

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2010

Anchorage School District
Student Nutrition Department

BEST BITES

Volunteer in PE

In PE class, your youngster will get exercise and learn skills to help her enjoy physical activity. Consider supporting the school's efforts—and your child's education—by asking the PE teacher how you can volunteer. She might need a parent to time races, set up obstacle courses, or assist at Field Day.

Bag your own lettuce



Bagged lettuce is convenient, but it can be expensive. Try this instead. Tear the leaves off a head of lettuce. Rinse, dry, and put into a large zipper bag (add a paper towel to remove extra moisture). Press the air out, and seal. Refrigerate for up to a week.

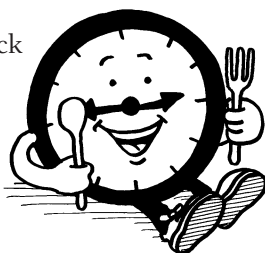
DID YOU KNOW?

About 7 in 10 children do not get enough vitamin D. The best source is the sun, and just 10–15 minutes a day outside is enough. Also, your youngster can drink milk or eat cereal that's fortified with vitamin D. This vitamin is important for bone and joint health because it helps the body absorb calcium.

Just for fun

Q: How do you know if a clock is hungry?

A: It goes back for seconds!



Set healthy goals

How can you motivate your child to eat well and be active? Together, set goals that will keep him on track and make him feel good when he succeeds. With these ideas, you can encourage him to aim high—and stay healthy.

Make a plan

Talk about ways your youngster can be healthy and grow strong. *Examples:* eating fruits and vegetables, drinking water instead of soda, playing outside every day. List all the ideas, and let your child pick a nutrition goal and an activity goal for each month. Try to make the goals as specific as possible (“eat one fruit and one vegetable at each meal” or “ride my bike 30 minutes a day”).

Stay motivated

Seeing his goals and his progress will inspire your youngster to stay committed. Have him write the goals on a poster board, decorate it, and hang it up. Then, post a calendar where he can keep a record. He could make a tally mark for each fruit and vegetable he eats and add



a sticker on days he meets his goal. Keep him pumped up by mentioning his goal each morning. (“Let’s ride bikes after school. Where should we go?”)

Celebrate success

Be excited by your youngster's progress—praise from you will go a long way. Let him know that you notice his efforts. (“Great idea to put a tomato slice on your bagel!”) When he meets his goal every day for a week, have a celebration. You might go bowling, play miniature golf, or attend a sporting event. Then, encourage him to start on his next goal. ●

“Anytime” or “sometimes” foods

Some foods are so healthy that your youngster can eat them anytime. Others might taste good but should only be eaten sometimes because they have more sugar or fat. Help your child understand the difference.

- Explain that foods like fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free yogurt and milk, whole grains, and lean meats are nutritious and can be eaten every day. Foods like cookies and chips are high in sugar, fat, or salt, so your youngster should have them just once in a while.

- Have your child help you put away groceries. As she places each item in the pantry or refrigerator, she can say whether it's an “anytime” food or a “sometimes” food. *Idea:* Let her mark small, blank stickers with “A” for “anytime” or “S” for “sometimes.” She can label the foods for an easy reminder. ●



Know the food groups

Youngsters should eat a variety of foods from each food group to get the vitamins and nutrients they need. Help your child learn about the food groups with these fun activities.

Name the group. During meals or at the grocery store, take turns calling out a food. The other person has to say which group it belongs to: fruits and vegetables; dairy; grains (bread, cereal, pasta, rice); or meat and meat alternatives (beef, pork, lamb, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts).



What's in the box? Help your child cover four empty cereal or cracker boxes (tops removed) with construction paper. Then, have her write the name of a food group on each box. Let her cut out pictures of foods from old magazines and sort them into the right boxes.

Make placemats. Cut poster board into placemat-sized pieces. Ask your youngster to draw pictures of foods from every food group on each placemat and label the groups with a marker. Cover the placemats with clear contact paper, or wrap them tightly with plastic wrap. Put the placemats at each person's spot at the table. Your child will be proud when her placemats help everyone remember the food groups. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Kick it!

Your child can get a great workout, have fun, and improve her soccer skills with these games.

Soccer tennis. Lay a long piece of rope on the grass. One player stands on each side. The players kick the ball back and forth to each other over the rope—letting it bounce only once or not at all before returning it.

Slalomcourse. Set up obstacles (cones, upside-down buckets) in a zigzag pattern in your yard or at a park. Each person kicks a soccer ball, weaving in and out of the obstacles, from the start to the finish and back—without hitting the obstacles. If a player's ball hits one, she goes back to the start line.



Target practice. Balance a soccer ball on top of a cone. Players take turns kicking another soccer ball at it. One point is scored each time the goal is toppled. ♥

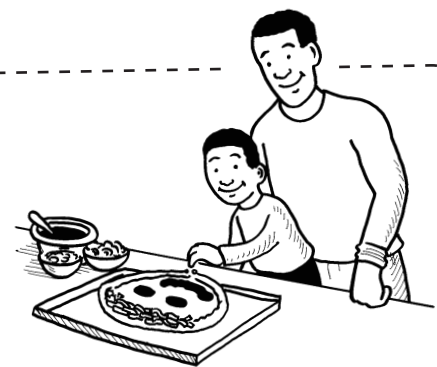


IN THE KITCHEN

Tasty art

With healthy ingredients and a little imagination, your youngster can make a craft project that's creative and delicious! Here are two ideas:

- Have him spread low-fat refried beans on a corn tortilla and make a design like a face or a house. Give him supplies such as grape tomatoes, black olives, grated low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded lettuce, and salsa. *Tip:* For a hot tortilla, microwave for one minute.
- Thaw frozen whole-wheat bread dough. Let your child roll it flat with



a rolling pin. Then, he can form the dough into letters, numbers, or animals. Have him place the pieces on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper for 15–20 minutes so the dough can rise. Bake at 375° until golden brown. ♥

Q & A Watching children outside

Q: *I want my kids to play outside. But between housework and the work I bring home from my job, sometimes it's hard to find time to watch them. What can I do?*

A: This is a problem shared by many busy parents. Why not try sharing the solution with other parents, too? Talk to neighbors who have children around the same age to see if they would be willing to swap “play duty.”

You could work out a schedule where you each take an afternoon

to supervise the kids outside. It's a good idea to set guidelines so your rules are consistent. For example, you could agree that kids will always wear helmets, knee pads, and wrist guards when they're on scooters. Or you might decide that they must stay in the backyard at all times. Explain the rules to the children—and let them begin enjoying their active time outdoors! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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