

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

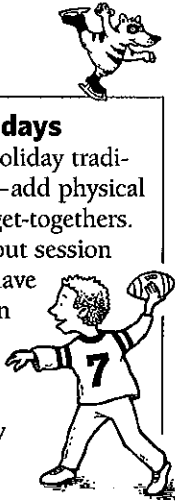
November 2008

McAllen Independent School District

BEST BITES

Active holidays

Start a new holiday tradition this year—add physical activity to your family get-togethers. You might plan a workout session for holiday mornings, have a touch football game in the afternoon, or take a walk after the meal. You'll help everyone stay fit and enjoy family time, too.



Don't fill up

When eating out, keep your kids from getting full while you're waiting for the food. Don't have drinks on the table before the meal comes. Ask the waiter not to bring a bread basket to the table. Your children will have more room for the healthy food if their stomachs aren't filled up first.

DID YOU KNOW?

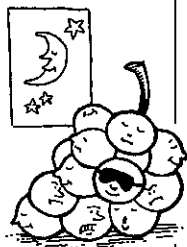
An orange has more vitamin C, fiber, calcium, and beta-carotene than a glass of orange juice. And the orange has 60 calories, compared with 110 for the juice. Encourage your child to choose whole fruit over juice, and, when buying orange juice, make it healthier by choosing refrigerated (not from concentrate) varieties with pulp.



Just for fun

Q: Why don't grapes snore?

A: They don't want to wake up the rest of the bunch.



Be a calcium kid

What do milk, cheese, yogurt, spinach, shrimp, papaya, and sunflower seeds have in common?

They're all terrific sources of calcium! Teach your child to eat these and other calcium-rich foods, and she'll build the strong bones she needs for her whole life. Here's how.

Know the foods. Your youngster may already know that milk is good for her bones. But she may be surprised to learn that blackberries, broccoli, canned salmon, and sweet potatoes have lots of calcium, too. She can find lists of foods at www.bcm.edu/cnrc/consumer/archives/plenty-calcium.htm or check with the school cafeteria manager for ideas.

Make a guide. Help your child fold four sheets of construction paper in half and staple along the side to make a book. She can decorate and title the cover (example: "Food for Strong Bones"). Let her use old magazines to cut out pictures of calcium-rich foods. Finally,



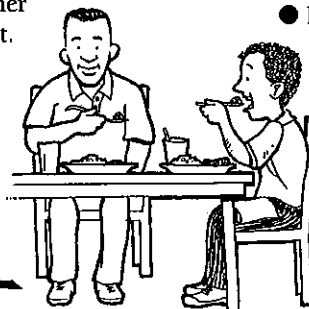
have her glue the pictures onto the pages and label each one.

Keep track. Your youngster can make a chart to record her daily servings of calcium. *Tip:* Her goal should be three servings a day. Have her make seven columns for the days of the week, and put three rows below for the servings. Each time she eats or drinks something with calcium, she can draw a picture or write the name of the item in a box for that day. Can she fill up the chart every week? ♥

Table manners

Having good table manners helps make a meal more pleasant. Share these tips with your children:

- Wait for everyone to sit down before starting to eat.
- Ask to have food across the table passed to you, rather than reaching for it.
- Sit up straight.
- Place your napkin in your lap, and use it to wipe your mouth.
- Don't "double dip" your food in ketchup or sauces on the table.
- Use utensils, not your fingers.
- Don't slurp, chew with your mouth open, or talk with your mouth full.
- Stay seated until everyone is finished. Ask to be excused if you need to leave the table.
- When the meal is over, thank the cook! ♥



After-school activity

Joey walks in the house, drops his backpack, and reaches for the remote control. An hour later, he's still watching TV.

You can help avoid that scene in your house by making it fun for your youngster to get off the couch and play after school. Try these ideas:



- Kids like to play with other kids. If possible, let your child invite classmates over. Suggest active games like catch, hopscotch, tag, or hide-and-seek.

- Keep a bucket of equipment in the garage or hall closet so it's easy to grab a jump rope, ball, baseball glove, or Frisbee.

- Help your youngster find an after-school activity he might like. Check into sports leagues, gymnastics programs, or martial arts classes. *Tip:* Signing up with a neighbor will give him a friend to go with, plus you and the other parents can carpool.

- If your child is in after-school care, be sure the program includes daily physical activity. Ask the teacher how long the children play and what they usually do. ♡



ACTIVITY CORNER

Stay balanced

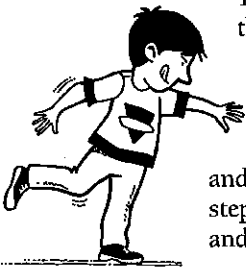
Can your child balance on one foot? Can he walk on a balance beam?

Having a good sense of balance is an important part of being physically fit. Here are two ways your youngster can practice:

- 1 Teach your child the yoga pose called "tree." Standing with his feet together, he should lift his right foot and press it into his inner left thigh. Then, he can put his arms up straight like a tree. Encourage him to hold the pose for 10–30 seconds and then switch to the other leg.

- 2 Draw a chalk line on the sidewalk, or put masking tape on the basement floor.

Take turns "walking the line" without stepping off the chalk or tape. Try different ways: walking forward and backward, stepping sideways, and hopping. ♡



PARENT TO PARENT

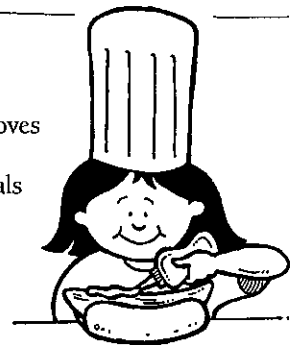
My little chef

You should see my daughter Maria! She loves to wear her apron, choose recipes from her cookbook, use small wooden spoons, and help make meals for our family.

It all started a few months ago when I read that kids who learn to cook healthy food are more apt to be healthy eaters. Maria's birthday was coming up, so I suggested that her relatives give her cooking gear. I added a children's cookbook with healthy recipes.

Once she unwrapped her gifts, Maria couldn't wait to get into the kitchen. Her favorite creation so far is a "banana dog"—she spreads a whole-wheat hot dog bun with peanut butter, tucks in a banana, and drizzles honey on top.

Of course, I always stay close to Maria when she's cooking. She knows she can measure, pour, and stir. But when it's time to use the stove, oven, or sharp knives, that's my job. ♡



IN THE KITCHEN

Beans and more

Beans come in all shapes, sizes, and colors—and they're all healthy. Try these easy bean dishes, and you'll add fiber, antioxidants, protein, and other nutrients to your child's meals.

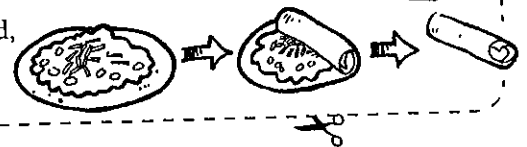
Burritos. Spread canned refried beans on a whole-wheat tortilla. Top with shredded low-fat cheese (Monterey Jack, cheddar) and salsa, and roll up.

Beans & corn. Toss together 3 cans drained beans (black, pinto, and red kidney), 1 can corn, and 1 chopped red pepper. Toss with low-fat Italian dressing.

Bean burgers. Mash 2 cups drained, canned beans (any variety), and combine with 2 cups cooked

brown rice. Stir in 2 beaten eggs, chopped vegetables, and ground pepper. Form into patties, and broil until cooked through and browned.

Quick tip: Mash white kidney beans, and add them to mashed potatoes, lasagna, and other favorite foods. ♡



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