

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

January 2018

Coal City Community Unit School District
Food Service Department



BEST BITES

Junior chef

Get your child excited about helping in the kitchen by letting her dress the part. Find a large white button-down shirt she can wear like a chef's outfit. Have her write her name on a mailing label ("Chef Suzy") and stick it on. Hand her a colorful spatula, and enjoy cooking together.



Swap parsnips for potatoes

Make "french fries" from parsnips, a root vegetable that's high in fiber and folate. Peel 2 lbs. parsnips, and cut into thick strips. Toss with 2 tbsp. olive oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper. Place on a baking sheet, and bake 10 minutes at 450°. Flip, and roast 10 minutes more.

DID YOU KNOW?

Swimming builds endurance, strengthens all muscle groups, and is easy on joints and bones. Encourage your youngster to swim year-round with trips to an indoor community pool. He might take swim lessons or sign up for a winter league. *Ideas:* Join him in the pool and swim together, race against each other, or play tag.

Just for fun



Q: What's green and bumpy and jumps every few seconds?

A: A pickle with hiccups.

Get healthier together!

Make eating better and getting fit a family affair this year. Being "in it together" can keep everyone motivated. Use these simple tips to get started.

Be a role model

Your youngster will copy your good and not-so-good behaviors. Telling him to eat an orange while you munch on potato chips sends a mixed message, as does using your tablet while encouraging him to go shoot baskets. A better approach? Ask him to help you cut apples for a snack, or suggest that you play basketball together.



Focus on variety

Instead of dieting or emphasizing foods to avoid, identify healthy foods to add to meals. Think: fresh fruits, crisp vegetables, beans and lentils, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and lean protein. This ensures you're not limiting nutrients your growing child needs. It also pushes less-nutritious foods off your plates.

Increase physical activity

Brainstorm regular family fitness ideas with your youngster, then put them on the calendar. You might try nightly after-dinner walks or Saturday morning bike rides. Move more during everyday activities, too. Park farther from your destination, take the stairs rather than the elevator, or shovel snow together. Before you know it, being more active will become a household habit. ♥

DIY supersized fun

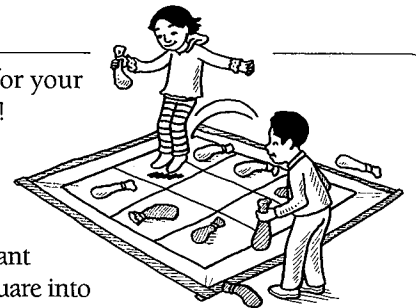
Looking for some life-size entertainment for your child? Let her create a giant tic-tac-toe board!

Materials: old sheet, marker, duct tape, 10 old socks (5 of one color and 5 of another), dry beans, rubber bands

Help your youngster measure and draw a giant square on the sheet. Draw lines dividing the square into 9 equal boxes, and tape the sheet to the floor, or set it outside.

Make beanbags by filling socks with beans and sealing them shut with rubber bands.

Each player gets 5 same-color beanbags. Now take turns hopping into a square, dropping a beanbag, and hopping out. The first to get three in a row across, down, or diagonally wins. ♥



A well-stocked kitchen

With the right ingredients on hand, you can quickly whip up nutritious dinners on busy week-nights. Plus, you'll avoid last-minute impulse purchases or costly takeout. Try these steps for shopping and planning.

1. Take inventory. Help your child list ingredients you use frequently, such as rice, pasta, shredded cheese, green beans, bread, and ground beef. Let her go through the refrigerator and pantry and cross out items you already have. *Bonus:* She'll practice reading and writing.



2. Stock up. Shop together for ingredients that remain on your list. Look for healthy swaps, such as whole-wheat bread rather than white, frozen vegetables instead of canned, and extra-lean ground beef in place of regular.

3. Figure out meals. Ask your youngster to help you create nutritious menus based on what's on hand. For instance, if you've got whole-grain spaghetti and a jar of marinara sauce, there's an easy meal.

To make it healthier, grate zucchini and stir into the sauce. Have a can of black beans and some brown rice? Just add cooked broccoli for a healthy rice bowl. ♡

PARENT TO PARENT

What's in your smoothie?

My son Liam loves our local smoothie place, and I'm happy he's getting more fruit into his diet. But recently, I noticed a sign listing nutrition information, and I realized his favorites have a lot of sugar and fat. So I decided to start making smoothies at home in the blender.



We experiment with fruit combinations like strawberry and banana or peach and mango. Instead of flavored yogurt, which has a lot of sugar, I use plain yogurt and a little honey. Sometimes I include peanut butter or flaxseed for protein. I've even added kale and spinach so my son gets greens.

Liam enjoys our homemade smoothies, and now he's eating more fruits and vegetables—and less sugar and fat. ♡

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Boosting balance skills

Set your youngster up for success in sports and games by helping her improve her balance. Consider these fun ideas.

● **Flamingo contest:** See who can stand on one foot the longest. Switch legs, and do it again. To increase the challenge, close your eyes while balancing.

● **Cereal box challenge:** Have each person place an empty cereal box on her head. Keeping your back straight and chin up, race across the room. If you drop your box, return to the start. The first player to cross the room wins.

● **Hula hop:** Scatter a few hula-hoops on the ground a few feet from each other (or make circles with pieces of yarn). Family members can jump into each hula-hoop—without losing their balance and falling outside the hoop. Try it again, this time jumping backward. ♡



IN THE KITCHEN

Slow-cooked meals

Tap into the power of your slow cooker with these recipes to enjoy on cold winter days.

Chicken-quinoa risotto

Place 1½ lbs. boneless chicken breasts into a slow cooker. Add 1 cup uncooked quinoa, 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth, and 2 cloves minced garlic. Cook on high 4 hours. Shred chicken, and return to slow cooker. Add 2 cups frozen peas, stir, and cook 30 minutes more.

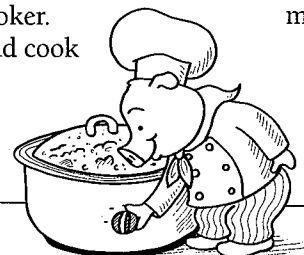
Vegetarian "pot roast"

Chop 1 lb. mushrooms (white or portobello), 1 lb. sweet potatoes, and 2 carrots. Put in slow

cooker with 2 cups vegetable stock, 1 tbsp. tomato paste, 1 tsp. dried thyme, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, and ½ tsp. garlic powder. Cook on low 6–8 hours.

Beef stroganoff

Fill slow cooker with 1½ lbs. lean stew meat, 1 medium onion (diced), 1 cup low-sodium beef broth, 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce, 2 tbsp. Dijon mustard, and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Cook on low 6–8 hours. Stir in 1 cup Greek yogurt just before serving. Enjoy over whole-grain egg noodles. ♡



Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

January 2018

Coal City Community Unit School District
Food Service Department



FAST TAKES

The joy of the game

Winning games feels good. But remind your tween that having fun is a more important reason to play. After a game, talk about her favorite moments instead of focusing on who won or lost. You'll send the message that there's more to playing sports than the score.

I'll try that!

Peer pressure can be a good thing—when it introduces your child to healthy foods. Encourage him to notice nutritious items other students put on their lunch trays. If a friend reaches for kiwi, he might, too. When his friends or cousins visit for dinner, ask about their favorite meals, and add good-for-you ideas to your dinner rotation.

Did You Know?

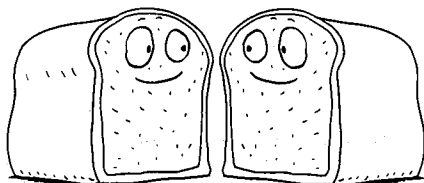
Those end-of-aisle displays in stores can trip up even savvy shoppers. The foods are placed there to catch your eye and tempt you to buy. But they may not be the cheapest or healthiest choices. Teach your teenager to use a list to stay on budget and to avoid impulse buying.



Just for fun

Q: What looks just like half a loaf of bread?

A: The other half!



Nutrition resolutions

“We’re going to eat healthier this year!” That’s a great New Year’s resolution—and it will be easier for your family to stick with it if you set specific, daily goals. Share these ideas with your teen for a fresh start in 2018.

Resolution: Eat more fruit.

Tips: Place a bowl of colorful fruit on the counter so family members can grab a piece on their way out the door. Keep frozen berries on hand to thaw for dessert. Tuck slices of citrus fruits (oranges, clementines) into sandwich wraps for a sweet burst of flavor.

Resolution: Eat a variety of dark, leafy green vegetables.

Tips: Put raw, cut-up broccoli in zipper bags, and display front and center in the refrigerator for your tween or teen to snack on. Serve a salad with dinner. Try different greens with favorite foods—for example, romaine adds crunch to burrito bowls, and arugula’s peppery flavor makes it a tasty burger topping.



Resolution: Eat calcium-rich foods.

Tips: Drinking a cup of milk with breakfast or lunch is an easy way to fit in a serving of calcium. When you buy cereal or orange juice, opt for calcium-fortified varieties. Include high-calcium side dishes at dinner, such as turnip greens, bok choy, or white beans.

Resolution: Make your proteins lean.

Tips: Hard-boil a batch of eggs on Sunday nights—they’re an ideal portable snack, and they’ll stay fresh in the refrigerator for up to a week. Purchase lean meat in bulk when it goes on sale, and freeze in dinner-size portions. ●

Stay hydrated this winter

In cooler temperatures, your tween may forget to stay hydrated. But it’s still important! Here are ways to work fluids into your family’s day.

Try tea. Brew caffeine-free herbal tea or flavored teas like raspberry, lemon, or mint. Drink it hot or iced with breakfast, after dinner, or on the go.

Sip soup. Broth-based chicken noodle and vegetable soups are satisfying options. *Tip:* If you buy canned soups, choose low-sodium varieties.

Drink water. Let your tween pick out a reusable water bottle to refill with tap water throughout the day. This is less expensive and more environmentally friendly than drinking bottled water. ●



Power up for workouts

What your child eats before a workout can mean the difference between going the distance and hitting a wall. Suggest this plan.

The fuel: Your tween needs carbohydrates, such as those found in fruits and grains, for quick energy. She also needs protein from foods like chicken, nuts, and seeds for long-term fuel.

The timing: About 1–3 hours before a workout, she could have a small meal or a snack. ●



Encourage your teenager to enjoy these pre-workout combos:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup hummus and 6 whole-grain crackers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Greek yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberries, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole-grain granola
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanuts with 2 tbsp. raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$ grilled chicken breast and $\frac{1}{2}$ baked sweet potato
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mashed black beans and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrot sticks
- 1 brown rice cake and 1 tbsp. sunflower seed or almond butter

Q & A Comfort foods

Q: My daughter Jessie and I crave “comfort foods” this time of year. Are there healthier ways for us to enjoy them?

A: Yes! You can enjoy the warm, cozy feeling of comfort foods without overdoing it on fat and calories.



Replace half of the cheese sauce in macaroni and cheese with steamed and pureed butternut squash. Instead of frying chicken, dip it in egg, roll in whole-grain bread crumbs, and bake. Substitute fat-free evaporated milk for heavy cream in casseroles and creamy soups. And choose cottage cheese over ricotta for lasagna or baked ziti.

These replacements should help you get through winter enjoying yummy comfort foods with your daughter—but with a better-for-you twist. ●

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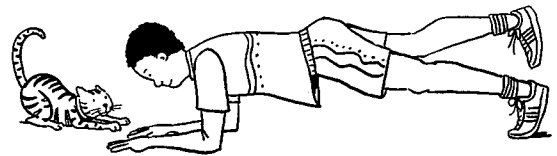


ACTIVITY CORNER

How to plank

Planks help strengthen your teen’s core, arms, and shoulders. Encourage him to try these.

Basic plank. Get into push-up position—but with your arms bent and your forearms, not your hands, shoulder-width apart. Keeping your entire body in a straight line, hold for at least 20 seconds, working up to 1 minute.



Cross-body mountain climber. From plank position, bring your right knee forward toward your left elbow. Return to start. Repeat with the left knee and right elbow. Alternate sides for 30 seconds.

One-leg plank. While doing a plank, lift your right leg straight behind you at least 6 inches off the floor. Keep your core engaged and the body straight. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other leg and continue alternating. ●

In the Kitchen

Salad shakers

Give your tween a large mason jar (or any container with a lid), and let him make, shake, and eat one of these fun winter salads! Since the dressing isn’t mixed with the vegetables, he can put them together ahead of time and refrigerate for several days.

Chicken taco

Add 2 tbsp. salsa to the jar. Layer in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cooked chicken, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. low-sodium taco seasoning, 1 cup mixed salad greens, 1 tbsp. shredded cheddar, and 2 tsp. crushed tortilla chips.

Winter Cobb

Pour 2 tbsp. Italian dressing in the jar. Layer in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cubed lean ham (or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas), 1 cup bite-size green leaf lettuce, 1 diced hard-boiled egg, and 2 tbsp. dried cranberries. ●

Grape and broccoli

Drizzle 2 tbsp. balsamic vinaigrette on the bottom of the jar. Layer in 1 cup bite-sized chopped fresh broccoli, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced red grapes, and 2 tbsp. toasted sunflower seeds.

