

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

January 2017



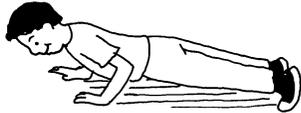
## BEST BITES

### School meals rock

Would your youngster enjoy X-ray Vision Carrots, Rainbow Risotto, or Squish Squash Lasagna? Today's school lunches feature plenty of good-for-you foods, often with cool names. Interest your child in eating her school's meals by reviewing the weekly menus together and helping her make choices. Each evening, let her describe the tastes to you.

### Push it

Push-ups are a terrific strength-training exercise. They're also convenient—they can be done anywhere. When



your youngster does them, have him keep his body "flat like a table" from the top of his head down to his heels. How many can he do? Even better: Do push-ups alongside him, and challenge each other to do one more!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Dish sponges are frequently teeming with bacteria. Regularly sanitizing yours will help keep your family healthy. Run it through a dishwasher on the "heated dry" setting, or soak it for 5 minutes in a solution of 2 tbsp. bleach to 3 cups water. Sponges without any metal may be soaked in water and microwaved on high for 1 minute.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why do fish live in salt water?

**A:** Because pepper makes them sneeze.



## Kids + cooking = fun!

Encourage your child to eat healthier foods by getting her involved "behind the scenes" in meal preparation. Here are some motivating and inviting strategies.

### Focus on shapes

Foods come in many different shapes. To highlight circles, your youngster might toss together a salad of cooked wagon wheel pasta, cherry tomatoes, and round yellow bell pepper slices. Or help her make "veggie cubes" by cutting sweet potatoes and parsnips into square shapes, mixing with a little olive oil, and roasting at 400° for 20 minutes or until tender.

### Explore textures

Show your child how the texture of food can change. Shred a bunch of fresh kale, and have her taste it raw. Then, ask her to stir the rest with Italian dressing and let it sit for 30 minutes. How does the texture feel when she tastes it again? You could explain that the vinegar (which

contains acetic acid) in the dressing softens the kale.

### Dinner and a movie

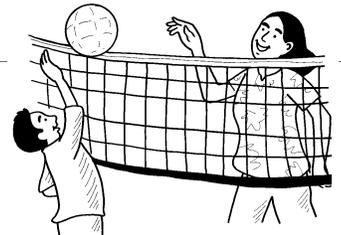
Make a meal with your youngster based on a favorite movie—and then watch the movie after you eat. Spaghetti and meatballs are perfect for *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. Roasted salmon with potatoes is a popular Norwegian dish and pairs well with *Frozen*. ♥



## Borderline overweight: Catch it early

Today, many children are on the verge of being overweight. If your youngster is showing signs of becoming too heavy, try these tips at the table:

- Children don't need the same-size portions as adults. Start your youngster's meal with servings that are  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the size of yours. He may ask for more if he's still hungry.
- During family meals, stop "speed eating" by suggesting that everyone sip water between bites. Slowing down the pace will give your child more time to feel satisfied, making it less likely he'll overeat.
- Serve fresh fruit for dessert. It's delicious on its own, paired with plain yogurt, or blended into a smoothie. ♥

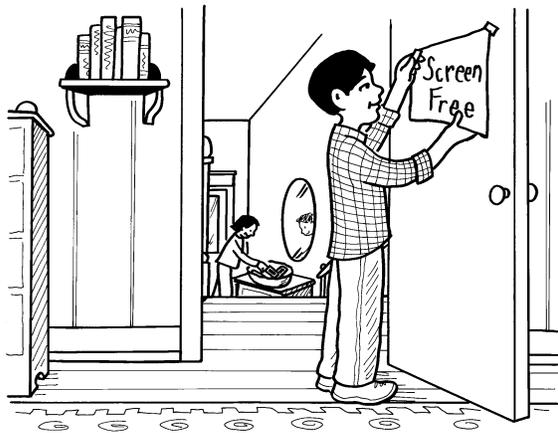


# Put away the screens

Are you concerned that your child is spending too much time on screens? You're not alone. Help him unplug with these four steps.

**1. Schedule it in.** Limit screen time to a few programs a week or a specific window of time. Your youngster can feel more in control by making his own calendar and blocking out his screen time. Then, encourage him to add in homework time, chores, reading time, and other activities.

**2. Find new pursuits.** Substitute active time for screen time by letting your child select a sport to explore, perhaps gymnastics or karate. To get the entire family involved,



**4. Design a screen-free bedroom.** Let your child arrange his room however he pleases—as long as he leaves the electronics elsewhere. He could choose the location for where they “sleep,” perhaps in a basket in the kitchen or by the front door. ●

hold regular non-screen events like charades, biking, or volunteering.

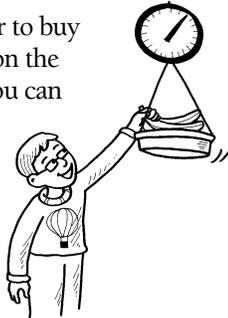
**3. Get creative.** Use your time together to inspire your youngster's imagination. Put away your own devices while you make crafts or sing songs, for instance. Your behavior will help shape his behavior.

## Q&A

### Organic quandary

**Q:** I see more and more organic fruits and vegetables in the grocery store. Are they really healthier? They can be so expensive!

**A:** Some people prefer to buy organic to cut down on the chemicals they eat. You can decide what makes the most difference and fits your budget. For example, pesticides aren't as likely to get through produce with thick coverings. So you might buy regular bananas, avocados, corn, pineapples, melons, grapefruit, and oranges.



On the other hand, more pesticides get through fruits and vegetables with edible or thin skin. You may opt for organic when buying celery, apples, strawberries, greens (lettuce, spinach, collard greens), or cherries.

*Note:* Whether you buy organic or conventional produce, wash all items (even melons) thoroughly before eating. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Winter walkabouts

Take your family on a walking tour of your city or town, and enjoy these active games.

**Story walking.** Your youngster begins a made-up story about something she sees along the route. At the next block, a second person picks up the storyline. A third storyteller takes over at block three, and so on. End the story after everyone has been a storyteller. Then, start a new tale.

**I Spy.** Choose a person to be the first “spy.” She picks an object or a place everyone can see and announces it with a clue: “I spy something that's round and encourages splashing.” Everybody takes turns asking yes-or-no questions until someone guesses correctly (a birdbath). That person leads a speed walk to the right location—and gets to be the next spy. ●



## IN THE KITCHEN

### One-pot wonders

It's comfort-food season! Keep warm with these easy one-pot meals.

#### White turkey chili

Saute 1 chopped onion and 3 minced garlic cloves in 2 tbsp. oil in a large pot until soft. Add 1 lb. ground turkey and cook until browned. Stir in 2 tsp. ground cumin, 1 14.5-oz. can chickpeas (drained, rinsed), and 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat. Simmer for 15 minutes.

#### Cod in tomato broth

In a large pot, combine ½ red onion (thinly sliced), 1½ cups diced tomatoes, 4 small potatoes (cubed), 1 tsp. dried basil, and 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce heat. Simmer until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes.

Add 4 skinless cod fillets to the pot, and replace cover. Simmer for about 7 minutes or until the fish is opaque and cooked through. ●



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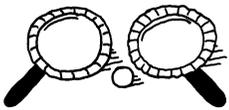
## BEST BITES

### Easy access

Make healthy snacks the first thing your child sees when she's hungry. Pick a cabinet or pantry shelf that is at her eye level, and stock it with raisins, baked crackers, and whole-wheat pretzels. The same for the fridge: Put string cheese, broccoli pieces, and fruit within easy reach.

### Paper plate Ping-Pong

Here's a fun idea for indoor physical activity. Let your youngster make paddles by gluing jumbo craft sticks to the backs of two sturdy paper plates. Use the paddles to lob a Ping-Pong ball back and forth in the air. Or he could just hit a ball against a garage or basement wall for solo practice.



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paper plates. Use the paddles to lob a Ping-Pong ball back and forth in the air. Or he could just hit a ball against a garage or basement wall for solo practice.

### DID YOU KNOW?

More restaurants are adding calorie counts to their menus. The numbers can help you make smart choices for your family when you go out. You may opt to skip extras when you see how many more calories they have. And remember that calories are hard to burn off—a 65-pound child has to ride a bike for about 30 minutes to burn 90 calories.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the giant eat a volcano?

**A:** He wanted a hot lunch!



## On tonight's menu...

Streamline weeknight dinner planning, and give your family interesting meals to look forward to, by coming up with daily themes. Let your child help you brainstorm ideas and menus. These thoughts will get you started.

### Meatless Monday

**What:** Go vegetarian once a week.

**How:** Make whole-grain bowls. Top cooked brown rice, farro, or quinoa with vegetables and a protein like beans, a fried egg, or grilled tofu.

### Tortilla Tuesday

**What:** Tortillas are a versatile base for a healthy meal.

**How:** Use any combination of meat, cheese, and veggies, and roll up into a burrito. *Example:* Grilled chicken, arugula, feta cheese. Or layer the ingredients instead to make tostadas.

### Waffle Wednesday

**What:** Don't limit your waffle maker to breakfast!

**How:** Get your youngster grilling panini-like sandwiches using soft whole-grain bread, roasted vegetables, and provolone



cheese. *Tip:* Brush a little olive oil on the outside of each slice so it browns.

### Throwback Thursday

**What:** Spotlight oldies but goodies.

**How:** Let your child list old family favorites, perhaps meatloaf or baked ziti. Then, look for ways to make them healthier (use lean ground beef or whole-wheat pasta, for example).

### Stir-fry Friday

**What:** This is the night for anything stir-fried.

**How:** Get out the wok or a deep skillet, and stir-fry vegetables with shrimp, chicken, or pork. To create a noodle dish, add rice noodles to the mixture. ●

## Chores reinvented

Chores are an easy way to add physical activity—and responsibility—into your youngster's routine. Try these twists.

**Sock dusting.** Have your child wear a pair of old white socks on her hands. Then, she can clean surfaces all over the house with her "sock hands."

**Undercover chores.** Refer to chores using code names. Picking up a messy room could be "Mission Impossible." Signal it's time to change the bed with "Inside Out." And "Dust Bunny Detail" might be code for sweeping the floor or vacuuming.

**Dance party.** Turn chore time into party time by putting on some tunes. Dance and sing your way to a clean house together. ●



# New spins on salad

Want your youngster to eat more vegetables? Go beyond the traditional salad bowl with these clever suggestions.

**Chopped salads.** Cut salad ingredients into small pieces. Begin with a sturdy lettuce like romaine. Have your child select three or four other ingredients, perhaps cucumbers, bell peppers, and avocado. She could rinse the items and help you chop them. Then, let her toss everything in a large bowl with a bit of her favorite dressing.



**Stick salads.** No utensils needed when you put salad on a stick! Help your youngster spike her preferred veggies on a toothpick. Encourage her to try new tastes by skewering cherry tomatoes, cucumber chunks, and spinach leaves. Or try chunks of mango, papaya, and pineapple with turkey cubes.

**Finger salads.** Kids love finger foods, so why not make salad something your child can eat with her fingers? Fill Belgian endive leaves with shredded carrots and roasted beets. Or cook and chill jumbo pasta shells and stuff with chickpeas, marinated artichokes, and diced tomatoes. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER



## Be active— 10 minutes at a time

Inspire your youngster to get fit with 10-minute bursts of activity. Here are ways to put him on the road to getting 60 minutes, or more, of exercise a day:

✓ Do a routine with jumping jacks, toe touches, knee lifts, squats, and lunges. One person can be the leader, and the other follows his moves.



✓ Take “power walks” around the block or up and down the stairs in your apartment building. Pump your arms as you go.

✓ Start a skipping contest. You could skip across the backyard, through a nearby field, or down the sidewalk.

✓ Grab a ball, Frisbee, or beanbag, and play catch outside. Mix things up by catching with both hands, with one hand, or over your head. *Bonus:* Your child will also practice hand-eye coordination. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

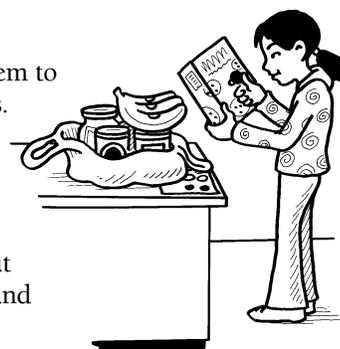
### Green means go!

I was frustrated because I couldn't seem to get my children to choose healthy foods.

While sitting at a red light one day, an idea suddenly dawned on me. Why not try a traffic-light approach to the foods in our house?

So I bought red, yellow, and green stickers and went home to discuss the plan. First, we talked about what makes a food healthy—it is high in nutrients and low in sugar, fat, and salt. Then I suggested we put a green sticker on foods to “go on” (fruits, vegetables), yellow on “sometimes” items (apple juice, cold cuts), and red on foods to “stop and think about” (cookies, ice cream).

Now when we get home from shopping, my kids have a job: label each item red, green, or yellow. And I'm happy to say they're going for the green most often! ♥



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Fishing for tacos

Eating fish will give your youngster essential nutrients to keep his heart and brain healthy. Follow these steps for delicious fish tacos your family is sure to enjoy.

**1. Make the fish.** In a skillet coated with 1 tbsp. olive oil, saute four 4-oz. tilapia fillets for 3 minutes on each side. Or rub four skinless 4-oz. salmon fillets with olive oil, place on a foil-lined sheet pan, and roast at 400° for 12 minutes.



**2. Prepare the vegetables.** Heat 1 tbsp. olive oil in a skillet, and saute 1 sliced onion, 1 sliced green bell pepper, and ½ lb. sliced mushrooms until soft.

**3. Mix the salsa.** Stir together 1 cup chopped pineapple, 2 chopped plum tomatoes, ½ cup chopped red onion, ¼ cup chopped red bell pepper, 1 minced jalapeño pepper, and juice of 1–2 fresh limes.

**4. Assemble the tacos.** Break the fish into chunks, mix with the vegetables, and divide among eight taco shells. Top with salsa. Yum! ♥

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## BEST BITES

### I'm full

Help your child avoid overeating by taking time to talk about the color, texture, or taste of his food. If you say, "I love the color of carrots," he may respond, "I like how crunchy they are." By stopping to think, he'll slow down his eating pace, giving him time to feel full.

### Building strength

Let your youngster create her own weights using two empty quart-sized milk jugs. Help her fill them a quarter-full with sand or dry rice and screw on the cap. Suggest that she hold one in each hand as she squats, lunges, or does bicep curls. As she gets stronger, she could add sand or rice to make her weights heavier.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Most children consume too much sodium. Lower your child's salt intake by offering a variety of spices and fresh herbs instead. Let him smell the basil, oregano, or ginger and sprinkle it in while you're cooking. *Idea:* Read spice jar labels together for ideas of where to use the spices. He'll learn about different flavors—and forget about the salt shaker!

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do you fix a torn pizza?

**A:** With tomato paste.



## Go for whole grains

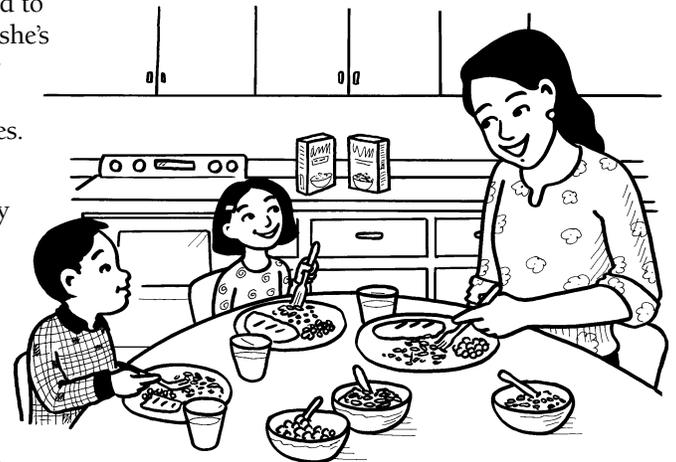
Get your youngster used to eating whole grains while she's young, and you'll help her build a healthy habit for a lifetime. Try these strategies.

### Give details

Begin by explaining why whole grains are good for her. You can tell her that these grains are still "wearing their coats"—they contain the entire grain kernel with all its fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Processed grains like white bread have the outer layer removed, so they've "lost their jackets"—where the important nutrients are.

### Make it gradual

Help your youngster adjust to whole grains by working them in gradually. For instance, make both white and brown rice, and mix them together. Or prepare regular and whole-grain pasta, and toss them in a bowl with sauce. As she becomes accustomed to the taste, build up to three-quarters whole grains and then eventually to all whole grains.



### Use daily

Try adding whole grains to foods your child regularly eats. You can stir oats into lean ground beef when you're fixing hamburgers. Or put barley or bulgur wheat in soups and casseroles. When shopping, go for the whole-grain varieties of bagels and tortillas.

*Note:* Many chronic conditions that develop later in life might be avoided by eating more whole grains. The fiber and other natural compounds may reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. ♥

### Get your winter wiggles out

Winter's chill might still be lingering, but your youngster can burn off pent-up energy—and get physical activity—with these indoor ideas.

● **"Drive" around the house.** Let your child use a kitchen pot lid as a pretend steering wheel. He could pick up speed by marching down the hallway or slow down as he maneuvers around furniture.

● **Follow the path.** Have your youngster make a color trail with different-colored socks (or pieces of construction paper). Then, take turns saying a color, and everyone has to walk down the path, stepping only on that color. *Variation:* Step on any color except the one called out. ♥



# O&A Healthy after-school snacks

**Q:** I'm concerned that my son snacks too much after school. How should I handle this?

**A:** Most children are hungry when they get home from school—it's a long time since lunch and a few hours until dinner. So think of your son's snack as a bridge between meals.

The important thing is to make sure the snacks he eats are healthy ones. This is a good time to get in nutrients he may be short on,



like vitamins A (dried apricots), C (oranges), D (fortified milk), and E (avocado), plus minerals like calcium (bok choy) and magnesium (garbanzo beans).

The best options are often smaller portions of foods you would normally eat at mealtime, such as turkey sausage tucked into a mini pita or a cup of tomato soup. In fact, try to avoid foods typically sold as snacks, like cookies, cakes, crackers, chips, and fruit drinks. They're loaded with sugar and empty calories that will give him only a short burst of energy—and won't satisfy his hunger for the long term. ●

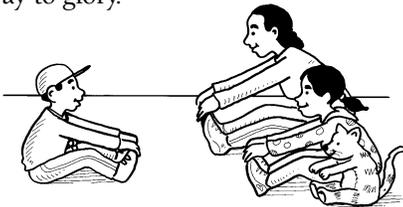
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Stage a performance

Encourage your youngster to put on a live show that highlights fitness. No props required! Suggest these three themes.

**1. Imagine the action.** Your little actor may decide to be an action hero who saves the planet from aliens. What leaps and bounds will he use to rescue small children and animals?

**2. Set up for sports.** Maybe your child will reenact a scene from his favorite sports movie. He might act out a character hitting the ball and running around the bases or be a track star hurdling his way to glory.



**3. "If I were a teacher..."** Ask your youngster to pretend he's the PE teacher at school. He could demonstrate games or exercises he will teach the kids—and then lead you in a "class." ●

## IN THE KITCHEN

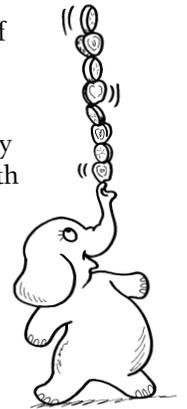
### Inspired by Dr. Seuss...

March 2 is Dr. Seuss's birthday. Celebrate his gift of rhyme with some cooking time!

**Cat-in-the-Hat fruit snacks.** Your child can make the cat's hat by alternating strawberry halves and banana slices on a plate. To enjoy her snack, she could dip the fruit into Greek yogurt sweetened with a little honey.

**Green Eggs and Ham.** Heat 1 tsp. olive oil in a skillet. Add 5 oz. (about 3 cups) fresh spinach leaves, and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Pour in 2 whisked eggs, and stir until they're set. The spinach turns them green! Serve with lean ham slices.

**Who hash.** In honor of the tiny Whoville-ians in *Horton Hears a Who*, dice potatoes, carrots, and radishes. In a skillet, heat 2 tbsp. olive oil, and saute 4 cups of the vegetables until tender. Add 2 cups shredded leftover pot roast or chicken. Heat through. ●



## Savvy food shopping

Serving healthier food to your family and saving money can go hand in hand. Here's how:

- To cut down on impulse purchases, make a shopping list, and stick to it. Also, don't shop when you or your children are hungry. *Tip:* Enjoy a healthy meal or snack together before heading to the store.
- Consider less-expensive sources of protein. Eggs, beans, and tofu usually cost less than meat or fish.

- Buy in bulk for family staples. For instance, get family packs of chicken, and freeze meal-size portions. Or purchase rice, cereal, and other grains in bulk, and store in airtight containers.
- Avoid packaged cookies, bakery items, processed foods, and frozen treats. They're not only high in fat and low in nutrients, they're also pricey. ●



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