

# Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

October 2016



## BEST BITES

### Celery stuffers

Children love the ease of finger food, and stuffed celery sticks are especially fun to make and eat!

Try kid-friendly spreads like chicken or tuna salad, cream cheese, and all kinds of nut butters. Let your youngster spread the filling and top with halved grapes, dried cranberries, capers, shredded carrots, or pitted olives.



### Create new games

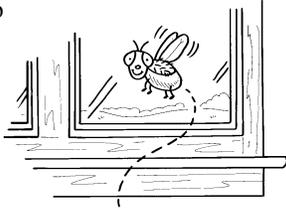
Challenge your child to make up games with vigorous activity like running and jumping. For example, she and her friends could break into teams and act out “athletic” versions of fairy tales for the other team to guess. When one team sees the other “climbing down” and running, they might guess that Jack (and the Beanstalk) is running away from the giant.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Bones are living tissues that are constantly breaking down and rebuilding. Weight-bearing exercise encourages this process by making bones work harder to overcome the pull of gravity. Help your youngster build strong bones by encouraging him to do this type of exercise, such as walking, climbing stairs, playing soccer or basketball, dancing, and hiking.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What spends the day at the window, goes to the table for meals, and hides at night?



**A:** A fly.

## Everyday veggies

**Wanted:** Children who happily eat their veggies!

If you're looking for ways to add vegetables to your youngster's diet, these approaches are a good place to start.

### Put vegetables first

Serving steamed broccoli alongside French fries? Broccoli may lose out. But studies show that children eat more of a food when it is served alone—so try beginning your meal with a first course of crunchy broccoli slaw. That way, the green veggie will be the focus of your child's attention.

### Get your child involved

Kids are more likely to try foods they choose and help prepare. During supermarket trips, ask your youngster to select a new vegetable. Let him decide how to cook it and what flavorings to add. As a final touch, he can bring the



finished dish to the table and introduce it to the rest of the family.

### Don't give up

Your child might need 10 or more exposures before he'll eat an unfamiliar food. Keep serving the new vegetable every few days. You could change things up by preparing it differently, perhaps grilling, steaming, or serving it raw with a healthy dip. Odds are your youngster will eventually warm up to it! ♥

## An active family

As fall's cooler temperatures set in, use these ideas to keep your kids from turning into couch potatoes.

**Pick the activity.** Together, write active ideas on craft sticks, one per stick. *Examples:* freeze tag, pillowcase race. Have your youngster put the sticks in a colorful basket or an empty can covered with wrapping paper. Each day, she could pull one out to do.

**Walk for a cause.** Help your child find a weekend charity walk that raises funds for a cause she cares about. Then, sign everyone up to participate. Both your family and your community will benefit. ♥



# Food allergies: Staying safe

For parents of children with food allergies, mealtimes can be filled with anxiety. Here are strategies that will help.

● **Always read food labels—and teach your youngster to read them, too.** Check the ingredient list, including words in parentheses, such as “whey (milk)” or “lecithin (soy).” Also, look for statements like “contains shellfish” or “may contain nuts.” And remember that labels might not always show what’s in an ingredient. For example, a hummus label may list tahini



but not say tahini is made from sesame seeds.

● **Avoid sharing food.** As hard as it may be, make sure your allergic child knows not to share food. You can role-play to help her develop strategies for responding. A simple “No thanks” may be enough to

stop (well-intentioned) friends from swapping food. Or she might say, “Thanks, but my body can’t handle eggs.”

● **Prevent cross-contact.** This occurs when allergens from one food touch and contaminate another food. Train family members to wash hands with soap and water before and after eating. Thoroughly clean cooking equipment, surfaces, dishes, and silverware that touch allergenic foods, again using soap and water. If necessary, have separate sets of utensils for foods that contain allergens. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER Football + fall = fun

Fall is football season! Play these non-contact games perfect for young children.

### Step-toss

Divide into teams of two players. Each team takes a turn tossing a football from one player to the other. After each toss, both players take one step backward. The last team able to catch a toss wins.



### Foxes and hens

The “fox” stands in the middle of the field. All the other players are “hens”—they each tuck a sock into their waistbands and stand at one end. Then, the hens start running around while the fox tries to pull out their socks. Any hen whose sock is pulled joins forces with the fox. Play continues until one hen remains. He’s the winner and becomes the fox in the next round. ●

## PARENT TO PARENT Your own meal kits

I got a flyer advertising a service that delivers boxes of premeasured ingredients and recipes straight to your door. That sounded so convenient, but it was expensive.

I realized I could create my own meal kits that would be just as handy—and much cheaper. So once a month, my son and I assemble ready-to-make dinners. One time, we filled freezer bags with boneless chicken breasts, sliced bell peppers and onions, and a sauce made of honey, apple cider vinegar, chili powder, cumin, and paprika. Another day we combined pork shoulder, cranberry sauce, and chopped onion. We freeze the bags, labeled with their ingredients and the date.

Then, to use a kit, we thaw it in the refrigerator overnight. The next morning, we dump the ingredients in the slow cooker and set it at low for 6–8 hours. *Voila!* Served with a quick salad, my family gets a healthy meal—without the delivery price. ●



## IN THE KITCHEN Muffin pan minis

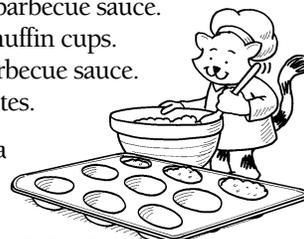
For dinners that are fun, convenient, and portion-controlled, make these three recipes using a lightly greased 12-cup muffin pan.

- 1. Turkey meatloaf.** Combine 1 lb. ground turkey, 1 chopped onion, 1 chopped carrot, 1 egg,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup quick-cooking oats, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup barbecue sauce. Divide equally into the muffin cups. Brush tops with more barbecue sauce. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes.

- 2. Crustless quiche.** In a bowl, whisk together 3 eggs, 1 cup milk, and

salt and pepper to taste. Scatter 2 cups cooked chopped vegetables and 1 cup packed shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese among the muffin cups. Then, pour the egg mixture on top. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Cool 10 minutes.

- 3. Zucchini fritters.** Beat 3 large eggs in a bowl. Mix in 2 grated large zucchinis, 1 chopped medium onion, 1 cup grated cheddar cheese, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup breadcrumbs. Divide into the muffin pan. Bake at 400° for 15–18 minutes. ●



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## BEST BITES

### Road trip activity

Planning a road trip over winter break? Take along a soccer ball or a Frisbee. Your child



could use these to let off steam—and get in some physical activity—during rest stops. Or teach her a few stretches to do on the way. For example, to loosen tight shoulders, slowly roll them forward 10 times and then backward 10 times.

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can increase the whole grains your family eats by using white whole-wheat flour in recipes. This unbleached flour is milled from a type of wheat that is as nutritious as traditional whole wheat but milder in flavor. Replace up to half of the flour in your recipes with the white whole-wheat variety—without noticing a difference.

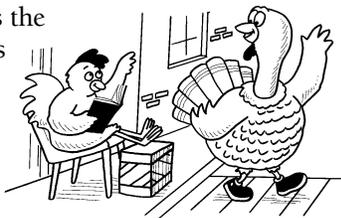
### Healthy apps

Try using free apps to help reach your family's health and fitness goals. Look for kid-friendly ones that let your youngster run and jump while he solves puzzles and plays games. Or find ones that let you track calories, create an exercise routine, or assemble an upbeat playlist to dance to.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the turkey cross the road?

**A:** It was the chicken's day off!



## Nutrition label reading 1-2-3

Help your youngster take charge of her health from the start by making healthy choices at the grocery store. Learning how to read the nutrition labels on food packages is as easy as 1-2-3!

### 1. Compare serving sizes

Have your child read the single-serving size on various cartons and bags. Does she think it's realistic? For example, a small package of chips may contain three servings. If she eats all of it, she has eaten three times the calories and salt shown. Help your youngster remember to check out serving sizes—and do the math!

### 2. Know your nutrients

Talk about where to look for higher or lower numbers on nutrition labels. For instance, healthier foods will be high in *fiber*, *vitamins*, or *minerals* and low in *sugar*, *sodium*, or *saturated fat*. Encourage your child to locate foods with 20%

or more Daily Values from the first group and 5% or less from the second group.

### 3. Read the ingredients

Ask your youngster to find the ingredient list, and then read it together. Point out that the items are listed in order from biggest to smallest amount by weight. Then, can she find foods with five or fewer ingredients? (Those tend to be healthier.) How about foods with sugar in the first few ingredients? (Those are less healthy.)



## Pinpointing the right sport

How do you find a sport or activity your child will love? Consider these suggestions.

**Ask for input.** Talk to your youngster about what activity interests him. He may already have one in mind from what he has enjoyed on the playground, watched older siblings play, or seen on TV.

**Match your child's personality.** An outgoing youngster might like a team sport, such as soccer, basketball, or hockey. A quieter one may prefer something that relies more on individual effort, like ice-skating, gymnastics, or swimming.

**Find a supportive coach.** Check out the instructors or coaches. The best ones are focused on developing skills, encouraging teamwork, and having fun. Coaches who emphasize competition and winning are probably not a good fit at this age.



# Ordering meals for kids, not kids' meals

Eating out is fun, fast, and convenient for many parents. The challenge is finding child-sized menu options that are both nutritious and appealing to your youngster. Use these strategies.

● **Request smaller portions.** Ask to order a half-size portion off the main menu—some restaurants will be willing to oblige. Or let your child make a healthy



appetizer into a meal by choosing soup, salad, shrimp cocktail, or turkey sliders.

● **Share an entree.** Think about splitting an entree with your youngster. Today's large portions mean that a single entree may be enough for both of you. *Tip:* Have your server bring an empty plate so you each have your own.

● **Look for updated kids' menus.** More fast-food restau-

rants are swapping out fried foods for grilled items, French fries for fruit, and soda for water or nonfat milk. Check around for the ones doing this, and make those your go-to places. You'll be able to take advantage of smaller portions at lower prices—without sacrificing nutrition. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER Jump rope games

Jumping rope is great exercise and improves coordination. Here are two fun games to play.

### Snake in the grass

Stretch a jump rope along the floor, and have a player hold each end. They shake the rope so it wiggles like a snake. The other players take turns running toward the rope and jumping over it. Anyone whose feet touch the rope is out. Play until two kids are left—they become the next "snake holders."

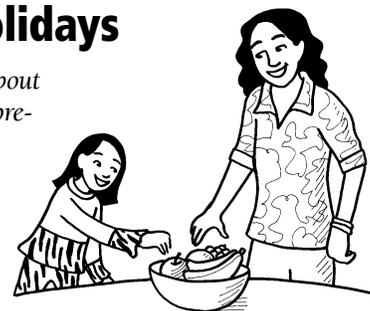


## Q&A Get through the holidays

**Q:** *As much as I love the holiday season, I worry about my family gaining too much weight. How can we prevent that?*

**A:** Enjoying the holidays without going overboard on its goodies is a challenge—but not impossible. One strategy is to avoid grazing. Encourage your children to eat only when they're sitting down. Also, keep healthy snacks on hand, such as fruit and nuts, to help everyone resist the temptation to nibble on holiday treats.

Then, avoid skipping meals to "save up" calories and splurge at holiday meals or parties. This can set a model that you don't want your children following. Going a long time without eating puts your metabolism in starvation mode. At that point, they might lose the ability to sense when they're full until after they've eaten more calories than they had saved! ●



### In and out

Two people begin turning a jump rope in full circles. One by one, players run in, jump once, and run out. Next round, everyone jumps twice. Continue adding another jump for each round. If you don't jump enough times or you touch the rope, you're out. The last player remaining is the winner. ●

## IN THE KITCHEN

### Celebrate National Sandwich Day

The Englishman John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, is believed to have invented the sandwich. In honor of his birthday November 3, give these recipes a try.

**Caprese grilled cheese.** Brush a little olive oil on two slices of bread. Place one slice oil-side down, and layer with mozzarella cheese, a tomato slice, and fresh basil leaves. Top with the other slice of bread, oil-side up. Grill in a preheated pan for 10 minutes, turning once to brown each side.

**Turkey and cranberry sauce.** Spread cranberry sauce on one slice of whole-wheat bread. Add leftover Thanksgiving turkey, shredded romaine lettuce, and another slice of bread.

**Roast beef and cheddar wraps.** Cover a spinach tortilla with 2 tbsp. cream cheese, leaving a 2-inch border. Add deli roast beef slices, shredded cheddar cheese, grated carrot, and fresh spinach leaves. Roll tightly, tucking in the sides as you go. ●



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## BEST BITES

### Stock up on cranberries

Remember to stash extra bags of fresh cranberries in your freezer this month. Although these antioxidant powerhouses are available in supermarkets only during late fall and early winter, they freeze well for up to 12 months. Try serving fresh cranberry sauce with roast chicken—it's a delicious combination any time of the year.

### Winter-weather layering

To help your child stay comfortable during cold-weather activities, encourage him to wear layers. First comes a snug bottom layer made of polyester or wool to move sweat away from his skin. Then, add an insulating layer to retain heat. Top it off with a waterproof outer layer to keep him dry and block the wind.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Fight cold and flu season with the help of the right foods. Yogurt's good bacteria protect our digestive system against germs. The vitamin C in oranges, lemons, and limes can reduce a cold's duration. And then there's chicken soup, a winter favorite that helps the body rid itself of viruses and bacteria.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What do you call a snowman in the summer?

**A:** A puddle!



## Incorporate nutrients—playfully

Calcium, vitamin D, potassium, and fiber are in short supply in many children's diets. Try these strategies to boost your youngster's intake of these important nutrients.



### Breakfast stars

Many breakfast foods are rich in calcium. Help your child write a list of these foods, such as milk, cheese, and fortified orange juice and cereal. Each time he eats one, he can draw a star next to it. How long before he reaches 10 stars? 20 stars? 30 stars?

### Rainy day vitamin D

Vitamin D is made in the skin when it is exposed to sunlight. The vitamin is also in some foods, including tuna, salmon, and egg yolks. On a rainy day when your youngster can't play outside, cook a meal together featuring one of these foods. Tuna salad sandwiches, baked salmon fillets, or scrambled eggs are all easy options.

### Veggie color wheel

Produce often has potassium. Ask your child to draw a color wheel on a paper plate and glue on pictures of matching fruits and vegetables—for example, bananas in the yellow section and kale in the green. Let him add a spinner (cut a cardboard arrow, and attach it with a brad). Each day, he could spin to pick a fruit or vegetable to try.

### Fiber ABCs

Challenge your youngster to come up with a "fiber food" that starts with each letter of the alphabet. (*Hint:* All plant-based foods have fiber.) He could look for foods like these while you're grocery shopping: apples, barley, carrots, and dates. 🍎

## Cook once, eat twice

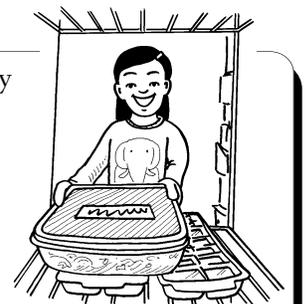
Shorten kitchen time by doubling your favorite healthy recipes and freezing the extra for later. Use these tips.

**Freeze this, not that.** Soups, stews, beans, cooked meats and poultry, mashed potatoes, grated hard cheeses, casseroles, and breads all freeze well. Not so with soft cheeses, baked potatoes, cooked pasta, or moisture-laden raw foods like cucumbers, oranges, lettuce, and watermelon.

**Store.** Wrap frozen foods airtight to maintain freshness.

Get your child involved by having her help package and label them with the contents and date. She could even add her initials so she'll enjoy eating "her" meal!

**Defrost.** For food safety, always defrost items in the refrigerator or a microwave. 🍲



# Active fun for a crowd

Holiday get-togethers are a perfect time for grown-ups and children to team up for active fun. Here are ideas.

**Juggle balloons.** Start with one balloon per person. Work cooperatively to keep all the balloons in the air. Then, try using two or three balloons per person. *Variations:* Play “no hands”—players have to juggle the balloons with their elbows, wrists, heads, knees, or feet.



trying to hit it in as few throws as possible. Just like in golf, the person with the lowest score wins. ♣

**Organize a soccer game.** Head to a field, and divide up into teams, balancing out ages and soccer experience. Consider leaving the goals unattended for a high-scoring game! Another benefit: Everyone will be running during the whole game (goalies sometimes spend more time watching than playing).

**Play snowball golf.** In a snow-filled area, set up a “golf course” by identifying 18 targets—say, the side of a fence, a large rock, or a tree branch. Players take turns throwing a snowball at each target,

## PARENT TO PARENT A cooking playdate

My daughter Julie likes to cook, so I wasn't surprised when she asked to invite a friend over for a cooking playdate. We found a clever idea online for pizza skewers and got the ingredients ahead of time.

Then, when Julie's friend arrived, they washed the cherry tomatoes and rolled small balls of pizza dough. They had fun alternating them on wooden skewers and brushing them with olive oil. While I broiled the skewers, the girls heated marinara sauce in the microwave. They sprinkled shredded mozzarella on the skewers, and I returned them to the broiler until the cheese melted.



After the skewers cooled, the girls enjoyed dunking the pieces in the marinara sauce. Both said it was the best pizza they had ever eaten! And before Julie's friend left, they made plans for another cooking playdate next week. ♣

## ACTIVITY CORNER Fitness x 2

With these activities, your youngster will work on his math skills while getting a workout:

- Ask your child to estimate the steps it would take him to walk from your front door to the mailbox. Then, have him walk and count. How close did he come? Or he might estimate the number of hops—and then hop down the hall or walkway to check.
- Mark a starting line. One by one, each player leaps forward as far as he can. Another player marks where the person's feet landed. Have your youngster measure each person's jump. Who will jump the farthest?
- Call out an equation. Then, players race around the yard or house to find objects totaling the solution. For example, yell “9 – 2,” and a player might gather 7 leaves or 7 blocks. The first person back with the right number of items gets to call out the next math problem. ♣



## IN THE KITCHEN Yummy food gifts

Help your child make food gifts like these to give to teachers and relatives. He could even add a gift tag with a note like “Happy healthy holiday!”

### Fruity granola

In a bowl, mix 4 cups rolled oats, 1½ cups pumpkin and sunflower seeds, ½ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. ground cinnamon, ½ cup oil, ½ cup maple syrup, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, and ⅔ cup chopped dried fruit. Spread on a large foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 325° for

15 minutes. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

### Spiced apricot tea mix

Combine 5 tbsp. loose decaf or herbal tea, 6 chopped dried apricots, 4 tbsp. chopped crystallized ginger, 2 tsp. whole allspice, 2 tsp. whole cloves,

and 6 crushed cinnamon sticks. Store in a metal tin. Enclose these directions: “To use, place 2 heaping tsp. in a tea infuser. Steep in hot water for 3 minutes.” ♣



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