

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2016

Palos Heights School District 128
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BEST BITES

Visit a farmers' market

Mark the end of summer with a trip to a farmers' market. Your children will find colorful produce like ruby-red tomatoes and sunshine-yellow corn. Let them bring along a sketchpad to draw their favorites—and pick out some to bring home. *Note:* Many farmers' markets accept SNAP cards, and some even double the value for fruits and vegetables.



Nightly walks

Consider a new (healthy) ritual this school year: Take a family walk around the block after dinner two, three, or even more nights a week. Not only will you get everyone's blood pumping a little faster, you'll also spend time together and relax after a day at school and work.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many sports drinks have as much added sugar as soda. For most kids, water is a perfect way to rehydrate after physical activity. Sports drinks are really only needed if your youngster participates in sustained and vigorous physical activity. Otherwise, they become a source of empty calories.

Just for fun

Q: What did the soccer ball say to the soccer player?

A: I get a kick out of you.



Breakfast: Make it a habit

Eating breakfast regularly can help your child do better—and behave better—in school. Here are ideas for getting into the breakfast habit despite the morning rush.

Keep it simple

Breakfast doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as whole-grain toast topped with cheese and a sliced pear or a nutritious cereal with nonfat milk and fresh or frozen (thawed) fruit. Another easy idea: Make scrambled eggs in the microwave. Just beat one or two eggs with a splash of milk in a microwave-safe bowl. Cook on high for 1–2 minutes, pausing to stir every 30 seconds.

Freezer-friendly foods

Plenty of breakfast foods can be made ahead and frozen—and still taste delicious! Over the weekend, cook up a double batch of whole-grain pancakes or waffles, and store the extras in a freezer bag. On a busy morning, reheat a few in the toaster. Breakfast will be ready in a



snap. *Tip:* When storing, place waxed paper between each waffle or pancake. That will make it easier to pull the frozen ones apart.

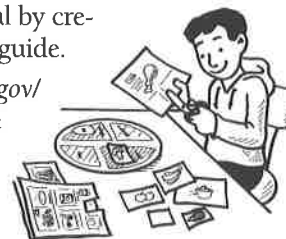
Eat at school

Some kids need extra time in the morning before they feel hungry. Eating breakfast at school will give your youngster's stomach time to "wake up," while freeing up a little morning time for both of you. Plus, getting breakfast in the cafeteria means a healthy meal and another chance to eat with her friends. *Note:* Check with the school office to see if your family qualifies for free or reduced-price meals. ♥

Play with MyPlate

Help your youngster learn how to build a healthy meal by creating his own "plate of food" based on the MyPlate food guide.

1. Together, look at a picture of MyPlate (choosemyplate.gov/myplate), and ask him to tell you about it. He will notice that about half the plate is fruits and vegetables, a little more than a quarter is grains, and slightly less than a quarter is protein. Plus, there's a cup for dairy.
2. Let your child cut pictures from old magazines for each category. With a marker, have him divide a paper plate into the MyPlate sections. Then, he could glue the pictures where they belong.
3. Post his MyPlate where he can see it during meals. It will be your youngster's healthy model as he fills his real plate! ♥



The whole outdoors is a playground

Fall's cooler weather makes for an ideal time to play outdoors. These fun activities will get your youngster outside and moving around.

Go on a scavenger hunt. Make a list of common outdoor objects. For younger kids, try an ABC list like acorn, barking dog, car, dandelion, and so on. Older kids might enjoy



a theme-based list, such as “items found in a park” or “landmarks around town.” Buddy up to run around and mark off the items on your list.

Hold a bike rodeo. Suggest that your child invite friends for a bike

rodeo. Chaperone as they meet at a park or school blacktop (helmets required). They could “follow the leader” on their bikes. Or they can draw a zigzag path or a big figure eight with chalk and then bike along it. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Hula hoop games



Your child might be surprised to learn that hoops have been popular playthings for thousands of years. In fact, children in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome shaped hoops from dried grapevines and rolled them along the ground using sticks. For a more modern twist, suggest these contests:



- Form a circle with everyone holding hands. Place a hula hoop over one pair of clasped hands. On a signal, begin moving the hoop around the circle—along each person's arm, over her head, and down the other arm—without breaking hands. Time how long it takes to complete the circle. Then, start again, and try to beat your time.

- Who can keep her hula hoop going the longest? Begin with spinning your hoop at the waist. Move on to variations like spinning in the opposite direction, spinning while standing on one leg, or even spinning more than one hoop. ♡

Q&A Nutritious backpack snacks

Q: Several days a week, my son goes straight from school to after-school programs. Can you suggest healthy snacks that will survive in his backpack until the afternoon?

A: Snacks can give your son energy for his after-school activities. The trick is finding some that are crush-proof, don't require refrigeration—and are nutritious.

Good options include:

- ✓ trail mix of nuts, dried fruit, and pretzels
- ✓ air-popped popcorn
- ✓ fruit cups packed in their own juice
- ✓ homemade cracker sandwiches made with whole-grain crackers and any nut butter
- ✓ fresh fruit like peeled tangerines, pineapple or melon chunks, or grapes that have been washed, dried, and stored in a zipper bag



Be sure to send things your child will eat by involving him in the process. Take him food shopping with you, and let him help prepare and pack the snacks. ♡

IN THE KITCHEN

A is for apples

September is apple season! Take advantage of all the varieties available with these quick recipes.

Apple oatmeal. Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rolled oats, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, and 1 tsp. cinnamon in a microwave-safe dish. Microwave on high for 1 minute. While the oats are cooking, peel, core, and chop 1 apple. Add to oats and cook for another minute.

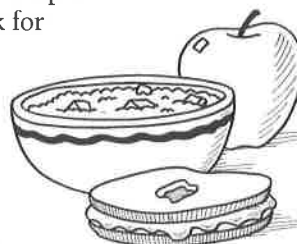
PB & apple sandwich.

Cut an apple in half horizontally, and remove the core. Slice each half into three rings. On half of the rings, spread $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. peanut

(or almond) butter and drizzle with honey. Top each one with a plain ring. You'll have three apple sandwiches.

Idea: Combine crispy fall apples with a science lesson by showing your child how to keep cut apples from turning brown. Have her drop apple slices in a

bowl containing 4 cups water and 1 tbsp. lemon juice. Soak 2–3 minutes, and drain. Explain that the acid in the lemon juice stops the chemical reaction that turns apples brown. ♡



OUR PURPOSE

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

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