

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

December 2013

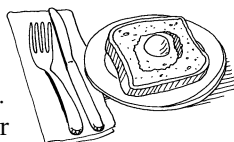
Elkhorn Area School District
Ellen Leasure, Food Service Supervisor



BEST BITES

Hole in one

For a healthy and kid-friendly breakfast, try this. Let your child tear out a circle from a slice of whole-wheat bread. Then, heat a skillet with nonfat cooking spray, add the bread, and crack an egg in the hole. When the egg is almost set, flip the bread, and cook until the egg is done.



DID YOU KNOW?

Eating food directly out of a bag or box often leads to overeating. That's because it's hard to see how much you're really taking. Keep your youngster from developing this habit by having her put food in a bowl or on a plate, whether she's snacking or having a meal.

De-stress with exercise

The holidays can be stressful for children as well as adults. Since exercise is a proven stress reliever, help your youngster enjoy the season more by building in opportunities for physical activity. Make sure he has time each day to run around a playground, go sledding or skating, or visit an indoor "bounce house."

Just for fun

Q: What did one snowman say to the other?

A: "I smell carrot. Do you?"



Holiday eating tips

Between parties, cookie swaps, and holiday meals, winter break is a challenge for healthy eating. Consider these strategies.

The traditions

Try to take the focus away from food for your holiday rituals. Instead of marathon cookie-making sessions, create cards or decorations together. Or take family walks to admire light displays. *Note:* You could still bake cookies, of course, but have your child deliver most of them to neighbors so he's not tempted to eat them all!

The buffet

Teach your youngster how to make good choices at a buffet. First, suggest that he survey the spread so he can plan what to take. Then, he might keep portions in check by taking just a spoonful of each item. Encourage him to make a balanced plate (meat, vegetables, fruits, grains). *Tip:* If you bring a dish, make it



a nutritious one, such as raw vegetables with a low-fat dip. Let your child help prepare the platter, and he'll be more likely to reach for it later.

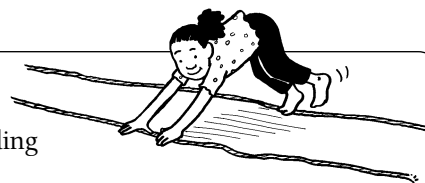
The big meal

When you're hosting a meal, lighten things up. Remove the skin as you slice the turkey. To prepare gravy, pour the drippings into a gravy separator, and discard the fat. For stuffing, use less bread and more vegetables (onion, celery, mushrooms), and mix in fruit like raisins or diced apples. And make mashed potatoes with fat-free milk and parmesan cheese, rather than whole milk and butter. ♥

Walk a line

Balance is an important part of sports—and everyday activity. Give your youngster a ball of yarn, and suggest fun balance-building activities like these:

- Let her unravel the yarn throughout your home. First, she could walk on it without stepping off. Next, have her straddle the yarn by walking with one foot on either side of it. Finally, she can walk with one foot on the yarn and the other off.
- Suggest that your child make two lines of yarn and pretend there's a river in between. To bridge the river, she has to move down the line sideways with her hands on one piece of yarn and her feet on the other.
- Take turns calling out different ways to go down the line. Family members might tiptoe, jump, or even do a cartwheel. If you step off the line, you're out. ♥



Stopping at the convenience store

New research shows that a quarter of Americans shop at convenience stores as often, or even more often, as at grocery stores. When you make a quick stop, encourage your child to overlook the soda and hot dogs and move right to the healthy stuff. Here's how.

Counter. Show her the fresh fruit—it's often right by the cash register. She might be able to choose from bananas, apples, or oranges, for example. If there is no fresh fruit, look for freeze-dried fruit rather than regular dried fruit with added sugar.



Cases. The refrigerator cases have a few healthy gems. Your youngster could find hard-boiled eggs, light string cheese, low-fat yogurt, fresh fruit cups, or bags of ready-to-eat carrots. And point out the cold water and nonfat milk, too.

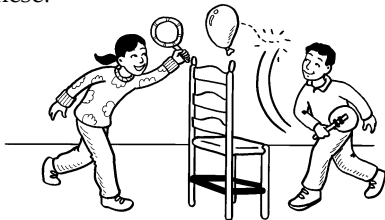
Shelves. Help her walk right by the shelves of chips, cookies, and candy. Instead, steer her toward whole-grain cereal, small bags of nuts, portion-controlled baked chips, and energy bars that are high in fiber and low in fat (be sure to read the nutrition labels). ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Indoor play

This year, don't let winter weather get in the way of your youngster's physical activity. Enjoy family fun indoors with games like these.



Paddle ball. For each player, attach a ruler or paint stirrer as a handle to a paper plate. Then, use your paddles to bat a balloon back and forth.

Bubble-wrap jump. Have leftover bubble wrap from holiday packages? Lay out a piece for each person, and jump on it until all the bubbles pop.

Don't drop it! In this race for pairs, stand side by side and hold a ball between your hips. Race from one side of a room to the other without dropping the ball—the first pair to the finish line wins. If the ball falls, the pair has to go back to the starting line. ♥

Q & A Encourage whole grains

Q: I've read that whole grains are important for my child's diet. But he doesn't like whole-wheat bread. What should I do?

A: Fortunately, there are many sources of whole grains. Try serving rice cakes layered with bananas and peanut butter or mini whole-wheat bagels with whipped cream cheese. When you buy pancake mix or frozen waffles, choose whole-grain varieties. And let your son pick out whole-grain cereals to try. In addition to having cereal for breakfast, he could sprinkle it on salads or in soup instead of croutons.

Also, you can build whole grains into meals you have away from home. Ask for brown rice in your sushi or whole-wheat crust for your pizza, for instance. When they're part of his favorite foods, your youngster may happily eat whole grains!

Note: Children ages 4–8 and girls ages 9–13 should have 5 ounces of grains a day, and boys ages 9–13 should have 6 ounces. At least half of those servings should be whole grains. ♥

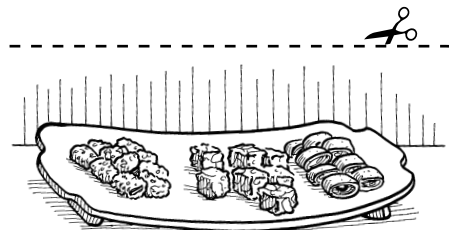


IN THE KITCHEN

Have a bite!

Good things come in small packages. With these bite-sized items, your youngster is sure to enjoy healthy eating:

- Slice skim mozzarella string cheese into bite-size pieces. Dredge each one in beaten egg and then dry whole-wheat bread crumbs. Place on a baking sheet (coated with cooking spray), and bake at 425° for 3 minutes. Serve with warm marinara sauce.
- Cut boneless chicken breasts into cubes, and cover each one with honey



mustard. Dip into crushed corn flakes. Put on a baking sheet, and bake at 425° for 10–15 minutes, until the chicken is no longer pink inside. Serve with barbecue sauce.

- Spread hummus on a soft tortilla. Add shredded carrot, diced tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, and black olive halves. Roll up tightly, and slice into bite-size pieces. ♥

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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