

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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BEST BITES

Math + fitness

Give your child a chance to combine math practice and exercise with daily "math breaks." Give directions that include a math problem and a fitness activity. For example, say, "Do $2 + 2$ jumping jacks" or "Do $11 - 2$ cartwheels."

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Healthy shopping

When you go to the grocery store, "shop the perimeter" first. The outside aisles are where you'll usually find fresh produce, healthy dairy products (fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese), and fresh meats, chicken, and fish. Fill your cart mostly with those items, and then get what you need from the middle of the store.

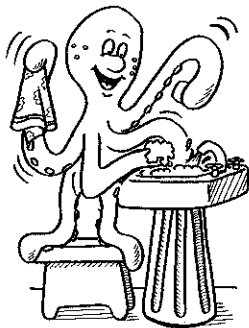
DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that students who skip breakfast have shorter attention spans and don't do as well on tests. Make sure your youngster gets up in time to have a nutritious breakfast either at home or at school. *Tip:* If he's having trouble waking up early enough, move his bedtime back.

Just for fun

Q: What's the worst thing about being an octopus?

A: Washing your hands before meals!



Snack attack

"I'm starving!" When your child bursts through the door after school or day care, she's probably hungry. Try these tips for healthy snacks that will give her the energy she needs to play and do homework.

Stock the kitchen

Whatever is in the house is what your youngster will eat—so shop with that in mind. Get interesting fruits and vegetables in different colors. Buy mango or peach salsa, and let your child dip in veggie sticks (carrot, celery, jicama). Stock popcorn to air pop (rather than getting less healthy microwave popcorn). Then, offer her choices. She'll have a say in what she eats, but she'll be choosing only from healthy foods.

Have a mini-meal

Breakfast or lunch foods can make a good snack. You could serve oatmeal with raisins and nuts or tuck scrambled eggs into a pita pocket. Or try individual pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins. Top each half with a little tomato sauce, shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese, and



vegetables (sliced mushrooms, chopped onions), and bake until the cheese melts.

Build your own

Let your child get creative in the kitchen, and she'll be likely to eat the results. She can make kebabs by threading fruit (grapes, melon chunks) and low-fat cheese cubes onto toothpicks. Put out cookie cutters for her to cut sandwiches into fun shapes. Or she could spread peanut or almond butter on rice cakes, apples, or bananas and decorate them with raisins and nuts. ●

Feeling good about sports

Participating in sports can build your child up... or drag him down. Make athletics a positive experience for your youngster with these strategies:

- Keep games in perspective. At this age, sports should be about having fun and developing skills. Ask about his favorite part of practice or the most interesting play in the game, rather than focusing on his performance or the score.
- Encourage him to set goals—but make sure the goals are realistic. He might aim to touch the ball three times during a game or to try a move that he's been working on.
- Avoid comments about your youngster's size or body. Concentrate on the friends he is making, the places he is playing, and the effort he is putting forth ("I love how you tried to get the rebound"). ●



