

Nutrition Nuggets

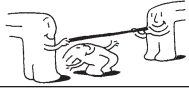
Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Fairfield Public Schools

Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food & Nutrition Services

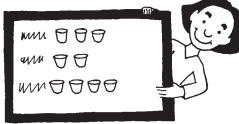
BEST BITES



Keep a water log

Encourage your family to drink more

water with this idea. Hang a small erasable whiteboard on the refrigerator.



Write each person's name down the left side. Each time a family member drinks water, have her draw a glass next to her name.

Play tourist

Seeing the sights in your own town is a fun way to build physical activity into your family's weekends. You might visit the animals at the zoo, explore plants at a botanical garden, or tour a local factory. *Tip:* Check Web sites for free or reduced-price admission days at nearby attractions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Seeds are filled with nutrients. Add them to your child's diet by tossing unsalted sunflower seeds into salads or adding pumpkin seeds to soups and cooked vegetables. Choose sesame-seed bagels, or try grinding seeds in a coffee grinder and sprinkling them on oatmeal or cold cereal.

Just for fun

Q: What's the worst thing about being an octopus?

A: Washing your hands before meals!



Snack wisely

As spring days fill up with soccer practice, school play rehearsals, and more time at the playground, families often scramble for quick and healthy snacks. Here are some suggestions.



After school

When your children come home hungry, try mini-meals rather than chips or sweets. Keep lean deli meat on hand for turkey and ham sandwiches on whole-grain bread. Or make hard-boiled eggs ahead of time. Your youngsters might like them plain, or they can fix deviled eggs. Help them split the eggs in half lengthwise, remove the yolks, and mash them with light mayonnaise, mustard, salt, and pepper. Mound the mixture back into the egg whites, and sprinkle with paprika.

On the go

Carry snacks in the car when you're driving your children to and from activities. Fill a sports bottle with water for

each child. Take along snacks that are portable and easy to eat, such as squeezable yogurt, pita filled with hummus and grated carrots, or a whole-wheat English muffin with melted cheese.

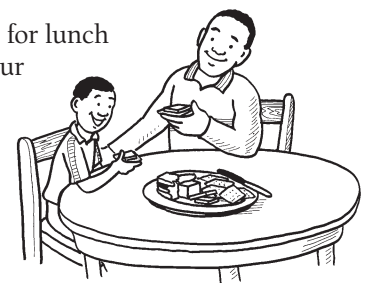
Anytime

Fruit is always a favorite snack. Dress up everyday fruits by making fruit cones. Puree peaches (peeled and pitted) in a blender, fill an ice cream cone with fruit (kiwi pieces, blueberries, pitted cherries), and drizzle the peach puree on top. For other fun fruit snacks, freeze orange slices or grapes. Or let kids dip apple slices in a little caramel sauce. 🍓

Guidelines for snacking

Snacking between meals is actually important for growing children. Try these tips for fitting snacks into a healthy diet:

- Have regular snack times (after school, an hour before bedtime) so your child doesn't eat all afternoon and evening.
- Keep snacks small enough that he's not too full for lunch or dinner. You might make snacks off-limits an hour before meals.
- Avoid "liquid calories" by not serving soda, sports drinks, or fruit drinks with snacks.
- Encourage snacks that combine at least two food groups. *Example:* a protein (cheese) with a grain (crackers). 🍓



Chores: Fit and fun

Your house needs cleaning, you want your children to get exercise, and they just want to have fun. There is a way you can accomplish all of this! Try these ideas.

Choose a job. Motivate your youngsters to pitch in by making a game out of choosing chores. List jobs (sweep, vacuum, mop, take out the trash), and let each family member roll a pair of dice. The highest roller picks his chore first, the second-highest next, and so on.



Beat the clock. Put more energy into family cleanup time by turning it into a race. Let each person be in charge of straightening up a different room. Then, set a timer. Rushing to beat the buzzer will make everyone move faster!

Make it fun. Add a twist of fun to everyday chores.

Have younger children dust with (clean) socks on their hands. Place a small hamper in each bedroom so children can “shoot” dirty laundry into the basket. Or play music while doing chores—you might even take a dance break in between tasks. ♡

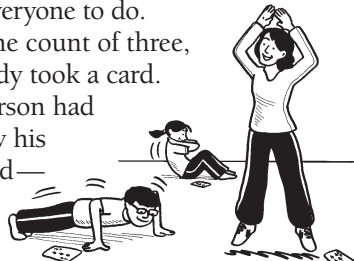
PARENT TO PARENT

Pick a card

My son Luke came home from school the other day excited about a game his gym teacher had taught his class. He asked if we could try it.

He got a deck of cards and had us think of a different exercise to match each suit. We decided on jumping jacks for spades, push-ups for diamonds, running around the room for clubs, and jogging in place for hearts. He said aces were wild—whoever drew one got to name the activity for everyone to do.

On the count of three, everybody took a card. Each person had to follow his own card—a 6 of spades meant



you had to do 6 jumping jacks. A 3 of diamonds meant 3 push-ups. On the next turn, my daughter drew an ace, and she had us do 10 sit-ups.

We had a great time playing the game, and Luke was proud that he had taught it to us. Now we have a good way to get indoor exercise on rainy April days—or any day! ♡

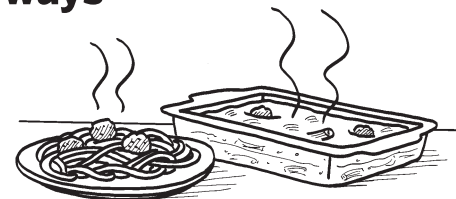
IN THE KITCHEN

Meatballs, two ways

Make one batch of meatballs for two nights of meals. Here’s how.

Combine 2 lbs. extra-lean ground beef or ground turkey with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup bread crumbs, 4 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese, and 2 eggs. Shape into 10 large and 20 small meatballs for:

■ **Spaghetti and meatballs.** In a skillet, brown the large meatballs in a little olive oil. Place in a baking dish and bake at 350° for about 30 minutes. Then, put in a saucepan with marinara sauce and cook until heated through. Serve over cooked and drained spaghetti.



■ **Baked ziti.** Cook 1 lb. ziti according to package directions, and drain. Mix 16 oz. skim ricotta cheese and 2 eggs. In a 9 x 13 inch pan, layer $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato sauce, half the cooked ziti, the ricotta mixture, the small meatballs, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sauce, and the rest of the ziti. Top with 1 cup shredded skim mozzarella cheese. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Art projects

Does your child love to do art projects? Help her learn about nutrition as she gets creative.

Start by having her cut out pictures of healthy foods from old magazines or catalogs. Suggest that she look for fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, chicken, fish, beans, and eggs. Then she can try these projects.

Collage. Have her sort the pictures into food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and beans). She can arrange each set into a collage, glue the pictures down, and label

the sheet. Hang the collages in the kitchen as a reminder of healthy foods to choose.

Mobile. Let your youngster make a breakfast, lunch, or dinner mobile—or all three! For each one, she can glue pictures onto index cards and carefully cut around the shapes. For a breakfast mobile, she might feature eggs, toast, pancakes, fruit, milk, and orange juice. Then, help her punch a hole in the top of each picture. Tie string through the pictures, and hang them from a coat hanger. ♡



OUR PURPOSE

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

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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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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