Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2019

Washington County Schools

Coordinated School Health

BEST BITES

Taco-in-a-mug

Here's an easy way for your child to make her own "taco-in-a-mug." Let her put cooked shredded chicken in the bottom, then layer taco ingredients. She might add low-fat pepper jack cheese, salsa, and lettuce. She can sprinkle on crumbled baked tortilla chips and eat right out of the cup!

Playing together

What's one of the best ways to get your youngster moving and having fun? Join him! Suggest that the two of you throw a football together, or ask him to teach you how to skateboard. You'll set a good example, get some exercise, and enjoy time together.

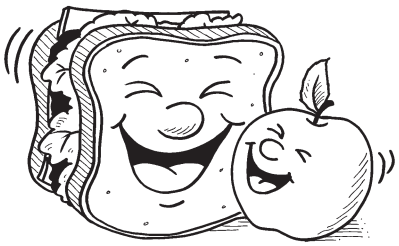
DID YOU KNOW?

Introduce your child to healthy foods at the grocery store—for free. Stores often let shoppers sample new items, such as edamame or tri-color quinoa. Say "yes" to anything nutritious that's offered and encourage her to try it. Then, add the products you both like to your shopping cart.

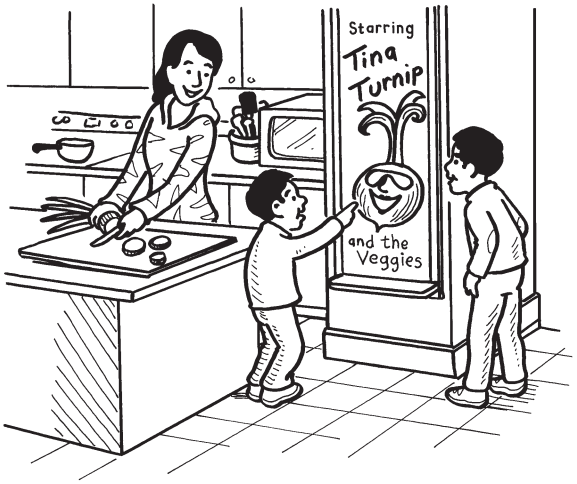
Just for fun

Q: What did the apple say to the sandwich?

A: Nothing. Apples can't talk!



Give peas (and carrots) a chance



Can vegetables be your child's new favorite foods? Yes! Try these ideas, and watch as veggies become something he looks forward to every day.

Featured vegetable

Think like an advertiser, and "sell" nutritious food choices to your youngster. You could post a menu with a featured vegetable. Give it a name that will make your child laugh. Maybe "Tina Turnip" will be the roasted root vegetable you'll serve with pot roast and brown rice pilaf. Tomorrow, ask him to sell *you* on the starring vegetable!

Vary the prep

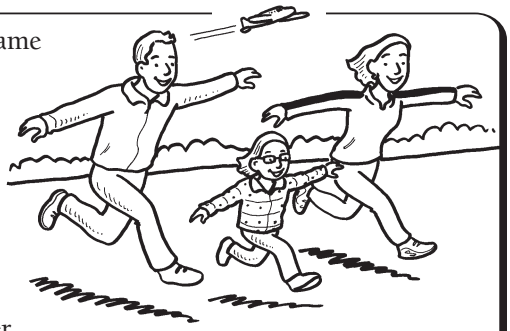
Does your youngster prefer that vegetables have a certain texture or temperature? You might steam, roast, saute, puree, or blanch carrots or zucchini—which way does he like best? Or if you always make cooked peas, offer cold pea salad or raw snap peas instead.

Add extras

Switch up your veggies with flavors your child likes—or may like once he tries them! Add cinnamon to butternut squash or sliced almonds to string beans. Or before cooking veggies, drizzle them with olive oil, then sprinkle on cayenne pepper or chili powder (for heat) or oregano, rosemary, and basil (for an Italian flair).

Make an activity spinner

Turn a spinner from an old board game into a fitness tool. Here's how.



1. Your child can cover each wedge of the spinner with a strip of masking tape. On each strip, have her write a fun way to move. *Examples:* "Hop like a frog." "Twirl like a ballet dancer." "Fly like an airplane."

2. To play, one person spins the spinner, reads the action, and calls out something in the yard to tag (perhaps a bush).

3. Everyone follows the direction (hop, twirl) on the way to the bush and back to the spinner. The first person back spins next.

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Our family cookbook

This keepsake will teach your child about nutritious foods—and help you add more options to your family's meals.

Collect. Have your youngster ask relatives for recipes they'd like to share. Look them over together, and pick out the healthier ones. For instance, your child might choose a casserole with tomato sauce rather than one with heavy cream.

Compile. Your youngster can glue each recipe onto a piece of notebook paper and illustrate it. Then, let her sort the recipes into categories, such as pasta, casseroles, and soups, and put them in a binder.

Use. Ask your child to pick out recipes and help you cook them. She could take a photograph of herself with each dish and mail it in a thank-you card to the relative who gave her the recipe.

Idea: Invite your youngster to share her cookbook with relatives at Thanksgiving.

ACTIVITY CORNER Pumpkin games

Anytime is the perfect time to play outdoors, and November is no exception. Try these games that use a pumpkin instead of a ball!

Roll it. Create start and finish lines. Players stand at the start line with a pumpkin at each person's feet. At "Go," racers roll the pumpkin along the ground with their hands. The first person to cross the finish line with his pumpkin wins.

Pass it. Everyone stands in a circle, arm's length apart, with the "starter" holding a pumpkin. Turn on music, signaling the starter to pass the pumpkin to his left. When the music stops, whoever is holding the pumpkin stands still while everyone else runs around the outside of the circle once and stops in any available spot. Turn the music back on, and play again.

Q&A Nutrition for vegetarians

Q: *My daughter has decided to become a vegetarian. How can I help her get the nutrients she needs?*

A: Good news: A vegetarian diet can give your daughter all the nutrients her growing body needs. Talk to the school nurse, the cafeteria manager, or her doctor for advice. They may recommend protein sources like tofu, beans, and nuts. For iron, they're likely to mention leafy green vegetables, dried fruits, and whole grains. Dairy products are good for protein and calcium, and eggs also do double-duty—they contain iron and protein.

Of course, your daughter's choice means changes for you, too. Try to show support by how you prepare dinner. On spaghetti night, you might serve meatballs on the side. Or make vegetarian versions of favorite recipes, like spinach and mushroom enchiladas instead of chicken, or black bean burgers rather than beef.

IN THE KITCHEN Sheet-pan chicken dinners

Cooking an entire dinner for four on one sheet pan means quicker cleanup. Use 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts for each of these recipes.

Cheesy potatoes and broccoli

Drizzle the juice of one lemon on the chicken. In a large bowl, mix $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cubed red potatoes and 1 broccoli head cut into florets with 1 tbsp. olive oil and 2–3 crushed garlic cloves. Add to pan and lightly season with salt, pepper, and Parmesan cheese. Bake at 400º for 35–40 minutes, until chicken is cooked through.

Fruit and veggie fajitas

Cut chicken into 1-inch strips, and place on cooking sheet. Add 1 sliced bell pepper, 1 sliced onion, and 1 16-oz. can pineapple chunks (in their own juice). In a small bowl, stir together 1 tbsp. each olive oil and lime juice, and 1 tsp. each honey, chili powder, and cumin. Drizzle over chicken mixture. Bake at 350º for 20 minutes. When cooked through, serve in warmed whole-grain tortillas.

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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