

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Solon City Schools District Wellness Program
Joanne Samuels, Registered Dietitian



BEST BITES

Loose tooth?

Eating can be tricky when your child has loose or missing teeth. Cut harder fruits (apples, melon) into small pieces, or offer softer fruits like bananas, strawberries, and canned mandarin oranges (packed in juice). Make sandwiches with soft whole-grain bread rather than rolls, and try creamy fillings like tuna salad. Scrambled eggs and pasta are good bets, too.



A new activity

Encourage physical activity by trying something new with your youngster. Start by brainstorming ideas, perhaps kayaking, ice skating, ultimate Frisbee, and paddleboarding. Have her help you research each one to find out where you could take classes, join leagues, or play—and what's involved in cost and time. Decide on the best fit, and get moving!

DID YOU KNOW?

Vitamin C helps your child's body absorb more iron. So along with iron-rich foods like red meat, fortified cereals, and spinach, he should have vitamin C-rich foods like oranges, tomatoes, kiwi, broccoli, and potatoes. Cooking in a cast-iron pan can enrich food with iron, too. *Note:* Children ages 4–8 need 10 mg of iron a day, and those 9–13 need 8 mg.

Just for fun

Q: Why are the presidents on Mount Rushmore so well rested?

A: They sleep like rocks!



Help! I've got a picky eater

Just because your youngster is a picky eater now doesn't mean she'll always be one. Try stress-free strategies like these to help her turn into a more adventurous—and healthier—eater.

Have one bite

Start a “take one bite” policy. Your child takes one bite of any food served, and you won't press her to eat more if she doesn't want to. This will expose her to new foods, a little at a time, but not lead to power struggles. Tell her it's okay not to like something—but she needs to try it to decide if she likes it or not.

One meal for all

Let your youngster know that what you serve for dinner is what's for dinner. It's her choice whether to eat it, but you're not going to make something different for her. To increase the chances that she'll eat, limit snacks before dinner so she'll be hungry. And try to serve at least one thing you know she likes.

Positive peer pressure

Some of her friends, or perhaps cousins or neighbors, are likely to be “better”



eaters. Invite one for dinner, and have her sit next to your child. Watching them eat salad, vegetables, or fish may entice her to do the same. Also, remember that you're her role model, too. If she sees you eating different foods, she might be inclined to try them.

Part of the action

One of the best ways to get a picky eater to try more foods is to involve her in preparing meals. If she has helped plan a menu, shopped for food, or chopped and cooked, she's likely to want to enjoy the fruits of her labor! ♥

Healthier fund-raisers

When your child's school, sports team, or club needs to raise money, consider swapping candy or bake sales for something that sends a healthier message. Here are ideas:

- Sponsor a fun run or a 5K race. Or have an active “thon” like a walk-a-thon, bowl-a-thon, bike-a-thon, dance-a-thon, skate-a-thon, or hula hoop-a-thon.
- Sell healthy foods, such as oranges and grapefruit from citrus growers.
- Hold a car wash—as kids scrub and move about, they'll get physical activity.
- Ask families to submit healthy recipes, and compile them into a cookbook to sell.
- Get children involved in gardening by having seed, plant, or mulch sales. ♥



How to save on grocery bills

It's not easy to feed a family when you're on a budget. Use these suggestions to get the biggest bang for your buck.

Begin "couponing." Clipping coupons takes time, but that time will pay off when you check out. Make your child the "Coupon King." He could help file coupons from grocery circulars, newspapers, or websites—and be in charge of remembering to take along and use the coupons. *Healthy tip:* Don't gather coupons for junk foods. That way, you won't be tempted to "save money" by buying them.



Comparison shop. Notice the prices from store to store for the items you buy regularly—you might be surprised at the differences. Then, keep a list (on paper or in your phone) of the best buys for each, and shop accordingly. Plus, if you know the price ranges for your most popular items, you can see when they hit a low point—and stock up.

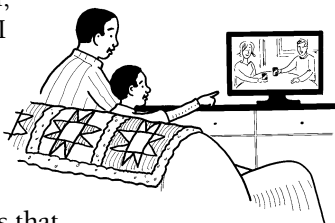
Be produce-savvy. Cut-up fruit and vegetables are certainly convenient, but you pay for that convenience. Instead, buy items whole, and get your kids to help you rinse and prepare them. Another plus: Produce will last longer if it hasn't been cut yet. Also, buy produce in season when it's cheaper, and get extra to freeze. Here's a handy guide: healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/features-month/whats-season. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

"As seen on TV"

My son was always asking for candy or other unhealthy foods he saw on television or online. When I mentioned this to our pediatrician, Dr. Dawson suggested that I ask Aidan if he knew who produced food ads or what they're designed to do.

Together, Aidan and I looked up answers. He was surprised to find out about tricks that



advertisers use to make products look better in ads, such as putting dish soap in soda to make bigger bubbles or painting hamburgers with shoe polish to give them more color.

We also learned about "product placements"—how companies pay to put their foods into online games, on television shows, or in movies. Now, when Aidan wants to try a new game, I'll ask, "Is that a game or an ad?" We've had interesting conversations, and I'm hoping he's getting a better understanding of advertising and how to make healthy choices for himself. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Winter games

Cold outside? Bundle up, and head outside for winter fun with these games.

"Horseshoes"

Place a shallow plastic bowl on the grass or in the snow. Stand a few yards back, and take turns tossing pebbles toward the bowl. Whoever lands the most pebbles in the bowl wins the round.



Hidden flag

After a snowfall, tie a white cloth (an old T-shirt or a white rag) to a ruler, and secretly stick it in the snow. The first one to find it hides it next. *No-snow variation:* Tie a green or brown cloth to a stick, and hide it in grass or the woods.

Snowball toss

Have each player pile up snowballs and take aim at a tree trunk. Count how many hit the target—top score wins. Or instead of snowballs, play with tennis balls. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Toast toppings

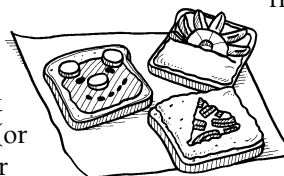
Toast a slice of bread—whole grain, please—and dress it up for a healthy snack or meal that's fun for your child to make and eat.

1. Sunrise, sunset. Cover toast with cream cheese. Your youngster could use pineapple rings and orange slices to create a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

2. Beary good. Spread toast with a thin layer of peanut (or other nut) butter. Have your

child make it into a bear's face, with banana slices for the ears and nose, and raisins for the eyes and mouth.

3. Shape filler. Let your youngster draw a shape on aluminum foil, cut it out, and place it on the toast. Spread skim ricotta cheese all around the shape, and sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried oregano. She can lift off the foil and fill the empty shape with chopped bell peppers. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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