

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

May 2015



## BEST BITES

### Frozen yogurt bites

Here's a healthy treat that's fun to make and eat. Line a baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper. Pour any flavor of nonfat or low-fat yogurt into a zipper bag, seal, and snip off a bottom corner. Let your child squeeze dots of yogurt onto the pan. Freeze until solid.

### Kangaroo hop

Try this fitness idea from Down Under. Have your children hop like kangaroos by jumping with both feet and holding their hands in front of their chests. They can race each other by hopping from one end of a room (or yard) to the other. Or they could take turns being the leader and play Follow the Kangaroo.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The peels of fruits and vegetables are filled with nutrients and fiber. Encourage your youngster to eat whole apples, pears, peaches, and kiwi, or give her slices with the peel intact. The same goes for potatoes: Serve baked or sweet potatoes with the peel on—and set an example by eating it. *Note:* Be sure to rinse fruits and vegetables first.

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do you start a campfire with two sticks?

**A:** Make sure one is a match!



## All wet!

On a hot summer day, there's nothing better than getting wet. Try these "cool" ideas for physical activity.

- **Hose 'em off.** Play a game of water limbo. Hold the hose to create a horizontal stream of water (putting your finger over the nozzle), and players go under it "limbo-style." Lower the hose, and go again. If a player gets wet, she's out.
- **Wash the car.** Get out buckets, sponges, and car-wash soap, and have a family car wash. *Idea:* Your kids could wash their ride-on toys or bicycles, too.
- **Hike along streams and creeks.** Take a "science kit" with you. Your youngster might use a magnifying glass to peer at fish and insects. Or give her a bucket for collecting rocks or scooping up tadpoles (and then letting them go).
- **Go swimming.** Whether splashing in the pool, swimming laps, or playing Marco Polo with friends, your child will get exercise. *Note:* For safety's sake, be



sure she knows how to swim, and supervise her. Check your YMCA or parks and recreation department for low-cost lessons.

- **Play in the sprinkler.** Do double-duty while watering the lawn. Turn on music, and have your kids dance through the water. Or play old-fashioned games like Duck, Duck, Goose or Simon Says—in the sprinkler's spray.

- **Slip and slide.** Go to a water park. Or look for splash pads to jump around in at a nearby park, town square, or shopping center.

*Note:* Check water restrictions if your area is experiencing drought conditions. ●

## Celebrate with healthy food

Spring and summer call for celebration. Put healthy foods into your holidays with these suggestions.

### Cinco de Mayo

With your child, make a colorful strawberry-avocado pico de gallo to serve with tacos, burrito bowls, or quesadillas. Stir together 1 diced avocado, 1 cup sliced strawberries,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup diced red onion, juice of 1 lime, and 2 tbsp. fresh cilantro. For a spicy kick, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  fresh jalapeno (diced).

### Fourth of July

Give each person a slice of watermelon, and have a watermelon seed-spitting contest. Who can spit the seeds the farthest? Or put out the makings for ants-on-a-log (celery stalks, peanut or other nut butter, and raisins or dried cranberries, cherries, or blueberries). Compete to make the most interesting version or fit in the most raisins. Eat them, and make a few more! ●



# Make it whole (grain)

Help your youngster learn to eat more whole grains now, and you'll help him build a healthy habit for a lifetime. Consider these tips.

## Shopping

Teach your child what to look for on nutrition labels. Have him write words on index cards to carry to the grocery store and match up. *Examples:* whole grain, whole wheat, graham flour, rolled oats, oatmeal, brown rice, wild rice, popcorn, whole-grain barley, bulgur, quinoa, and wheat berries. Tell him if the whole grain is listed first, that means there's more of it than anything else.

## Eating at home

Put more whole grains into the foods you serve. For instance, add barley or wild rice to soups and casseroles.



Or use whole-wheat bread crumbs in meat-loaf or to bread baked chicken and fish. Also, mix whole-grain pasta with regular pasta, and blend brown and white rice. As your child gets used to the taste, you can move toward all whole grain.

## Eating out

When eating out, ask for whole grain. Encourage your youngster to request brown rice with his burrito, Chinese food, or sushi. Or he could ask for whole-grain bread or bun with his sandwich or burger. *Idea:* Have him make the request himself. He'll feel grown-up—and he'll get in the habit of asking for whole grains. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Ball games

When it comes to playing ball, baseball is just the start. Play ball with these three games, too.

**1. Move back.** Stand a foot apart, and toss a ball to each other. Take a step back, and throw and catch again. Keep moving farther apart. How far away can you go without the ball hitting the ground?

**2. No hands allowed.**

Lie on your backs. One person holds a ball between his feet and tosses it to another player. That person has to catch the ball with *his* feet and then toss it on. Continue tossing until the ball drops—and then start again.



**3. Z is for zebra.** In this game, each player has to clap once before catching the ball. If it drops, he gets a "z" for zebra, an "e" the next time, and so on. The first one to spell zebra loses. ♥

## Q&A What to do about processed food

**Q:** I know processed foods aren't as healthy as fresh, but they save so much time. Can you recommend convenience foods that are less processed?

**A:** It can be a challenge to avoid processed foods when grocery stores are filled with these timesavers. Sorting out the healthier from the less healthy processed foods will help.

Start by thinking "plain." For instance, buy plain frozen vegetables rather than those with sauce added. Choose fresh or frozen plain meat rather than packaged breaded chicken nuggets or frozen beef stroganoff.

There are other minimally processed foods that will save you time and are perfectly healthy, too. For example, get canned beans and canned tomatoes, but select ones labeled "no salt added" to keep things healthier. Or pick up fresh vegetables that have been trimmed, sliced, and packaged in bags.

No one would expect you to stay away from processed foods all the time, but buying more fresh or minimally processed foods will help provide an overall healthier diet for your family. ♥



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Summer skewers

Use these recipes for an all-skewer meal, or mix them into other summer menus.

**Honey-lime chicken**

Whisk together 3 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce, ¼ cup honey, 1 tbsp. olive oil, and juice of 2 limes. Pour over 2½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken (cut into chunks), and refrigerate at least 6 hours. Thread the chicken onto skewers, and grill until cooked through, 10–15 minutes.



**Greek salad**

On toothpicks, place cucumber chunks, feta cheese cubes, pitted black olives, and grape tomatoes. Brush lightly with olive oil.

**Frozen fruit**

Cut fruits like mango, pineapple, bananas, and kiwi into chunks. Freeze along with green and red grapes. When frozen, thread onto skewers. If desired, melt dark chocolate, and use a fork to drizzle a little chocolate onto each one. ♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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