insect repellent can protect your child from tick- and mosquito-borne illnesses. Look for child-safe products, or ask your pediatrician for advice. 🦟



Create a cookbook

Let your youngster craft his own cookbook—he'll get excited about cooking, enjoy eating the healthy food he makes, and practice reading and writing. These steps will get him started.

1. Collect. Together, brainstorm healthy recipes to include. They might be his favorites from home, or he could ask relatives, neighbors, and friends to contribute theirs.

2. Organize. Help your child decide how to arrange the recipes. He may want to group them in a binder or an accordion file by category (starters, main dishes, sides, dessert). Or he



can put them into folders according to food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. *Idea:* Suggest that he classify fruit and vegetable recipes by color (red fruits, yellow vegetables). This will remind him to eat a variety of colors.

3. Illustrate. Have your youngster add drawings or photos of each dish. Even better, take pictures of him cooking, and he could include those.

4. Explain. Encourage him to write stories introducing some recipes. For example, he might describe the first time he tried a particular food or why he likes a certain dish. ●

ACTIVITY CORNER

Relay games

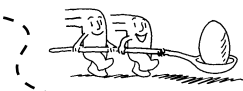
Build your child's coordination skills with these lively family games.

Run forward, throw back

Players line up, with the first person holding a ball. At the signal, he runs to a designated spot, turns around, and tosses the ball to the next person in line. That player catches the ball and repeats the process. Continue until everyone has had five turns to catch, run, and throw. *Variation:* Before throwing the ball, do movements like three jumping jacks or five squats.

Egg-and-spoon race

Divide into teams. The first runners each place a hard-boiled egg on a spoon. They run (or walk quickly) to a turnaround point and then run back—passing the egg and spoon to the next person in line. (Drop the egg, and you have to stop to pick it up.) First team to finish wins! *Variation:* Play with an egg and a spoon in each hand. ●



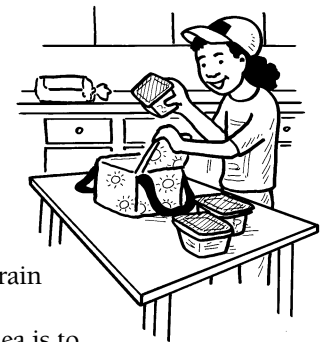
Q&A Healthy lunch to go

Q: During the school year my daughter buys lunch at school. But this summer she's going to day camp, and I'll need to pack her lunch. What advice do you have?

A: Start by shopping with her for lunch items. That way, she can help pick out foods she likes, and you'll get a chance to talk about healthy choices like whole-grain bread, lean meats, fruits, and vegetables.

Then, have your child pack her own lunch. A fun idea is to include items for her to assemble at lunchtime. For example, she might put in separate containers of marinara sauce, shredded mozzarella cheese, and round whole-wheat sandwich thins—she'll be able to make her own mini pizzas. Also, suggest fruits that travel well, such as grapes or orange slices.

Note: If your youngster's lunch won't be refrigerated, use an insulated bag, and include an ice pack or a frozen water bottle. ●



IN THE KITCHEN

Campfire cooking

Enjoy healthy summer foods by cooking them in foil packets over a campfire, grill, or fire pit. Just place ingredients in the middle of a large sheet of heavy-duty foil and fold tightly. Try these recipes.

Quesadilla

Cut corn from a cob. Mix with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canned black beans (rinsed, drained) and 2 tbsp. shredded Monterey Jack cheese. Spread on half of a large whole-wheat tortilla, and fold the other half over. Cook for 15–20 minutes.



Shrimp & veggie

Marinate 1 lb. peeled, uncooked shrimp for 10–15 minutes in a mixture of 1 tsp. lime juice, 1 crushed garlic clove, 1 tbsp. olive oil, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground pepper. Mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped zucchini and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup snap peas. Split among 4 packets, and grill for 10–12 minutes.

Grilled fruit

Combine 1 sliced peach or nectarine, 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, and 1 tsp. brown sugar. Cook for 15 minutes. Eat this single-serving sweet snack on its own or with fresh mint and a dollop of vanilla 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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