

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2010

Forestville Central School



BEST BITES

Word play

Help your child think about healthy foods with this activity. Have her write her name vertically on a piece of paper. Then, ask her to write one nutritious food for each letter of her name. For example, Stacy might write: Squash, Tuna, Apple, Chicken, Yucca. *Idea:* Join in, and write healthy foods that spell your name, too.

DID YOU KNOW?

The average student eats a third to a half of his daily food intake at school. Encourage your youngster to make good choices in the cafeteria by sticking with healthy entrees, vegetables, fruit, and fat-free milk. *Tip:* Each day, ask him what he ate in school, and give him a high five for each nutritious item.

My own sport



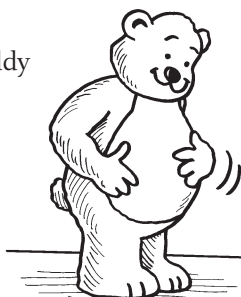
Suggest that your child create and play a new sport. Ask her to give it a name and write a description that tells

what equipment players use (ball, puck) and explains the rules. *Hint:* She might combine two sports or rewrite rules for an existing game. Then, she can try out her new game with family or friends.

Just for fun

Q: What do teddy bears have in common with turkey?

A: Stuffing!



Read the label

While your child is young, get him in the habit of reading food labels. He'll learn more about nutrition—and he'll see that healthy food decisions are in his hands! Here are a few suggestions.

Show the way. Let your youngster see you using nutrition labels when you shop. Pick up several varieties of the same food (ketchup, whole-wheat bread), and compare the facts aloud. *Example:* "This ketchup has 190 milligrams of sodium in a tablespoon, and this one has zero," or "This bread has 2 grams of fiber per slice, and this one has less than one." As he gets comfortable with the information, have him read the labels and suggest which one to buy.

Scavenger hunt. Give your child a list of questions, and send him on a food-label hunt at home. *Examples:* How many pretzels are in one serving? How



much sugar is in a serving of vanilla ice cream? He'll learn how the labels are organized and get used to scanning them for the information he needs.

Design labels. Pretend that there's a contest for creating a new food label. Have your youngster take out a favorite food such as cereal or peanut butter. Using construction paper and crayons, he can design a new label and include nutrition facts on it. Writing the nutrients will help him remember them for the future. ♥

Dance party

Dancing is a great way for families to be active *and* enjoy time together. Get your family moving with these ideas:

- During family gatherings, have someone from each generation teach a dance move. Grandpa might demonstrate the twist, while you show disco dances and your youngster does hip-hop moves.
- Borrow library CDs of family dance classics, and do the Hokey Pokey, Chicken Dance, or Macarena.
- Make up your own dances. Put on the radio, and dance along to different kinds of music such as jazz or rock.
- Check your community center for square dance, folk dance, or swing dance nights. ♥



Young chefs

Many young children love to cook. If you get your child involved in the kitchen, you'll gain a helper, and she'll learn skills she can use for a lifetime. Plus, when she helps prepare healthy food, she'll be more likely to eat it at mealtime.

● While you're in the kitchen together, discuss healthy food choices. You might mention why you chose a certain ingredient. ("To



make the creamed onions healthier, I'm using fat-free milk instead of heavy cream. They will taste just as good!") Your youngster will learn healthier ways to cook—and also realize that she can improvise and make her own choices.

● Have her taste the food as she cooks. For example, as she's stirring cooled spaghetti sauce, she can sample a spoonful and decide if it needs more seasoning. Encourage her to use healthy herbs and spices (oregano, basil, pepper) rather than adding extra salt.

Tip: Cooking with your child will be more pleasant if you have her join in the cleanup, too. Help her get in the habit of cleaning up as you go so there isn't a big mess at the end. ♥

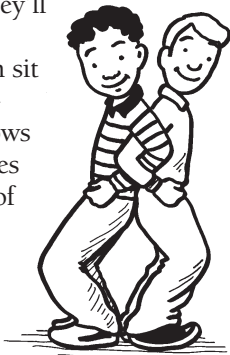
ACTIVITY CORNER

Partner exercises

Exercising with a partner can be fun! When your youngster has a friend over, suggest ideas like these:

● Tell them they're going to be a human seesaw. Have them stand arm's length apart, facing each other and holding hands. One stays standing while the other crouches down. Then, they keep switching: up, down, up, down.

● For this activity, they'll need to cooperate to stand up! Have them sit on the floor back-to-back, with their elbows linked and their knees bent. On the count of three, they try to stand up. For a bigger challenge, they can add a third friend and try again.



● This time, have them sit facing each other. Keeping their knees bent, they should lift their legs in the air and put the soles of their feet together. Have them "bicycle"—move in a circle, alternating bent and straight legs. Call "switch," and they can reverse their circle. ♥

Q & A Managing diabetes

Q: My daughter Kelsey has been diagnosed with diabetes. How can we help her manage at school and home?

A: A dietitian can help you and your child work out an eating plan for school, home, and outings. The good news is that Kelsey doesn't need any special foods—she just needs a healthy diet. Consider having your whole family eat the same way as Kelsey. That will make things easier on her, and it means that everyone will be eating nutritiously.

Also, be sure to let everyone possible know about her diagnosis. And let your child know you're telling them so they can help her if needed. You can send a note or an e-mail to her teacher, school nurse, principal, bus driver, cafeteria manager, coaches, after-school program leaders, and friends' parents. You'll want to alert them if your daughter needs to eat at certain times or stay away from certain foods. And be sure to give them warning signs to watch for that would show her blood glucose levels are dropping or spiking. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

Thanksgiving fun

Here are a few healthy twists on Thanksgiving favorites that your children are sure to enjoy.

Cornucopia salad. Roll small tortillas into a cone shape, with a point on one end and an opening on the other. Stuff your "cornucopias" with bite-sized vegetables like baby carrots, green beans, and cauliflower pieces. Top with a spoonful of cranberry sauce, and eat like an ice cream cone.

Turkey pinwheels. Spread honey mustard on a whole-wheat wrap. Layer fresh spinach leaves, sliced turkey, and



Jarlsberg cheese, and sprinkle on dried cranberries. Fold in the side edges, roll up tightly, and cut crosswise into four pieces.

Pumpkin-pie cup. Fill a small mug with canned pumpkin, and stir in ¼ tsp. pumpkin pie spice. Add a little marshmallow creme or fat-free whipped topping. Eat with a spoon, or spread on graham crackers. ♥

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 Aspen Publishers, Inc.
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www.rfeonline.com

Nutrition Nuggets is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.
ISSN 1935-4630