

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

May 2008

Saint Matthew PEP Grant
Building Healthy Bodies Together

BEST BITES

Ballpark food

Warm weather may mean ball games and amusement parks, but it doesn't have to mean hot dogs and fries. Encourage your children to make healthy choices, such as a grilled chicken sandwich rather than a double cheeseburger. Other good options: crab cakes, salads, wraps, and sunflower seeds.



DID YOU KNOW?

Many youngsters tend to gain weight over the summer. How can you prevent this in your house? Make sure your children get exercise, don't fill up on high-calorie snacks or soda, and stay active. When kids have too much free time, they often spend it munching in front of a TV.



The right activity

Finding a sport your child likes can be as simple as asking her. Rather than assuming she'll want to play soccer or take ballet, talk to her first. Letting her choose her own activity will improve the odds that she'll find something she likes—and stick with it.

Just for fun



Q: What's green and bumpy and jumps every few seconds?

A: A pickle with hiccups!

Picnic and play

Picnic season is here! Enjoy family time with these fun ideas for summer eating and outdoor play.

Have a ball

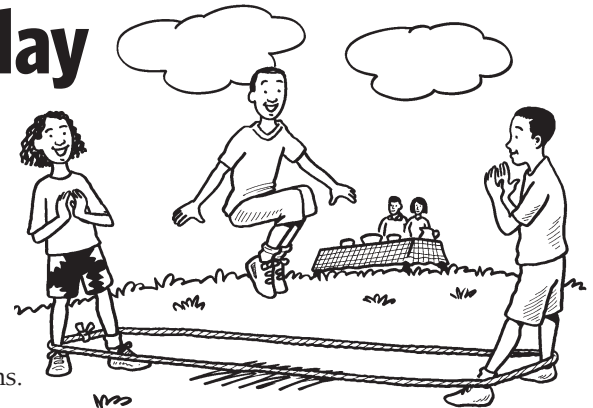
The food: Pack round foods, such as mozzarella balls and cherry tomatoes. Make a fruit salad of blueberries and melon balls, or take whole peaches, nectarines, and plums.

The games: Play badminton, croquet, or softball. Or try soccer tag: While each person dribbles his own soccer ball, the person who is "It" has to tag the others out—with his hands—while still controlling the ball with his feet.

Jump for it

The food: Celebrate the Beijing Summer Olympics with a Chinese chicken salad. Combine cooked chicken chunks with shredded lettuce, steamed asparagus pieces, and crunchy noodles. For the dressing, mix olive oil, apple cider vinegar, and low-sodium soy sauce.

The games: Play Chinese jump rope. Two people stretch an elastic rope (or rubber



bands looped together) around their ankles and call moves to a third person: "in" (jump inside the rope), "out" (jump out), "side-by-side" (one foot in, one foot out).

Get wet

The food: Enjoy a water-themed picnic by a pond. Serve "tuna canoes" (celery stalks filled with tuna salad), "seashells" (pasta shells with mixed vegetables and fat-free Italian dressing), and baked fish-shaped crackers.

The games: Run relay races with wet sponges. Have a hula hoop water balloon toss: One person holds a hula hoop at his side, and the others try to throw a water balloon through the hoop. ♡

Safe outdoors

The long days of summer are perfect for outdoor exercise. Keep your children safe with these tips:

- Be sure they wear helmets for biking, and wrist guards, knee pads, and helmets when in-line skating, riding scooters, or skateboarding.
- Watch your youngsters closely when they're in the pool. Swim only where there's a lifeguard on duty.



- Prevent sunburn by applying sunscreen, even on cloudy days, and having children wear hats.
- On playgrounds, keep youngsters in your sight. Encourage safe play (sitting when going down sliding boards, getting off a seesaw carefully).
- Have them wear sneakers or other closed shoes so they don't trip. Also, avoid necklaces, hoop earrings, or drawstrings on hoods that can get caught on toys or equipment. ♡

Good-for-you foods

You want your child to eat the best foods. But how do you know which ones they are?

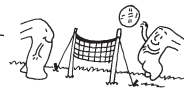
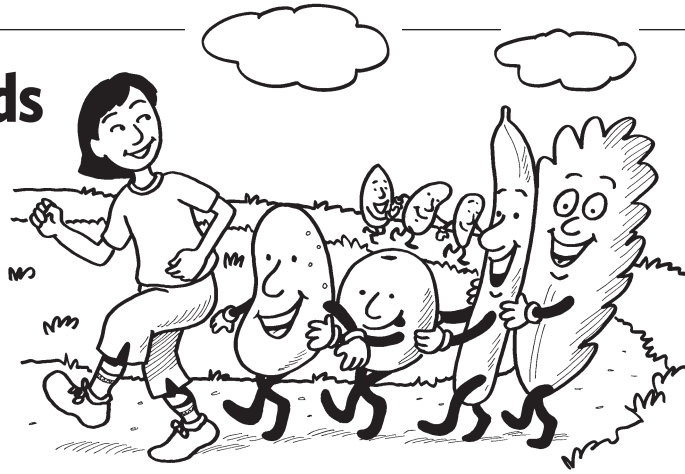
One way is to choose foods that are “nutrient rich”—meaning that, ounce for ounce, they have the most vitamins and minerals and the fewest calories. Here are a few to put on your shopping list.

Beans. Red kidney beans are high in fiber, and white beans (cannellini) are a great source of magnesium. Mix both types, along with navy, pinto, and garbanzo beans, and toss with low-fat French dressing for a Five-Bean Salad. *Note:* Drain canned beans first.

watercress provide calcium, vitamin C, and magnesium. For a simple side dish, microwave broccoli until tender, and then puree it in a food processor (or mash with a fork) with a little fat-free milk. ♥

Nuts. Almonds, hazelnuts, pine nuts, walnuts, and cashews will add calcium, vitamin E, and iron to your youngster’s diet. A handful—about 25 nuts—makes a perfect daily snack.

Vegetables. Broccoli and dark, leafy greens like kale, spinach, and



ACTIVITY CORNER

Create menus

What’s for dinner tonight?

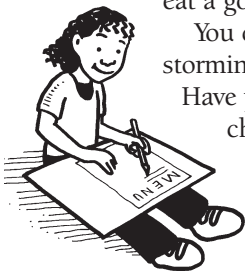
If you hear that question every day, try getting your youngster involved in the planning. She’ll learn about healthy food, appreciate what goes into putting dinner on the table, and be more apt to eat a good meal.

You can start by brainstorming favorite foods.

Have your child record the choices on a piece of paper. Talk about what makes a nutritious meal (lean meat,

chicken, fish; vegetables and fruits; whole grains like brown rice, multi-grain pasta, or whole-wheat rolls; fat-free milk or water).

Once you have a list of foods, you and your youngster can make up next week’s menu. Let her write it on a poster board, decorate it with markers or stickers, and hang the menu in the kitchen. Now, no one will have to ask what’s for dinner tonight! ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

On the grill

Fire up the barbecue for these kid-friendly dishes.

Shrimp kebabs. Marinate peeled, uncooked shrimp for 10–15 minutes in a mixture of lime juice, crushed garlic cloves, olive oil, and ground pepper. Thread the shrimp on skewers. Grill 2 minutes on each side until just cooked through.

Grilled veggies. Grill vegetables such as cauliflower pieces, halved red potatoes, and zucchini strips until tender. (Place on foil or in a grill basket to keep them from falling through the grill.) Serve with grated asiago or parmesan cheese and fat-free vinaigrette.

Banana melts. Peel back a strip of banana peel, and cut out a slit of the fruit. Stuff the opening with chocolate chips, marshmallows, granola, or trail mix. Replace the peel, and wrap in foil. Grill the banana for 7–9 minutes, and eat it with a spoon. ♥



Q & A Building confidence with sports

Q: My child won’t play sports because he doesn’t think he’s good enough. How can I build his self-esteem and encourage him to join in?

A: Start by explaining that kids develop at different rates. You can tell him that some kids who can’t hit a baseball in elementary school wind up being stars on their high school teams.

Then, practice together at home, where your youngster won’t feel self-conscious. You might

shoot baskets, kick around a soccer ball, play a game of catch, or go running.

Also, consider enrolling him in a class, such as martial arts or conditioning, that will help him feel more confident.

Most of all, keep sports fun. Try to keep the emphasis off winning by supporting your child’s efforts and cheering his progress. Let him know that the goal is to enjoy being active. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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