

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

February 2019



BEST BITES

Give this a whirl!

Bring out the gymnast in your children with this colorful idea. Help them knot different-colored ribbons securely to yardsticks or wooden dowels. They'll build coordination as they spin or dance around and wave their arms to create figure 8s, circles, and ripples with the ribbons.



Turn to turnips

Loaded with fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and protein, turnips deserve a spot on your child's plate. Peel a raw turnip, and grate it over his salad. Cut it into matchsticks and serve with hummus. Or dice turnips and add to soups, stews, and casseroles. *Note:* Try other root vegetables like rutabaga and parsnips, they contain similar health benefits.

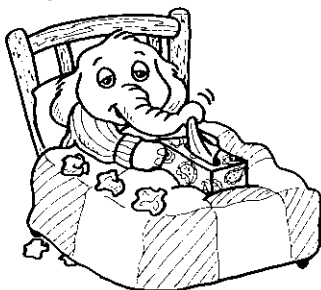
DID YOU KNOW?

Vitamin K helps blood clot and keeps bones healthy. To be sure your youngster gets the recommended amount, try adding spinach, kale, lettuce, and other leafy greens to her diet. More good sources of vitamin K include brussels sprouts, blueberries, broccoli, and figs.

Just for fun

Q: What can you catch in the winter with your eyes closed?

A: A cold.



Raise an adventurous eater

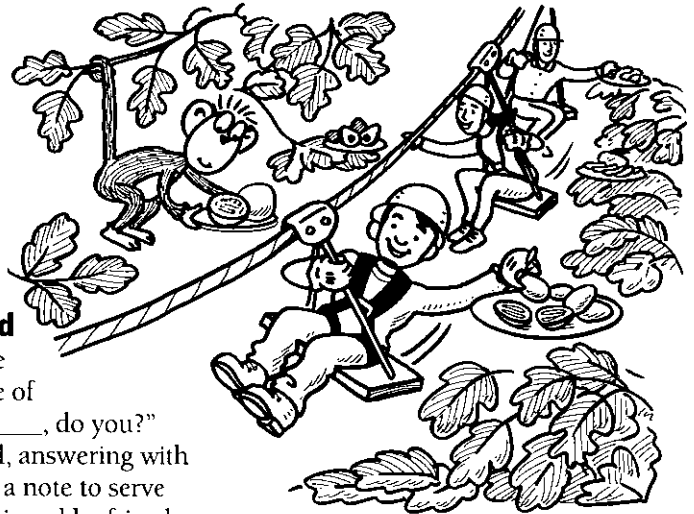
You want your child to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. He wants macaroni and cheese. *Always.* Try these strategies to break through his picky-eater pattern.

Get friends involved

The next time you're carpooling, lead a game of "I like to eat healthy _____, do you?" The kids can go around, answering with foods they enjoy. Make a note to serve some of the foods mentioned by friends. Your youngster just may be willing to try ones that his peers like!

Guess the mystery ingredient

Add an unfamiliar food to a dish that includes a few of your child's favorite ingredients. For example, toss kiwi into a fruit salad. Or put lima beans in mixed vegetables. Have him close his eyes and take a few bites. Let him name the familiar foods and guess the new one.



Explore as a dinner guest

When your youngster eats at someone else's house, encourage him to sample a little of whatever is served. He could add a spoonful of beets to his plate, for example, or take a small piece of salmon. When he gets home, ask what he tried. Can he describe its taste? Then, consider making it at home—he might be willing to eat a dish "like the one at Joey's house." ●

Fitness coding

When does ABC mean hop, crawl, and skip? When kids combine coding with fitness in this game! Here's how.

1. Have your youngster write the alphabet down the left side of a sheet of paper and fill in a movement beside each letter. For example, A = hop on one foot for 10 seconds, B = crawl like a crab, C = skip to the tree and back.

2. Now take turns secretly choosing a word and doing the movements for each letter. Other players consult the list and write the "code" by figuring out which letter matches each movement. So if the code is s-n-o-w, the secret word is snow. The first person to say the word picks the next one. ●



Bullying and food allergies

Nearly a third of youngsters with food allergies report being bullied about not being able to eat certain foods. If your child has a food allergy or is friends with someone who does, she can use this advice.

Recognize bullying. If a classmate knows that someone is allergic to a food and waves it in her face, pressures her to eat it, or puts it on her



cafeteria tray, that's bullying. It's also dangerous and could make the child sick or possibly lead to death. Your child needs to let an adult know right away if this happens.

Keep food safe. If your youngster has food allergies, help her protect herself from bullies. For example, tell her to only accept food from a trusted adult who is aware of her allergy. Also, she shouldn't leave her food unattended. She could ask a friend to help her keep an eye on her cafeteria tray, or she can offer to look out for a friend who is allergic.

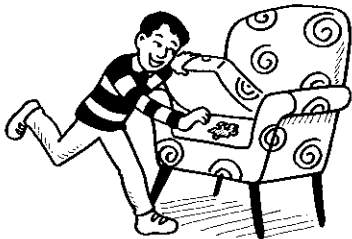
Note: Make sure your child knows which foods she is allergic to and is familiar with the symptoms of a reaction. ●



ACTIVITY CORNER Indoor scavenger hunts

Amp up the indoor fun this winter with a scavenger hunt for your child and his friends.

● **Color hunt.** Assign each child a different color, then hide a dozen Legos or blocks of each color. Players race to find all the blocks of their color.



● **Puzzle hunt.** Break out a 25-piece jigsaw puzzle and hide the pieces around the house. When the youngsters have all 25 pieces, they can put the puzzle together.

● **Shape hunt.** Ask the children to list all the shapes they can think of. They can run around and each try to find one item of every shape. Maybe the remote control is a rectangular prism, a soccer ball is a sphere, and a paper towel is a square. ●

O&A Organized sports: Finding the best fit

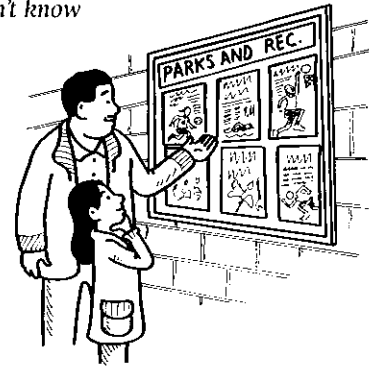
Q: My daughter wants to join a sports team, but I don't know where to start. Any suggestions?

A: Taking part in an organized sport is a terrific way for your child to stay active. Plus, it can boost her self-esteem and social skills. Start by talking with your daughter about her interests. Which sports does she enjoy playing during PE or on the playground?

Then, see what's available in your area. Your youngster's school and the parks and recreation department are good places to start. Look into the time commitment and costs involved in various sports.

To learn more, you could also talk to other parents whose children have participated.

Finally, consider having her try a few sports, perhaps one each season, to find her favorites. ●



IN THE KITCHEN Stay warm with chili

Try these big-batch spins on family favorites.

Slow-cooker chicken chili

- In a slow cooker, combine the following:
- 2 lbs. boneless chicken breasts (cubed)
- 2 15-oz. cans pinto beans (drained, rinsed)
- 1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1½ cups frozen corn
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. each cumin, dried oregano, and minced garlic

Cook on high for 1 hour, then on low for 3–4 hours.



Lentil vegetarian chili

- In a large pot, stir together:
- 4 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes
- 2 15-oz. cans kidney beans (drained, rinsed)
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups uncooked green lentils
- 1½ cups each diced onion and bell pepper
- 3 tbsp. chili powder
- 2 tbsp. garlic powder

Boil, then cover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in:

- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
 - 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- Heat 5 minutes more. ●

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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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Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

February 2019

Mitchell School District 17-2
Leann Carmody, Food Service Director



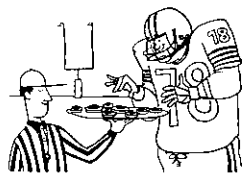
FAST TAKES

Heart month

Give every heart in your household a workout during American Heart Month. Bundle up and go for a winter run. Or hold a friendly snowball fight in your yard. When vigorous exercise becomes a family habit, everyone's heart health will improve.

Game-day treats

Make Super Bowl Sunday super healthy with these teen-friendly ideas. Suggest that your teenager make mini pizzas, using zucchini slices for the "crust." Just top with marinara sauce and mozzarella cheese, and broil until the cheese bubbles. Instead of serving chips, he might sprinkle jicama sticks with lime juice and chili powder.



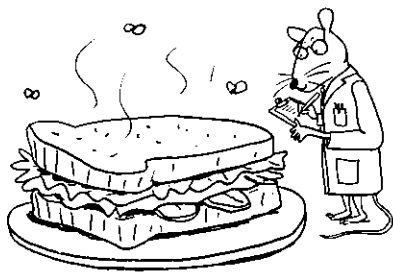
Did You Know?

Swapping nonfat Greek yogurt for sour cream is a tasty way to eat more protein and less fat. Your tween could add a teaspoonful to tacos or whisk it into a ranch dressing recipe. Maybe she'll even layer Greek yogurt with refried beans, guacamole, salsa, cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes for a seven-layer dip!

Just for fun

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

A: A science experiment.



Active and screen free

Cutting back on screen time can motivate your tween or teen to get more physical activity and maintain a healthy weight. Here are ways to set screen time limits for the whole family.

Hold a family meeting

Discuss ways to reduce screen time, and draw up a contract for everyone to sign. For example, "Silence and put away devices during meals." You'll pay more attention to your food, making you less likely to overeat. Or help everyone sleep better—which lowers the risk of obesity—by pledging to turn off devices an hour before bedtime.

Choose to move

Brainstorm active alternatives to screen time. Instead of playing soccer or tennis video games, your tween could play actual soccer or tennis with friends. Rather than a family movie night, go to open gym night at your local rec center or take a free yoga class at the library.



Idea: Write down screen-free ideas and keep the list handy so you always have options.

Be a role model

Your teen will be more likely to adopt healthy habits if he sees you doing so, too. Make a point of closing your laptop and going for a walk. Ask your child to join you, and leave your phones at home. Or you might say, "I really want to see the next episode of my show. I'm going to save it to watch while I'm on the treadmill tomorrow." ●

What's that ingredient?

When choosing packaged foods, it's usually best to select ones with a short list of recognizable ingredients. But some unfamiliar-sounding ingredients are actually good for your teen! Share this advice to expand her food-label vocabulary.

● **Ascorbic acid** is another name for vitamin C, which supports your child's immune system. Encourage her to look for breakfast cereals that are fortified with ascorbic acid.

● **Lactobacillus acidophilus** is the good bacteria in yogurt that helps to promote healthy digestion. Have your teen choose yogurt with "live and active cultures." Products like squeezable yogurt, bottled yogurt smoothies, and yogurt-covered pretzels and raisins may not contain these cultures. ●



Winning nutrition for young athletes

To fuel up and play her best, it's important for your athlete to consume the right foods and drinks at the right times. Consider this game plan.

Meals and snacks. Have your child eat a meal 2–3 hours before a practice or game, a snack when it's over, and a meal within 2 hours afterward. Protein builds and repairs muscles, while carbohydrates provide energy, so her meals should include both. For example, she might have an apple and a turkey and cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread. Or she could eat baked salmon, brown rice, and a green vegetable.



Drinks. Water is usually the best choice to stay hydrated before, during, and after exercise. Encourage your tween or teen to take a water bottle to practice and games and to drink when she feels thirsty. Also, while

low-fat chocolate milk may sound like a treat, it happens to contain the ideal protein-carb ratio for athletes, so she might drink a glass after a workout. Explain that she doesn't need sports drinks—which are typically filled with sugar—unless she exercises vigorously for more than an hour. ●

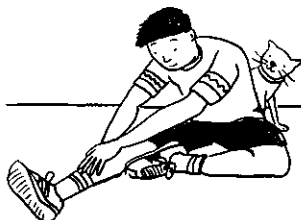
ACTIVITY CORNER



Cool-down stretches

Post-workout stretching can help your teenager maintain his flexibility and range of motion—and prevent injury. Suggest these two stretches.

1. Shoulder stretch. Reach your left arm across your chest, keeping it parallel to the floor. Hold it in the crook of your right elbow, and stretch. Repeat with the other arm. Hold for 30 seconds on each side.



2. Hamstring stretch. Sitting on the floor, extend your right leg straight out in front. Bend your left leg to place the sole of your left foot on your right inner thigh. Lean forward to feel the stretch in the back of your extended thigh, and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg. ●

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PARENT TO PARENT

Freeze and save

With three growing teens, I needed to stretch my food budget. One strategy I discovered was to make better use of the freezer by buying food in bulk and stocking up.

At the grocery store, I look for value packs of meat like chicken breasts and lean ground beef. The kids and I place individual portions into bags, label and date them, and put them in the freezer. I also buy bulk quantities of vegetables that are in season. When green peppers were on sale, for example, I bought a few pounds, and my teens helped me chop them and put them in bags to freeze. Now it's easy to add them to scrambled eggs, fajitas, and casseroles.

To remember what's in the freezer, we keep a list on the refrigerator. Then, we consult the list before we go shopping to make sure we don't waste money buying something we already have on hand. ●



In the Kitchen

Fiber-ful snacks

How can your teens get the 25–31 grams of fiber they need a day? Snacks like these can help—each contains a rich source of fiber.

Artichoke salad

Drain 1 6-oz. can artichoke hearts. Cut the hearts in half, and mix with 1 tbsp. crumbled feta cheese, 1 tsp. lemon juice, and pepper to taste.

Roasted chickpeas

Preheat oven to 375°. Drain and rinse 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, and pat dry with a clean towel. In a bowl, whisk 1 tbsp. olive oil, ½ tsp. minced garlic, ¼ tsp. pepper, and a

pinch of salt. Add the chickpeas, and toss to coat. Cook in a single layer on a baking sheet for about 50 minutes, until golden brown and crisp.

Crunchy bananas

In a small bowl, microwave 2 tbsp. nut or seed butter about 10 seconds to soften. In a second bowl, combine 1 tbsp. rolled oats and 1 tsp. coconut flakes.

Break a peeled banana in half. Roll in the nut butter, then in the oat mixture.

Note: Fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grains are all good sources of fiber. ●

