

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

October 2016



**BEST BITES**

## Celery stuffers

Children love the ease of finger food, and stuffed celery sticks are especially fun to make and eat!

Try kid-friendly spreads like chicken or tuna salad, cream cheese, and all kinds of nut butters. Let your youngster spread the filling and top with halved grapes, dried cranberries, capers, shredded carrots, or pitted olives.



## Create new games

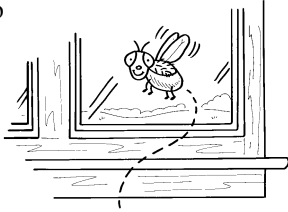
Challenge your child to make up games with vigorous activity like running and jumping. For example, she and her friends could break into teams and act out “athletic” versions of fairy tales for the other team to guess. When one team sees the other “climbing down” and running, they might guess that Jack (and the Beanstalk) is running away from the giant.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Bones are living tissues that are constantly breaking down and rebuilding. Weight-bearing exercise encourages this process by making bones work harder to overcome the pull of gravity. Help your youngster build strong bones by encouraging him to do this type of exercise, such as walking, climbing stairs, playing soccer or basketball, dancing, and hiking.

## Just for fun

**Q:** What spends the day at the window, goes to the table for meals, and hides at night?



**A:** A fly.

Magnolia Independent School District  
Kimberly Ohlendorf, MS, RD, Child Nutrition Director

## Everyday veggies

**Wanted:** Children who happily eat their veggies!

If you're looking for ways to add vegetables to your youngster's diet, these approaches are a good place to start.

### Put vegetables first

Serving steamed broccoli alongside French fries? Broccoli may lose out. But studies show that children eat more of a food when it is served alone—so try beginning your meal with a first course of crunchy broccoli slaw. That way, the green veggie will be the focus of your child's attention.

### Get your child involved

Kids are more likely to try foods they choose and help prepare. During supermarket trips, ask your youngster to select a new vegetable. Let him decide how to cook it and what flavorings to add. As a final touch, he can bring the



finished dish to the table and introduce it to the rest of the family.

### Don't give up

Your child might need 10 or more exposures before he'll eat an unfamiliar food. Keep serving the new vegetable every few days. You could change things up by preparing it differently, perhaps grilling, steaming, or serving it raw with a healthy dip. Odds are your youngster will eventually warm up to it! ♥

## An active family

As fall's cooler temperatures set in, use these ideas to keep your kids from turning into couch potatoes.

**Pick the activity.** Together, write active ideas on craft sticks, one per stick. *Examples:* freeze tag, pillowcase race. Have your youngster put the sticks in a colorful basket or an empty can covered with wrapping paper. Each day, she could pull one out to do.

**Walk for a cause.** Help your child find a weekend charity walk that raises funds for a cause she cares about. Then, sign everyone up to participate. Both your family and your community will benefit. ♥



# Food allergies: Staying safe

For parents of children with food allergies, mealtimes can be filled with anxiety. Here are strategies that will help.

● **Always read food labels—and teach your youngster to read them, too.** Check the ingredient list, including words in parentheses, such as “whey (milk)” or “lecithin (soy).” Also, look for statements like “contains shellfish” or “may contain nuts.” And remember that labels might not always show what’s in an ingredient. For example, a hummus label may list tahini



but not say tahini is made from sesame seeds.

● **Avoid sharing food.** As hard as it may be, make sure your allergic child knows not to share food. You can role-play to help her develop strategies for responding. A simple “No thanks” may be enough to

stop (well-intentioned) friends from swapping food. Or she might say, “Thanks, but my body can’t handle eggs.”

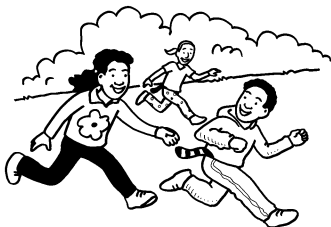
● **Prevent cross-contact.** This occurs when allergens from one food touch and contaminate another food. Train family members to wash hands with soap and water before and after eating. Thoroughly clean cooking equipment, surfaces, dishes, and silverware that touch allergenic foods, again using soap and water. If necessary, have separate sets of utensils for foods that contain allergens. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER Football + fall = fun

Fall is football season! Play these non-contact games perfect for young children.

### Step-toss

Divide into teams of two players. Each team takes a turn tossing a football from one player to the other. After each toss, both players take one step backward. The last team able to catch a toss wins.



### Foxes and hens

The “fox” stands in the middle of the field. All the other players are “hens” — they each tuck a sock into their waistbands and stand at one end. Then, the hens start running around while the fox tries to pull out their socks. Any hen whose sock is pulled joins forces with the fox. Play continues until one hen remains. He’s the winner and becomes the fox in the next round. ●

## PARENT TO PARENT Your own meal kits

I got a flyer advertising a service that delivers boxes of premeasured ingredients and recipes straight to your door. That sounded so convenient, but it was expensive.

I realized I could create my own meal kits that would be just as handy—and much cheaper. So once a month, my son and I assemble ready-to-make dinners. One time, we filled freezer bags with boneless chicken breasts, sliced bell peppers and onions, and a sauce made of honey, apple cider vinegar, chili powder, cumin, and paprika. Another day we combined pork shoulder, cranberry sauce, and chopped onion. We freeze the bags, labeled with their ingredients and the date.

Then, to use a kit, we thaw it in the refrigerator overnight. The next morning, we dump the ingredients in the slow cooker and set it at low for 6–8 hours. *Voila!* Served with a quick salad, my family gets a healthy meal—without the delivery price. ●



## IN THE KITCHEN Muffin pan minis

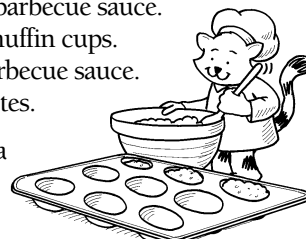
For dinners that are fun, convenient, and portion-controlled, make these three recipes using a lightly greased 12-cup muffin pan.

- 1. Turkey meatloaf.** Combine 1 lb. ground turkey, 1 chopped onion, 1 chopped carrot, 1 egg, ½ cup quick-cooking oats, and ½ cup barbecue sauce. Divide equally into the muffin cups. Brush tops with more barbecue sauce. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes.

- 2. Crustless quiche.** In a bowl, whisk together 3 eggs, 1 cup milk, and

salt and pepper to taste. Scatter 2 cups cooked chopped vegetables and 1 cup packed shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese among the muffin cups. Then, pour the egg mixture on top. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Cool 10 minutes.

- 3. Zucchini fritters.** Beat 3 large eggs in a bowl. Mix in 2 grated large zucchinis, 1 chopped medium onion, 1 cup grated cheddar cheese, and ½ cup breadcrumbs. Divide into the muffin pan. Bake at 400° for 15–18 minutes. ●



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

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