

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

May 2021

Mitchell School District 17-2

Leann Carmody, Food Service Director



BEST BITES

Foods from my state

Washington apples, Maryland crabs, Kentucky blackberries ... what food is your state known for? Encourage your child to do research in books or online to find out, and help him use the food in a healthy recipe. Together, you might make apple-fennel coleslaw, baked crab cakes, or blackberry sorbet.

Stop and go



Help your youngster boost coordination with this fast-paced game. Kick a ball from player to

player. The kicker calls out a body part (right foot, right elbow, left knee). The receiver tries to stop the ball using that body part. If a player doesn't follow the directions, she gets a point. Lowest score wins!

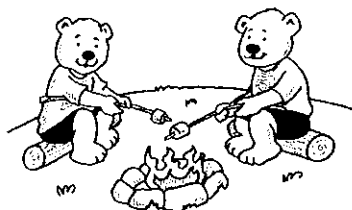
DID YOU KNOW?

If you receive SNAP benefits, you can use them to buy seeds and plants to grow food for your family. Visit fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator to find participating stores. Then, let your child help you plant fresh vegetables and herbs in a garden or in windowsill pots. *Note:* Many farmers' markets accept SNAP benefits, too.

Just for fun

Q: How do you start a campfire with two sticks?

A: Make sure one is a match!



Right-size portions

It's important for your child to eat the right foods *and* to eat the right amount. Help her learn about portions with these hands-on ideas.

Measure snacks

At snack time, set out measuring cups and spoons along with snacks like dry cereal and raisins. Encourage your youngster to read the serving size on each package and measure the recommended amount onto her plate—and yours. She'll learn to use nutrition labels and discover healthy portion sizes.



Make a poster

Let your child create a chart that compares just-right portions of food to the size of everyday objects she chooses. First, share these common comparisons:

- 3 oz. chicken or fish = deck of cards
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked vegetables, pasta, or rice = lightbulb
- 1 cup raw vegetables = baseball
- 1 oz. cheese = pair of dice

Then, she can pick items that are about the same size and sketch them on poster board. She might draw a computer mouse for chicken, a mini stuffed animal for rice, her snow globe for raw veggies, and an eraser for cheese.

Divide your plate

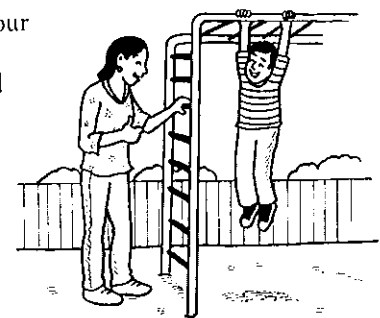
When your youngster serves herself, suggest that she start by covering half of her plate with fruits and vegetables. For extra fun, she could divide her plate in half with asparagus spears or a spaghetti noodle! That strategy will help her take reasonable portions of protein and grains to fill the other half of her plate. ●

Playground stretches

The playground is the perfect place for your youngster to do stretches. He'll improve his flexibility, which helps to prevent sports and overuse injuries. Here's how.

Reach high. Encourage your child to stretch and jump up to catch horizontal bars or monkey bars, then count how many times he can swing.

Stretch low. Suggest that your youngster try stretches on a balance beam or a painted line on the blacktop—without stepping off. First, he can put one foot in front of the other and touch his toes on the front foot. Then, have him turn sideways, step his legs out wide, and try to touch the beam. ●



Salads kids want to eat

There's a whole world of interesting greens and other salad ingredients out there! Consider these tips to help your youngster fall in love with salads.

Try different leaves. Add more nutrients by encouraging your child to eat a variety of greens. He'll enjoy learning their names and discovering their unique flavors and textures. Each time you get groceries, let him pick out a new base for his next salad, such as red bibb, soft butter lettuce, dark green baby kale, purple radicchio, scoop-shaped endive, or curly frisée.



Use creative names. Your youngster might make "mac-and-cheese salad" with lettuce, tomato, cooked whole-wheat pasta, and low-fat shredded cheddar. Or you could invent "Popeye salad" with baby spinach, strawberries, and olive oil. *Idea:* He may get a kick out of learning that *rocket* is another name for arugula. Blast off with "rocket salad"—toss rocket with peach slices, part-skim ricotta cheese, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.

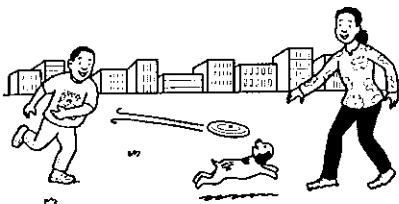
Add kid-friendly crunch. Encourage your child to crumble baked tortilla chips or his favorite whole-grain crackers onto his salad. Or he might sprinkle a salad with slivered almonds or sesame sticks. ●

PARENT TO PARENT

Overweight? Focus on health

My son Patrick is a bit overweight. His pediatrician said we could help him by focusing on healthy foods and fun activities for the whole family instead of on Patrick's weight.

So we bought fruits and vegetables that Patrick likes, including oranges and snap peas, and bypassed the cookies and chips. Also, we've switched to lean meat and fat-free milk.



Now instead of lounging in front of the TV after dinner, we take walks or go to the park. We like playing 2-on-2 basketball, and we've recently discovered disc golf. Patrick has more energy—and he looks forward to kicking off the weekend with a family bike ride. ●

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

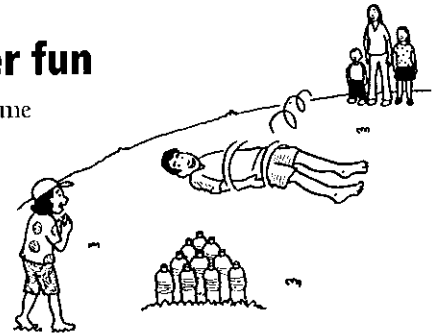
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ACTIVITY CORNER

Outdoor summer fun

Longer days mean more time to play outside. Get everyone's heart pumping with these games.

Human bowling. Family members are the "bowling balls" in this game. Have your child arrange "pins" (half-full plastic water bottles) at the bottom of a grassy hill. Take turns lying at the top and rolling horizontally to topple the pins. Count how many you knock down, reset, and run back up the hill. Knock over the most pins in 10 "rolls" to win.



Ribbon run. Help your youngster set up a running course by tying ribbons to 5–10 objects outside, such as a tree, bench, or fence. Time each other running the whole course from ribbon to ribbon, making sure to touch them all. The fastest player wins. ●

IN THE KITCHEN

Create buffets at home

There's something for everyone at a buffet. Set out foods around themes like these, and your child can build her own meals.

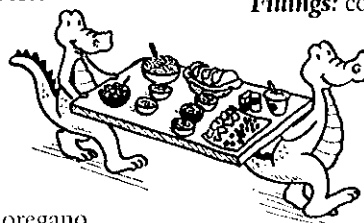
Pasta extravaganza

Noodles: whole-wheat pasta, spaghetti squash, or zucchini noodles

Sauce: marinara, pesto

Toppings:

cooked turkey meatballs, steamed broccoli florets, sun-dried tomatoes, grated Parmesan cheese, oregano



Yogurt station

Base: nonfat Greek yogurt

Mix-ins: blueberries, mango chunks, cinnamon, nutmeg, honey, chopped walnuts

Taco bar

Shell: soft corn or whole-wheat tortillas

Fillings: cooked lean ground beef or steamed shrimp, black beans, low-fat shredded pepper-jack cheese

Toppings: shredded lettuce, diced tomato, sliced avocado ●

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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FAST TAKES

An edible board game

Let your tween create a board game that's also a healthy snack. Maybe he'll invent "Veggie Land," with a path made of celery and carrots, and use radish and cucumber slices as tokens. He can write instructions and teach family members how to play. After your game, eat the board and tokens!



Did You Know?

Walking while using a cell phone is a safety hazard for pedestrians, and it's unfortunately common among tweens and teens. Remind your child: "Head up, phone down." She should remove earbuds so she's aware of her surroundings and never talk or text when she's on the move.

Go for low sodium

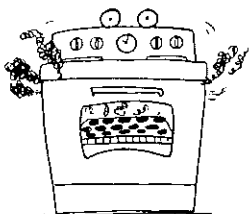
Sauces and dressings can add a lot of sodium to your teen's diet. Suggest that he compare nutrition labels in the store and choose lower-sodium pasta sauce, condiments, and salad dressings. Another option? Make sauces at home, and add flavor with herbs and spices rather than salt.

Just for fun

Judy: I just burned 3,000 calories in 30 minutes.

Andy: How?!

Judy: I forgot to take the cookies out of the oven!



Smart summer eating

Hot summer days provide plenty of opportunities for your teen to adopt healthy habits. Try these suggestions.

Take breakfast outside

Picnics aren't just for lunch! Create a routine everyone will look forward to by having breakfast outdoors together on weekends. Imagine listening to the birds chirping while you eat fruit-and-yogurt parfaits, avocado toast with sliced hard-boiled egg, or whole-grain English muffins with nonfat cottage cheese.



produce like zucchini, yellow squash, plums, or apricots.

Grill it

Grilling trims fat from meat—as it cooks, fat drips off. Teach your teen to brush meat, chicken, or fish with a mixture of olive oil and low-sodium soy sauce (equal amounts of each) before grilling. The grill is also a terrific way to cook fruits and vegetables, since it brings out their natural sweetness. Together, experiment with grilling

Make "cool" meals

When it's hot, your tween won't be craving heavy stews or pastas. Instead, she might try open-faced sandwiches on one slice of whole-grain bread for dinner. Have her look in cookbooks or online for main-dish salads or cold soups. Or whip up alternatives to mashed potatoes and white rice, such as corn tossed with diced tomatoes, red onions, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. ●

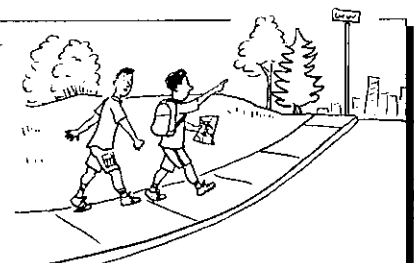
All around town

How can your teen get lots of exercise—and get to know your town or neighborhood better? Challenge him to walk or run every street in your area this summer! Here's how.

1. Map it out. Get a street map of your town or print neighborhood maps from the internet. He can mark safe routes and highlight each one he takes.

2. Step it up. To work different muscles and add variety to his walks or runs, your teen might alternate hilly and flat routes.

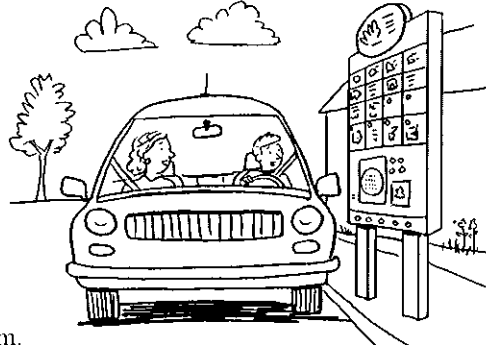
3. See new sights. As a bonus, he may discover things he's never seen before, like a colorful mural on the side of a building or a miniature park. ●



Choose wisely at the drive-thru

The calories in fast food can add up faster than the time it takes to get your food! Help your teen make healthier choices with these tips.

Know the numbers. Have your child read nutrition information on the menu board or restaurant website. He can choose items that are higher in fiber and lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Instead of a special-edition burger loaded with



high-fat toppings, he might order a regular burger with extra veggies. Or rather than a milkshake, he could get a small cup of ice cream. *Tip:* Suggest that your teen decide on his order before going so there's less temptation at the restaurant.

Order from the "secret menu."

Whether a restaurant actually has a secret menu or not, encourage your child to invent his own meals. He might ask for a plain baked potato and a side of salsa to put on top. Or he could make a grilled chicken salad by ordering a chicken sandwich with no bun and a side salad. ♥



Q & A Water: The healthiest beverage

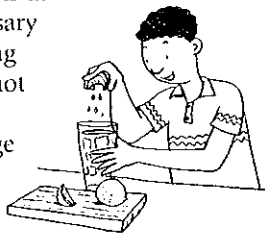
Q: I've heard that water is the only drink my teenager needs. How can I get him to drink more of it?

A: With zero fat, sugar, or sodium, water is the perfect beverage! Plus, a glass of ice-cold water is refreshing on a hot summer day.

In addition to water, your child also needs fat-free milk for calcium. Keep in mind that sports drinks are only necessary if he's exercising vigorously in hot weather.

To encourage your teen to drink water, suggest that he add a splash of lemon or lime juice to regular or sparkling water. Or he might like unsweetened decaf tea, which of course is mostly water.

Finally, encourage your teenager to carry a refillable water bottle with him to stay hydrated. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

"Snack" on exercise

Your teen can reap all the benefits of a full workout in 10-minute activity "bites" throughout the day! Share these ideas.

Jump for joy. Create a jump-rope routine that includes single and double jumps, side swings, and crossovers.

Push it. Strengthen arm and chest muscles by doing alternating planks and push-ups.

Play with younger siblings. Give piggyback rides, throw and catch a beach ball, or let little ones chase her around the yard.

Think outside the box. Juggle beanbags or balls. Blow up a few balloons and bat them around to keep them all in the air.

Idea: Encourage your child to make a three-song playlist for each activity. Since the average pop song is about 3½ minutes long, each playlist will be about 10 minutes. ♥

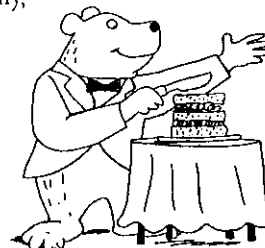


In the Kitchen Fruit with a twist

Add more fruit to your teen's diet with these refreshing and creative summertime recipes. They're ideal for dessert or special occasions.

Peach "nachos"

Cut two peaches in half, and remove pits. Slice thinly, then layer on a plate. Drizzle ¼ cup warm nut or seed butter on top. Sprinkle lightly with mini dark chocolate chips, coconut flakes, and cinnamon.



Watermelon "layer cake"

Cut three round watermelon "layers," each about 1-inch thick, and remove the rinds. Place one slice on a plate and top with kiwi and banana slices and raspberries. Continue alternating watermelon and toppings to make a three-layer "cake."

Rainbow kebabs

Thread fresh strawberries, orange segments, pineapple chunks, honeydew melon cubes, and blueberries onto skewers—it's a rainbow! Dip in plain fat-free yogurt. ♥

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