

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Palos Heights School District 128  
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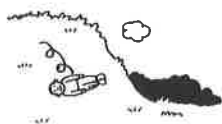
**BEST BITES**

## Freeze-ahead tacos

On busy weeknights, you'll be glad to have this "dinner in a bag" ready and waiting. Brown 1 lb. ground beef or turkey with 1 tbsp. low-salt taco seasoning. Drain, cool, and place in a freezer bag. In separate freezer bags, put 2 cups shredded cheddar and tortillas. Drop all three bags into one larger bag, and freeze. To serve your tacos, thaw overnight in the refrigerator, and reheat the meat.

## "Hilly" fitness

Find a hill, and get some exercise. It's great fun for kids (and even adults) to lie sideways, tuck in their arms, and roll down a hill. When you get to the bottom, run back up, and do it again. Children might race each other, or let kids race adults. First one to the bottom and back to the top wins.



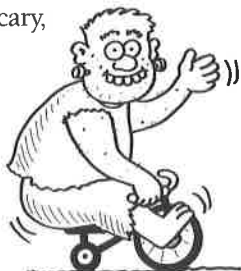
**DID YOU KNOW?**

Children who have televisions in their bedrooms are at a higher risk of being overweight. That's because they're more likely to be sitting or lying down in front of the screen, rather than running around playing. Also, kids tend to munch while watching TV, so extra screen time often means extra eating.

## Just for fun

**Q:** What's big, scary, and has three wheels?

**A:** A monster riding a tricycle!



## Creative snacking

Want your child to choose healthy snacks over junk food? Encourage her to dream up and prepare her own imaginative (and nutritious) snacks, and she'll be excited to eat them. These ideas are a fun place to start.

### Score a touchdown

Help your youngster cut two pieces of pumpernickel bread into matching football shapes. On one, she could layer apple slices, lean ham, and provolone cheese. Then, she can decorate the top slice with "laces" (perhaps a long green bean with jicama pieces going across). *Tip:* Suggest that she try various whole-grain breads and healthy fillings to create basketball, soccer, or other sandwich shapes.

### Roll into "sushi"

Let your child be a sushi chef. On a sheet of plastic wrap, have her pack cooked brown rice into a rectangle and line up vegetables or fruits along one long edge. The combinations are endless: She might use avocado chunks, diced bell peppers, and spinach leaves. Or she could arrange strawberry halves,



blueberries, and pineapple chunks. Help her tightly roll up the filled rice. Refrigerate until firm, and slice.

### On your mark...

Your budding engineer can practice her design skills—and eat the results. Together, gather healthy foods, along with straws, toothpicks, and other household supplies. Her challenge is to build a racing car and see how far it will roll (use a clean surface). For instance, she might make wheels from mini cheese rounds or cherry tomatoes and use a zucchini or cucumber for the body. Which design rolls the farthest—and tastes the best? 🍌

## What you say...what they hear

Just saying "Eat your vegetables" or "Drink your milk" may not get your youngster to eat his veggies or drink his milk. Instead, try strategies like these for encouraging him to have nutritious foods:

- Discuss the food you're enjoying, not what you're limiting. For example, if you're serving fresh fruit rather than cake for dessert, you might say, "These grapes are so sweet, and I love how they pop when I bite them."
- Rather than telling your child to eat something because it's healthy, focus on what the food will do for him. You might say, "This breakfast will give you lots of energy so you can run up and down the soccer field the whole time you're in the game." 🍌



# Falling leaves

When the leaves start falling, head out back or to a park so your family can enjoy the season—actively!

**Fill the basket.** Put out two big baskets, and divide into two teams. Race to see which team can fill its basket first—by scooping up armloads of leaves and running to dump them in.

**Create a maze.** Together, rake leaves into a maze. You could make a square maze, a circular one, or one that twists



and turns. Then, walk or run through its path. Or your child might ride his bike or push toy trucks through the maze.

**Toss and catch.** Throw handfuls of leaves high in the air. Run around to catch as many as you can as they come down. Count the leaves to see who got the most.

**Eat leaves.** What? Okay, you're not going to eat the leaves that fall from trees, but see if your children can name any leaves that we *do* eat. *Hint:* Lettuce, cabbage, and spinach are a few examples. After playing in leaves all afternoon, make a salad filled with leaves for dinner. 🍷



## PARENT TO PARENT My child is lactose intolerant

After several bouts of terrible stomachaches, our doctor diagnosed our son Ricardo with lactose intolerance. We were glad to know the cause and that it was nothing serious. But then we had to figure out how to manage his eating. Luckily, the school nurse was a big help.

Ms. Clark said Ricardo should stay away from regular milk, ice cream, yogurt, and soft cheeses.

But, she said, he can still get the calcium he needs with enriched lactose-free versions. For instance, there's soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, and lactose-free milk. Another option, she said, is to take lactase tablets or drops just before eating anything with lactose.

Ricardo is getting used to his "new normal," and so far it hasn't been too hard. I'm amazed how many lactose-free products are available, and I'm relieved his stomachaches are gone. 🍷



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### All about balance

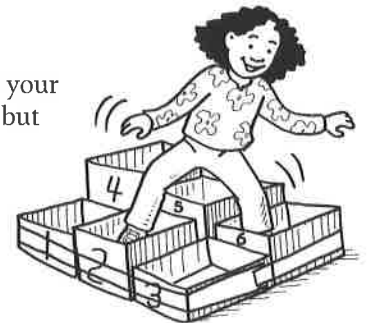
Working on balance skills will help your youngster not only with sports and gross motor skills, but with everyday activities, too. Try these three games.

**1.** Be a statue, and guess each other's pose. Your child might "ride a horse" like a war hero, while you raise one arm up to be the Statue of Liberty.

**2.** Tape together six cardboard boxes of different sizes.

Have your youngster number them 1–6. Roll a die, and she puts one foot in the matching box (roll a 3, and she puts her right foot in box #3). Roll it again, and her other foot goes in the box that matches. Roll a few more times, and then it's your turn to balance in the box.

**3.** Go "surfing" on dry land. Place a board (surfboard, sled, or boogie board) on a pool noodle or on an upside-down container so it will wobble when she stands on it. Now, she can ride the waves! 🍷



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Pumpkin power

October is for pumpkins. Try these recipes with easy-to-use canned pumpkin, a terrific source of vitamin A and potassium. (*Note:* Get solid-pack pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling.)

#### Parfait

Mix 1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt with 1 cup pumpkin. In a glass, layer the pumpkin-flavored yogurt with granola. Top with pumpkin seeds.

#### Hummus

In a food processor, combine 2 cups pumpkin with 2 tbsp. tahini, 1 garlic clove, and 1 tsp. olive oil. Salt

to taste, and serve with cut-up vegetables or warmed pita bread.

#### Chili

In a large pot, heat 1 tbsp. canola oil, and saute 1 chopped onion. When soft, add 2 cups shredded cooked chicken, 1 can black beans (drained, rinsed), 1 can pumpkin, 1 large can diced tomatoes, and 1 cup frozen corn.

Season with 2 tbsp. chili powder, 1 tbsp. cumin, and 1 tsp. cinnamon. Simmer on low heat for 45–60 minutes. 🍷



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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