

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

January 2008

BEST BITES

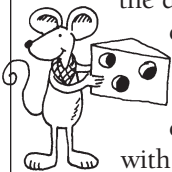
Dine together

When was the last time you ate in a school cafeteria? Join your child for lunch one day, and you'll be surprised at all the positive changes. Eating with him will show that you support school meals, and your youngster will be delighted to show you off to his friends!



DID YOU KNOW?

Fewer than 1 in 10 girls and 1 in 3 boys get the calcium they need. Boost your youngster's amount by serving snacks from the dairy group. Try pudding cups, grilled cheese (use cooking spray instead of butter in the pan), or hot chocolate made with fat-free milk.



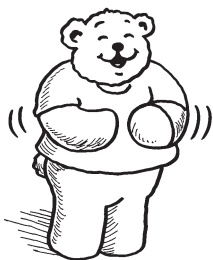
Spring sports

Get a head start on spring by signing your youngster up for sports and activities now. Check registration dates for T-ball, softball, soccer, roller hockey, and lacrosse leagues. You might also look into tennis classes, running clubs, or cheerleading programs. *Tip:* Getting a friend to join will probably increase your child's interest.

Just for fun

Q: What did the teddy bear say when he was offered dessert?

A: No, thanks. I'm stuffed!



Eat your veggies!

Do you find yourself wondering how to get your child to eat enough vegetables? Here are eight easy ways:

1. Put vegetables in foods your youngster loves. *Examples:* Add shredded carrots to meatballs and peas to macaroni and cheese. Puree cooked cauliflower and stir into mashed potatoes.
2. Have a veggie snack waiting for your child after school. *Examples:* corn on the cob, baked potato with broccoli and cheese, quesadilla (layer spinach, mushrooms, tomatoes, and cheese on a whole-wheat tortilla, and microwave).
3. Add frozen mixed vegetables to canned soup. Load up chili or beef stew with potatoes and pureed onions, peppers, or celery.
4. Make a weekday meal fancy by serving a first-course "sunshine" salad. Use a circle of lettuce, "sunspots" of grape tomatoes, and "rays" of cucumber spears and carrot sticks.
5. Puree cooked broccoli, carrots, or butternut squash, and stir into spaghetti



sauce. *Idea:* Freeze sauce in ice cube trays. Defrost and heat for a quick and healthy pasta snack.

6. Serve vegetables when your youngster is hungry. *Example:* While dinner cooks, put out raw sugar-snap beans and red bell pepper slices with a dip (fat-free ranch dressing or nonfat yogurt with a little curry powder mixed in).
7. Make veggie chips. Thinly slice sweet potatoes, carrots, zucchini, and yellow squash. Place on a baking sheet, and sprinkle with salt. Bake at 200° until crisp (about 2 hours).
8. Eat veggies yourself. If your child sees you eating—and enjoying—them, he'll be more likely to eat them, too. ♥

Food safety

It's never too early to teach your youngster about food safety. Here are some good household rules:

- Wash and dry hands before preparing food or eating.
- Put perishable foods (milk, yogurt, mayonnaise) back in the refrigerator right away.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with cold water before eating them. *Note:* Be sure to rinse fruits that have peels you don't eat (grapefruit, cantaloupe), since cutting through the rind can transfer bacteria into the part you do eat.

■ Check dates on containers. Smell milk and deli meats to make sure they're still fresh.

■ Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold when packing lunches or snacks. Use a thermos for hot items and ice packs for cold ones.

■ Wipe counters and tables with clean sponges and soap. Keep backpacks, clothes, and pets off surfaces where you eat or make meals. ♥



Guide to kids' menus

"Mom, should I get chicken tenders or a grilled chicken sandwich?"

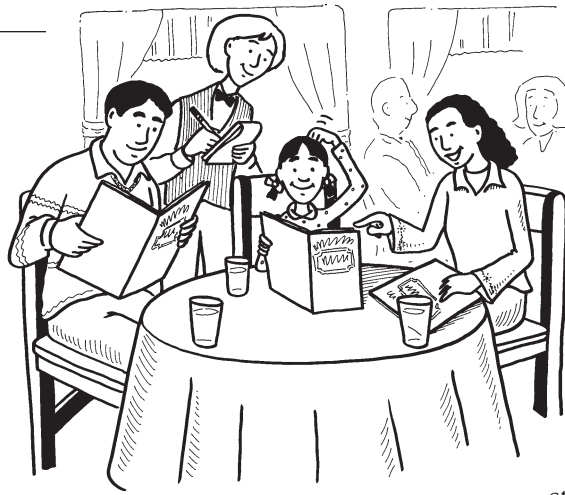
The next time you're at a restaurant with your youngster, offer suggestions that will guide her to make healthy choices. Try these ideas.

Read carefully

Teach your child to watch out for words like "fried," "breaded," "creamed," "smothered," "stuffed," and "jumbo." They can mean unhealthy cooking styles or huge portions. Show her words to look for instead: "baked," "broiled," "grilled," "roasted," "steamed," "stir-fried," and "regular."

Watch the sides

Encourage your youngster to skip the fries, onion rings, and chips. Suggest applesauce or a small salad with fat-free



dressing. Or she might enjoy ordering the "vegetable of the day."

Use the adult menu

Help your child feel grown-up by letting her pick from the regular menu. Have her check the appetizers—the smaller size and different options (shrimp cocktail, minestrone) might be perfect.

Go light on dessert

Order a bowl of berries, sherbet, sorbet, or frozen yogurt. If your youngster wants pie, cake, or an ice cream sundae, consider splitting the treat. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Family games

Games are more fun when you play together. Try these ideas to keep the whole family active.

Juggling contest. While standing, try juggling two balls and then three. Who can keep the balls in the air the longest? *Idea:* Look online or in the library for tips on how to juggle.

Broom hockey. In the basement or garage, set up goals using cones, buckets, or trash cans. Choose teams, and try to score goals using a soft ball and brooms.



Follow the footprints. Trace each person's foot on several pieces of cardboard or poster board and cut them out. Lay them on the floor, and play follow the leader—walking, hopping, skipping, or jumping from footprint to footprint. ♥

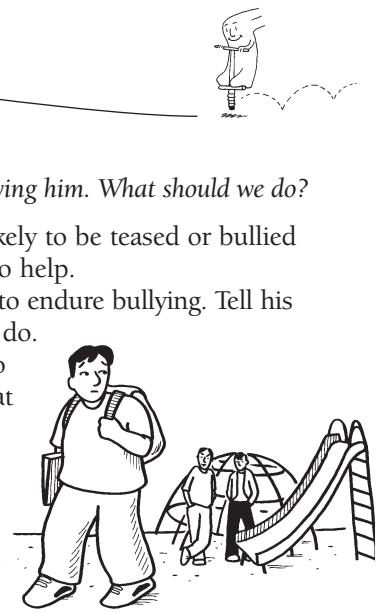
Q & A Stop the bullying

Q: My son is overweight, and a few kids have started bullying him. What should we do?

A: Unfortunately, overweight children are far more likely to be teased or bullied than other kids. There are several things you can do to help.

First, let your youngster know that he doesn't have to endure bullying. Tell his teacher what is going on, and ask what the school can do. Second, give your child ways to cope. Teach him not to react angrily, since that's what bullies want. Role-play at home so he can practice ignoring the comments and walking away. Suggest that he stick with a classmate at recess or sit with an older neighbor on the bus.

Finally, try to work together to help your child reach a healthy weight so he can feel better about himself. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN Pasta bowls

Kids love pasta! Cook up a pot of your youngster's favorite, and top with these ingredients to make a meal in a bowl. Each one will give your child a healthy dose of fiber and protein.

Buffalo Chicken: Shredded lettuce and carrots, cooked chicken strips, low-fat buffalo sauce, and fat-free ranch dressing.

Huevos Rancheros: Diced tomatoes and green bell peppers, cooked scrambled eggs, shredded low-fat Monterey Jack cheese, fat-free sour cream, and salsa.

Cheeseburger: Sautéed mushrooms and onions, cooked lean ground beef, and shredded low-fat cheddar cheese, drizzled with ketchup.

Thai: Snow peas, sliced scallions, chopped red bell peppers, cooked pork or beef chunks, peanut sauce, and unsalted peanuts.

Greek: Shredded lettuce, fresh spinach leaves, pitted black olives, chopped tomatoes and cucumbers, cooked shrimp, crumbled feta cheese, and a sauce of 1 tsp. vinegar and 1 tsp. olive oil. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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