

# Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Palos Heights School District 128  
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## BEST BITES

### Road trip activity

Planning a road trip over winter break? Take along a soccer ball or a Frisbee. Your child



could use these to let off steam—and get in some physical activity—during rest stops. Or teach her a few stretches to do on the way. For example, to loosen tight shoulders, slowly roll them forward 10 times and then backward 10 times.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can increase the whole grains your family eats by using white whole-wheat flour in recipes. This unbleached flour is milled from a type of wheat that is as nutritious as traditional whole wheat but milder in flavor. Replace up to half of the flour in your recipes with the white whole-wheat variety—without noticing a difference.

### Healthy apps

Try using free apps to help reach your family's health and fitness goals. Look for kid-friendly ones that let your youngster run and jump while he solves puzzles and plays games. Or find ones that let you track calories, create an exercise routine, or assemble an upbeat playlist to dance to.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the turkey cross the road?

**A:** It was the chicken's day off!



## Nutrition label reading 1-2-3

Help your youngster take charge of her health from the start by making healthy choices at the grocery store. Learning how to read the nutrition labels on food packages is as easy as 1-2-3!

### 1. Compare serving sizes

Have your child read the single-serving size on various cartons and bags. Does she think it's realistic? For example, a small package of chips may contain three servings. If she eats all of it, she has eaten three times the calories and salt shown. Help your youngster remember to check out serving sizes—and do the math!

### 2. Know your nutrients

Talk about where to look for higher or lower numbers on nutrition labels. For instance, healthier foods will be high in *fiber*, *vitamins*, or *minerals* and low in *sugar*, *sodium*, or *saturated fat*. Encourage your child to locate foods with 20%



or more Daily Values from the first group and 5% or less from the second group.

### 3. Read the ingredients

Ask your youngster to find the ingredient list, and then read it together. Point out that the items are listed in order from biggest to smallest amount by weight. Then, can she find foods with five or fewer ingredients? (Those tend to be healthier.) How about foods with sugar in the first few ingredients? (Those are less healthy.)

## Pinpointing the right sport

How do you find a sport or activity your child will love? Consider these suggestions.

**Ask for input.** Talk to your youngster about what activity interests him. He may already have one in mind from what he has enjoyed on the playground, watched older siblings play, or seen on TV.

**Match your child's personality.** An outgoing youngster might like a team sport, such as soccer, basketball, or hockey. A quieter one may prefer something that relies more on individual effort, like ice-skating, gymnastics, or swimming.

**Find a supportive coach.** Check out the instructors or coaches. The best ones are focused on developing skills, encouraging teamwork, and having fun. Coaches who emphasize competition and winning are probably not a good fit at this age.



# Ordering meals for kids, not kids' meals

Eating out is fun, fast, and convenient for many parents. The challenge is finding child-sized menu options that are both nutritious and appealing to your youngster. Use these strategies.

● **Request smaller portions.** Ask to order a half-size portion off the main menu—some restaurants will be willing to oblige. Or let your child make a healthy



appetizer into a meal by choosing soup, salad, shrimp cocktail, or turkey sliders.

● **Share an entree.** Think about splitting an entree with your youngster. Today's large portions mean that a single entree may be enough for both of you. *Tip:* Have your server bring an empty plate so you each have your own.

● **Look for updated kids' menus.** More fast-food restau-

rants are swapping out fried foods for grilled items, French fries for fruit, and soda for water or nonfat milk. Check around for the ones doing this, and make those your go-to places. You'll be able to take advantage of smaller portions at lower prices—without sacrificing nutrition. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Jump rope games

Jumping rope is great exercise and improves coordination. Here are two fun games to play.

#### Snake in the grass

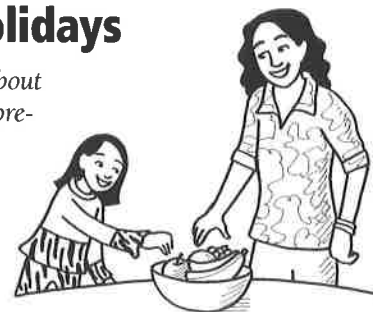
Stretch a jump rope along the floor, and have a player hold each end. They shake the rope so it wiggles like a snake. The other players take turns running toward the rope and jumping over it. Anyone whose feet touch the rope is out. Play until two kids are left—they become the next "snake holders."



## Q&A Get through the holidays

**Q:** *As much as I love the holiday season, I worry about my family gaining too much weight. How can we prevent that?*

**A:** Enjoying the holidays without going overboard on its goodies is a challenge—but not impossible. One strategy is to avoid grazing. Encourage your children to eat only when they're sitting down. Also, keep healthy snacks on hand, such as fruit and nuts, to help everyone resist the temptation to nibble on holiday treats.



Then, avoid skipping meals to "save up" calories and splurge at holiday meals or parties. This can set a model that you don't want your children following. Going a long time without eating puts your metabolism in starvation mode. At that point, they might lose the ability to sense when they're full until after they've eaten more calories than they had saved! ●

### In and out

Two people begin turning a jump rope in full circles. One by one, players run in, jump once, and run out. Next round, everyone jumps twice. Continue adding another jump for each round. If you don't jump enough times or you touch the rope, you're out. The last player remaining is the winner. ●

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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## IN THE KITCHEN

### Celebrate National Sandwich Day

The Englishman John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, is believed to have invented the sandwich. In honor of his birthday November 3, give these recipes a try.

**Caprese grilled cheese.** Brush a little olive oil on two slices of bread. Place one slice oil-side down, and layer with mozzarella cheese, a tomato slice, and fresh basil leaves. Top with the other slice of bread, oil-side up. Grill in a preheated pan for 10 minutes, turning once to brown each side.



**Turkey and cranberry sauce.** Spread cranberry sauce on one slice of whole-wheat bread. Add leftover Thanksgiving turkey, shredded romaine lettuce, and another slice of bread.

**Roast beef and cheddar wraps.** Cover a spinach tortilla with 2 tbsp. cream cheese, leaving a 2-inch border. Add deli roast beef slices, shredded cheddar cheese, grated carrot, and fresh spinach leaves. Roll tightly, tucking in the sides as you go. ●