

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2021



BEST BITES

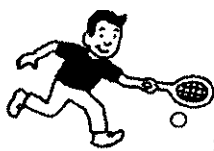
Favorite lunches

Read the school lunch menu with your child, and have her circle foods she'd like to eat this week. Each day after school, let her rate her choices on a scale of 1–5 "apples." She can draw apples on the menu to remember her favorites. *Tip:* Encourage her to give 1- and 2-apple items another chance. Sometimes it takes a few tries to like a new food.

Active after school

Suggest that your youngster make a list of six active things to do. *Examples:*

1. Hit tennis balls.
 2. Run with the dog.
 3. Play tag.
- After school each day, he can roll a die and do that numbered item



from his list. He'll get his heart pumping, and burning off energy will make it easier for him to focus on homework later.

DID YOU KNOW?

When your child chooses whole fruit over juice, she gets more fiber and nutrients—and less sugar. For example, 1 cup of orange juice has almost no fiber and 24 grams of sugar, while an orange contains about 3 grams of fiber and 14 grams of sugar. Suggest that she try at least one new fruit each month, fresh, frozen, or canned in its own juice.

Just for fun

Q: What ingredient works best when it's broken?

A: An egg.



Eat your ABCs

Your child can explore a variety of healthy foods—and his ABCs—at the same time. Eat your way through the alphabet together with these activities.

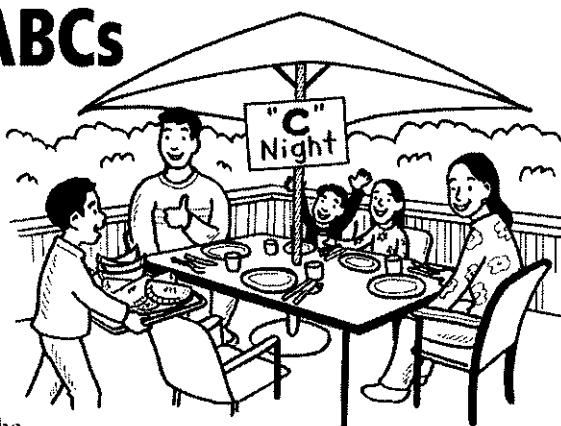
Go on an alphabet hunt

"A is for avocado!"

Help your youngster find new foods to try by turning grocery shopping into an alphabet adventure. In a small notebook, he can list healthy foods for every letter (nectarine for n, quinoa for q). *Hint:* Explain that fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products are healthier than things like cookies and chips.

Plan alphabet-themed dinners

"It's 'C' Night!" Let your child pick a letter of the alphabet to plan a meal around. He might decide on whole-wheat calzones made with store-bought dough and filled with chicken, cauliflower, and low-fat cheese, and add a side



of cantaloupe. *Idea:* Encourage him to use the first letter of his name. Eli may be inspired to try eggplant parmesan!

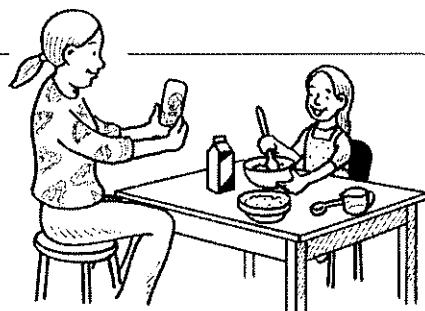
"Write" with snacks

Your youngster will look forward to healthy snacks that he can use to form letters. He could arrange jicama or carrot sticks to spell words or write a short message for you ("I love you"). *Idea:* Look for letter-shaped cookie cutters at a dollar store, and let him use them to cut sandwiches, waffles, and pancakes into words. ♥

My cooking show

With her very own cooking show, your youngster can teach "viewers" about healthy eating while she practices speaking and presentation skills, too!

1. Ask your child to choose a simple, healthy dish to make, such as tuna salad or fruit skewers.
2. Help her prep ingredients. For instance, you may need to chop celery or open a can of tuna for her.
3. Videotape your youngster while she cooks. She can explain the steps ("I'm stirring nonfat Greek yogurt and celery into the tuna") and sprinkle in nutrition tips ("I'm going to eat this yummy tuna salad on rice crackers").
4. Let her share her show with friends—and then make a new "episode." ♥



Better fast-food choices

Fast food can be a not-so-healthy fact of busy lives. Share these tips with your youngster for making better choices and pumping up the nutrition in a fast-food meal.

Design a healthy combo. Celebrities have fast-food combos named after them—why not let your child create a healthy order named after her? For example, “The Charlotte” might include a grilled chicken sandwich



on a whole-wheat bun with mustard and extra lettuce, tomato, and pickles, along with a side of fruit salad. She'll look forward to ordering her special meal each time you're in the drive-thru.

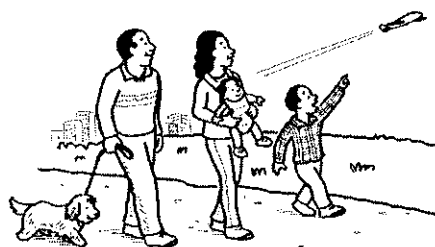
Share portions. Does your youngster beg for french fries or a milkshake when you get fast food? Consider letting her pick one “extra” for everyone to share—you'll teach her to eat foods like that in moderation. (“We'll take a small vanilla shake with two extra cups, please.”) Or if she wants sour cream on her taco, you could request one order on the side so each family member gets a small amount. ●

ACTIVITY CORNER

Take a learning walk

Walking is one of the easiest things you can do to help your child—and your whole family—stay fit. Add learning to your strolls, too, with these themes.

● **Nature.** Count how many types of mammals, birds, or insects you spot. Or see how many flowers of different colors you can find.



● **Storytelling.** Together, make up a story about something interesting you see, such as an antique car, a new hobby shop, or an airplane flying overhead.

● **Shapes.** Let your youngster look for street signs of different shapes. Or he could map out a route in a geometric shape (square, hexagon), using a map or GPS to figure out the path. ●

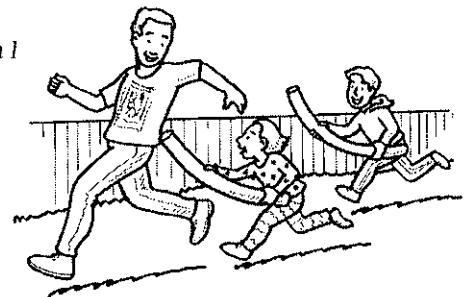
O&A Bring PE home!

Q: My daughter loves PE at school. How can I use her enthusiasm to encourage her to be more active at home?

A: Your child's PE class is a great source of ideas for games and activities she can do outside of school, too.

First, ask her to tell you all about PE. What did she play today? Did she learn a new game or skill, such as scooter ball or tumbling? Let her demonstrate her moves for you—she can delight you with a forward roll or a cartwheel.

Then, suggest that your daughter share some favorite PE activities with your whole family. She might organize a game of “long-distance tag” using pool noodles or show you how to juggle scarves. Your interest will show her that physical activity is important, and she'll discover that she can bring PE home. ●



IN THE KITCHEN

Oatmeal with a twist

These tasty whole-grain breakfasts are not your typical bowl of oatmeal. Let your child help you whip them up for a comforting meal he's sure to enjoy.

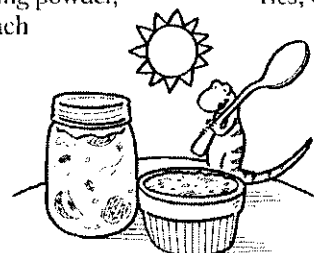
Blended baked oats

In a blender, combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rolled oats, 1 medium banana, 1 egg, 1 tbsp. maple syrup, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla, and a pinch of salt. Blend on high into a smooth batter, and pour into an 8-oz. baking dish or ramekin greased with cooking spray. Bake at 350°

for 20–25 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Overnight oats

Mix together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rolled oats, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup fat-free milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla, and 1 tsp. raisins. Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced strawberries, diced peaches, or pineapple tidbits (canned in juice, drained). Pour into a clean jar or similar container with a tight-fitting lid. Cover and refrigerate overnight. The next morning, breakfast is ready! ●



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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