

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Magnolia Independent School District
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BEST BITES

Creamy tomato soup

Get soup season off to a good start with this easy way to make homemade tomato soup. Simply puree a 28-ounce can of crushed tomatoes in a blender or food processor. Combine in a saucepan with 1 cup fat-free milk, freshly ground pepper, and a dash of salt. Heat through.



You're an athlete

"Let's go, athletes! Time to play outside." With those words, your children immediately know you think of them as athletes—and they'll think of themselves as athletes, too. Just use the label "athlete" when they're getting ready for after-school activities, play dates, or family fun to put them in an "athletic frame of mind."

DID YOU KNOW?

Eating school breakfasts and lunches is an opportunity for your youngster to sample foods he may not have at home. Ask him what he put on his tray today. Look at the school menu together, and talk about what he might try tomorrow. Then, consider buying some of those foods to serve at home, too.

Just for fun

Q: What do you get when you cross a telephone with a big football player?

A: A wide receiver!



Fast food: Make it healthier

It may be hard to avoid the convenience of fast food sometimes, but you *can* avoid the high calories and low nutrients with these strategies.

Plan ahead

To cut down on unhealthy impulse buys, encourage your child to build his meal in advance. Bring home nutrition brochures from your favorite places, or look at their websites together. Point out healthier choices, and have your youngster draw or write out his order. *Idea:* For a math and nutrition lesson, ask him to sketch out a few menus and tally the nutrients, fat, sodium, and calories for each.

List alternatives

Get your child invested in making healthy choices by brainstorming a "get this, not that" list. *Examples:* "Get water or fat-free milk, not soda." "Get mustard, not special sauces." "Get salad, not potato chips." "Get lettuce and tomato, not bacon and cheese." *Tip:* Let him



write out and decorate the list, and keep it in the car for reference.

Take it home

When you stop for fast food, just get main courses, and then add nutritious sides from your refrigerator or pantry. You could serve any vegetables you have on hand, such as raw carrots, frozen peas, or canned corn (no salt added). Place fruit on the table, too. *Bonus:* Put the food on real plates, and eat together at the kitchen table—it will feel much more like a family meal than if you eat in the car. ♥

My recipe file

Your little cook will enjoy making and using her own recipe file. Try these steps.

1. Talk about how to organize her file. She could label folders by parts of a meal (appetizers, entrees, side dishes, desserts) or types of food (sandwiches, fish, cookies).
2. Cook together. She can take a photo at each stage and use them to make a "picture recipe"—writing a caption under each photo. Or she might create a "rebus recipe" by substituting pictures for some of the words. For example, she may draw a picture of an apple instead of writing the word.
3. Help her look for healthy recipes online or in magazines. She could print or cut them out to add to her recipe file. ♥



“Moving” around the world

From Australia to Zambia and Finland to Venezuela, children everywhere play all kinds of active games. Here are a few your youngster could try with neighborhood friends, classmates, or visiting relatives.



Ounch Neech (Pakistan)

Ounch means *up* and *neech* means *down* in this version of tag. “It” shouts *ouch* or *neech*, and players start running to avoid being tagged. When It says *ouch*, players are safe if they’re “up” (on a tree stump or a big rock, for instance) but can be tagged if they’re on the ground. For a *neech* round, the

opposite is true. Get tagged, and you’re It for the next round.

El Escondite al Revés (Spain)

For this reverse hide-and-seek game, It hides, and everyone else looks for her. As each person finds her, that person hides with It. The last one to join the group is the new It.

Catch the Dragon’s Tail (China)

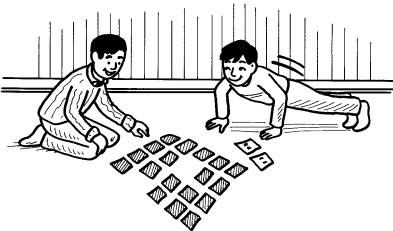
Players form a “dragon”—a single-file line with each person’s hands on the next person’s shoulders. The dragon’s “head” (the first one in line) has to tag the “tail” (the last person) without breaking the chain. When she succeeds, she becomes the tail, and the new head tries to catch the new tail. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER



Active memory

Flip a card, and do the exercise. This game will work out your child’s memory skills as well as his muscles.



Start by making memory cards. Cut construction paper into 20 squares. Have your youngster draw matching pictures of exercises like sit-ups, push-ups, and more (stick figures are fine)—there should be two cards for each exercise.

To play, mix up the cards, and lay them in rows facedown. Take turns flipping over two cards. If they match, keep them. If not, turn them back over. But either way, do the exercise (or exercises) shown. The player with the most cards at the end wins the game. And all the players win when it comes to exercise! ♡

Q&A Healthy holiday traditions

Q: With the holidays coming up, I’m looking for ways to make the season healthier for my family. What are your suggestions?

A: First, try to lighten up the dishes you serve each year. For stuffing, you might swap whole-wheat for white bread and use less bread and more vegetables or fruit. Rather than making candied sweet potatoes, roast root vegetables for a naturally sweet side dish.

Then, after the big meal, divide up leftovers, and send them home with your guests. Or freeze them in small portions to enjoy every now and then. You can also turn leftovers into a salad: Heap greens in a bowl, and top with leftover turkey, vegetables, and a spoonful of cranberry sauce.

Finally, build in an active family holiday tradition, too. You could participate in a charity run or walk on Thanksgiving morning—many communities have these. Play a touch football game in the afternoon. Or after eating, get everyone to bundle up for a walk around the neighborhood. ♡



IN THE KITCHEN

Breakfast bowls

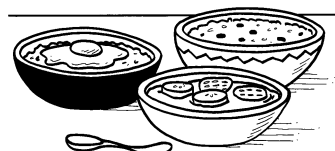
Cereal isn’t the only thing to eat out of a bowl for breakfast. Consider these ideas that pack nutrition and taste into a bowl.

Fruit smoothie. In a blender, combine 1 frozen banana, ½ cup frozen blueberries, and ½ cup almond milk. Pour into a bowl. Top with sliced strawberries, sliced bananas, and nuts.

Mexican quinoa. Combine 1 cup water and ⅓ cup quinoa in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover, lower heat, and simmer until the water is absorbed, 15–20 minutes. Let sit for

5 minutes, and place in a bowl. Whisk 3 tbsp. plain Greek yogurt with the juice of ½ lime, and pour over the quinoa. Add canned black beans (drained, rinsed), diced avocado, and salsa.

Oatmeal and egg. Stir ½ cup quick-cooking oats into 1 cup boiling water. Simmer 5 minutes. Then, crack an egg into a small skillet (coated with cooking spray), and cook until white is set, about 3 minutes. Put oatmeal into a bowl, slide the egg on top, and sprinkle with 1 tbsp. shredded cheddar cheese. ♡



OUR PURPOSE

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

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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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