

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

January 2010

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Morris Educational Foundation

## 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 activ-  
ity. For example, say, “Do  $2 + 2$   
jumping jacks” or “Do  $11 - 2$  cart-  
wheels.” Then, let him give you  
instructions for your math break.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Kids tend to overeat  
when they have nothing  
to do. Try to avoid this by making  
sure your youngster is active after  
school. You might set a schedule for  
homework and playtime. Encourage  
her to play outside with neighbors  
or have friends over. Or sign her up  
for an activity like a sports league or  
a nature program.

### Donate healthy foods

Encourage your child to think about  
the needs of others. Let him help  
you find canned and boxed foods at  
home or in the grocery store to drop  
off at homeless shelters or food pan-  
tries. Encourage him to select healthy  
items, such as canned beans, tuna  
packed in water, oatmeal, and multi-  
grain pasta.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why aren't restaurants built in  
outer space?

**A:** Because they wouldn't have any  
atmosphere!



## Salad time

Would you like your youngster  
to eat more salad? Try tossing in  
a little creativity with the vege-  
tables! Here are a few ideas.

### Make your own

Let your child decide what to  
put in his salad by setting up a  
salad bar at home. You can put  
out a big bowl of lettuce and  
smaller bowls filled with differ-  
ent vegetables and toppings. Or let your  
youngster help make salad for the family  
and select the ingredients. A young child  
can wash and tear lettuce and sprinkle on  
vegetables that you've sliced. Show older  
children how to safely use a knife to cut up  
vegetables.

### Change the look

Salad doesn't have to be served in a  
bowl. Put it on a thin pizza crust (pur-  
chased from the grocery freezer section),  
slice into pizza-shaped triangles, and  
drizzle on dressing. Place a few spoon-  
fuls of salad onto a fat-free tortilla, and



roll into a burrito-shaped wrap. Or  
scoop out a whole tomato, and fill the  
shell with salad.

### Use interesting ingredients

Keep your youngster eating salad by  
adding variety. Small grape tomatoes give  
a burst of flavor. Mix in color with canned  
red beets or mandarin oranges. Include  
whole grains by spooning on cooked  
couscous, quinoa, or brown rice. Or top  
salads with crunchy chow mein noodles,  
sesame sticks, or chopped pecans.

*Tip:* Let your child try different low-fat  
dressings to find ones he likes. A fun and  
healthy option is salsa, especially fruity  
ones like mango or peach. ♥

## Stay healthy

Strawberries, carrots, eggs... These and other foods have vitamins that can boost your youngster's immune system and help prevent—or shorten—colds this winter. Use this list as a guide.

**Vitamin A.** Dark orange vegetables and fruits (carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, mangoes, apricots), dark green vegetables, milk, egg yolks.

**Vitamin C.** Citrus fruits (oranges, tangerines, grapefruit), strawberries, guava, kiwi, pears, cantaloupe, broccoli, cabbage.

**Vitamin E.** Eggs, whole grains, wheat germ, avocado, nuts, seeds.

**Zinc.** Milk, cheese, egg yolks, legumes (chickpeas, lentils, lima beans), whole grains, lean meat, chicken, fish.

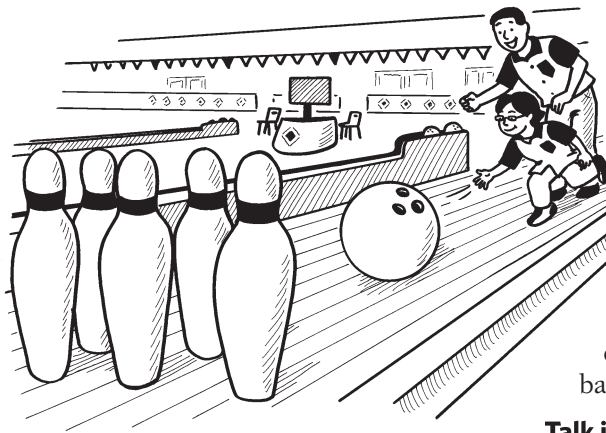
*Note:* Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent sickness. Get your youngster used to washing her hands often—and especially before preparing food or eating. ♥



# Be an active family

The family that plays together gets fit together! This year, try to add more physical activity into your family's life. Encourage your youngster to follow your lead with these tips.

**Have fun together.** Look for activities you both will enjoy. You might join a parent-child bowling league or take a beginning karate class at your community center. Plan active family events, such as a weekend bike ride or a hike in the woods. Show your child cheers you did in high school, and let her make up her own.



**Play ball!** Do you like to watch basketball? Does your youngster follow a favorite soccer team? Suggest going outside and practicing what you've seen. Shoot baskets, or kick a soccer ball back and forth.

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Take five

If your child has five minutes, he has time to fit in a workout. Here are three quick exercises.

#### Ball toss

Standing up, hold a medium-size ball at your chest. Toss it straight up in the air, and reach up high to catch it. Bring the ball back to your chest. Repeat 10 times.

#### Mountain climber

Start on all fours, with arms straight and palms flat on the floor. Lift your right knee toward your right arm, and move it back. Lift your left knee to your left arm and back. Quickly repeat for 1–2 minutes.



#### Hip raises

Sit with your legs straight out and your hands flat on the floor (facing out). Keeping your elbows straight, raise your hips until your body is straight and only your heels and hands touch the floor. Lower back down. Repeat 10 times. ♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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**Talk it up.** Let your child know that being active makes you feel good. ("It was great to walk at lunchtime today. I was ready for the afternoon!") *Tip:* Use the words "fun" or "play" when making suggestions. Many children—like many adults—think "exercise" sounds boring or hard. ♥

## IN THE KITCHEN

### Hot pots

When it's cold outside, warm up your family with hearty stews and soups. Try these.



**Beefy stew.** Brown 1½ lb. ground beef in a skillet, and drain. Place in a soup pot, and add 2 sliced potatoes, 2 sliced carrots, 1 bag frozen peas, 1 can tomato soup, and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Simmer for an hour until the vegetables are tender.

**Chinese noodle soup.** Heat 1 quart low-sodium broth (vegetable, chicken, or beef) in a large pot. Add 1 cup cooked chicken or cubed tofu. Stir in 1 can sliced water chestnuts, 1 can bamboo shoots (drained), ½ cup snowpeas, and ½ cup sliced mushrooms. Cook 10 minutes. Add 1 package thin Chinese noodles (or spaghetti), 1½ cups chopped bok choy or spinach, and 1 tsp. sesame oil. Cook 5 minutes longer. ♥

## Q & A I want that!

**Q:** My child always asks for the foods he sees advertised on TV, but I know they're often not healthy. How can I help him make nutritious choices?

**A:** This is a great time to help your youngster learn about advertising and media influences. Have him keep a log of food commercials while he watches TV. He can write down the product name and the claims made. For example, an ad might say the food will build muscles and make him stronger.

Then, with the list in hand, take a trip to the grocery store together. Let your child find the foods and read the nutrition labels. Ask him if he thinks the foods are healthy or not.

Discuss the trends you notice. Are there lots of sugary foods on his list? Are there fruits and vegetables? Explain that it's better to read food labels and make healthy decisions for himself than to choose foods based on commercials. ♥

