

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2017



Coal City Community Unit School District
Food Service Department

BEST BITES

Count the ingredients

A long list of ingredients on a cereal box or a jar of pasta sauce often means the food is highly processed. At the grocery store, let your youngster compare several brands of an item on your list (say, cereal bars). She can count the ingredients in each—and put the one with the fewest ingredients in your cart.



Explore the great outdoors

Cooler temperatures offer the perfect opportunity to discover outdoor community “gems” with your child. Help him find local plants and animals while you walk along a trail or through a park or botanical garden. For extra fun and exercise, bring along helmets and explore on bikes, skateboards, or scooters (where permitted).

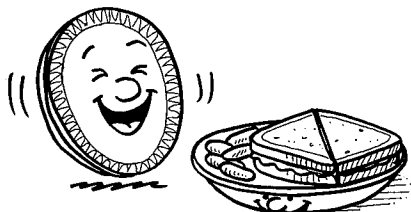
DID YOU KNOW?

November 6 is National Nachos Day. Make this popular appetizer healthier by using whole-grain tortilla chips and swapping plain Greek yogurt for sour cream. Melt real cheese on top (rather than store-bought queso). Then, add vegetables like chopped tomatoes, corn, shredded lettuce, and diced red onion.

Just for fun

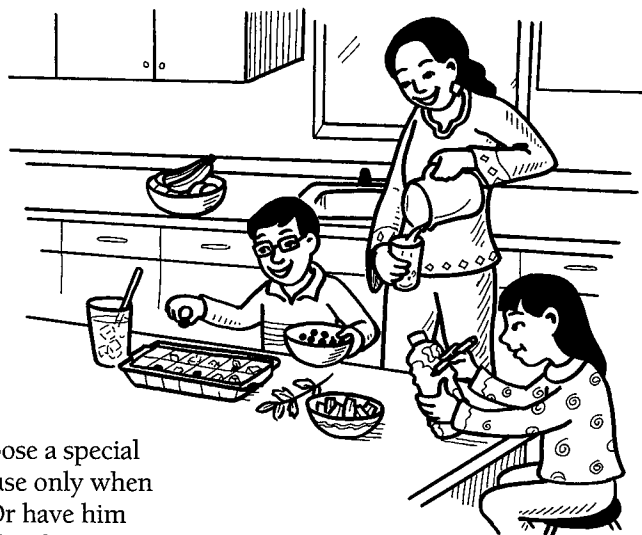
Q: What did one plate say to another?

A: Lunch is on me.



Just add water (or milk)!

Does your child ask for juice boxes, soda, or sports drinks when he’s thirsty? Loaded with sugar and calories, these choices offer little nutrition. The best way to quench his thirst is to drink water or milk. Try the following tips to encourage healthier beverage choices.



Make it motivating

Let your youngster choose a special cup at the dollar store to use only when he drinks milk or water. Or have him decorate a reusable water bottle. Using permanent markers, he can jazz up a plain bottle with his name, colorful pictures, and creative designs.

Add flavor

Enhance the flavor of water and milk with these healthy twists. Fill an ice cube tray with water, invite your child to add a flavor mix-in (a mint leaf, a pineapple chunk, a raspberry) to each compartment, and freeze. Then, he could choose a cube to flavor his water. When

he drinks milk, he might try stirring in a sprinkle of cinnamon or a few drops of vanilla extract.

Go for fizz

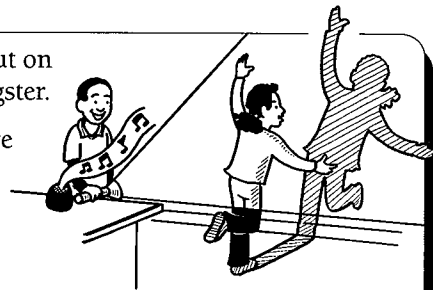
Your youngster may enjoy the fizzy effect of plain seltzer or sparkling water. With zero calories, sugar, or artificial colors or flavors, this bubbly water is fun to drink—without all the unhealthy stuff that’s in soda. And seltzer is now sold in a variety of interesting natural flavors like mandarin orange, cucumber, and pomegranate. ♥

Get your groove on

Keeping fit can be as simple as dancing! Put on music, and enjoy these ideas with your youngster.

● **Shadow dancing.** In a darkened room, have your child face a blank wall while someone else shines a flashlight on her from behind. She could create cool moves to make her shadow “dance.”

● **Chain reaction.** Build a dance sequence together. The first person does a simple movement like swinging her arms overhead. The next dancer copies that move, then adds one of her own. Take turns, each time repeating the sequence from the beginning and adding a new move at the end. ♥



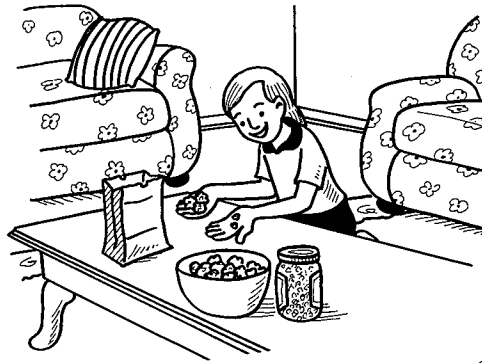
Science in the kitchen

Boost your youngster's enthusiasm for healthy eating with these hands-on experiments that weave in science fun.

"Egg-cellent" snack

Experiment: Let your child fill two glasses with water and add 1 tbsp. salt to one. Place a fresh egg in each. What happens? The egg in salt water will float. Why? (The egg is denser than plain water, but less dense than salt water.) *Note:* If the egg doesn't float, have her add 1 tsp. salt at a time until it does.

Eat: Hard-boiled eggs are a protein-rich snack. Place eggs in a saucepan, and cover with water. Put on a lid, boil 1 minute,



and remove from heat. Let sit covered for 12 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and peel.

Popping perfection

Experiment: Have your youngster observe unpopped popcorn kernels. (They're small, brown, and hard.) Then, she should place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup kernels in a paper lunch bag and fold the top over a few times.

Microwave 2–3 minutes, pour into a bowl, and let her observe again: The kernels are big, white, and fluffy! What happened? (Kernels contain water that turns into steam when heated. Steam expands, making the kernels explode.)

Eat: Popcorn is a healthy whole grain. Instead of salt, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, or paprika. ♡

Q&A



DIY convenience foods

Q: Our grocery store stocks pre-cut vegetables and other time-saving items, but they're too expensive for my budget! Any suggestions?

A: With a little planning, you can make your own convenience foods at home.

On week-ends, ask your child to help you prep vegetables for the week. For



example, wash and dry lettuce, and place in a covered container with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. You can also wash, chop, and store firm veggies like carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower.

Cook chicken pieces or portions of meat, and seal in zipper bags to use within 2–3 days. You can even make pasta or rice in advance. Toss with olive oil so it doesn't get sticky, and put in an airtight container.

Your refrigerator will resemble the prepared-foods case at the grocery store—but you won't spend any extra money. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Fitness: It's in the cards!

Put a clever twist on physical activity by helping your youngsters make their own deck of family fitness cards. Here's how.

Together, come up with at least a dozen active ideas that can be done in less than five minutes. Be as creative or silly as you like! Write each one on the front of a separate index card. For example:

- Hop on one foot for one minute while holding the other foot with one hand and pinching your nose. Switch feet and hop for one more minute.
- Lie on your stomach, and pretend to swim like a frog for three minutes.
- Hold hands with a partner. Skip back and forth across the room five times.



On the back of each card, your children can illustrate the activity. Put the cards into a box, and pull one out whenever it's time for a burst of activity! ♡

IN THE KITCHEN

Healthier holiday classics

No need to forgo favorite Thanksgiving dishes. Consider these better-for-you versions.

- **Green bean casserole.** For the topping, toss 1 chopped onion and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced fresh mushrooms with 2 tbsp. whole-wheat breadcrumbs. Spread mixture on a greased baking sheet, and bake 10–15 minutes at 400° or until browned. Microwave 12 oz. fresh or frozen green beans, transfer to a dish, and add topping.
- **Cranberry-orange sauce.** In a medium saucepan, combine 10 oz. fresh cranberries, 1 cup water, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup honey, 2 tbsp. grated

orange rind, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. allspice. Boil, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes until mixture thickens.

- **Sage-couscous stuffing.** Cook 1 cup whole-wheat pearl couscous according to package directions. Then, heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each diced onion, celery, and carrots. Saute until soft. Stir in couscous, 1 tbsp. fresh sage, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each salt and pepper. ♡



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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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Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

November 2017

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FAST TAKES



Snack on seeds

Seeds are a smart snacking solution. They're high in healthy fats and provide satisfying protein. In small bags or jars, let your teen combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each sunflower seeds and dried cranberries for a simple and energizing trail mix. Or she might roast a couple handfuls of pumpkin seeds with a sprinkle of chili powder for a spicy treat.

Sneakers that fit

Properly fitted sneakers can help prevent injury. Your child may need a nudge to swap the cool pair he wears to school for a sturdy shoe designed for running or playing tennis. To save on the cost, shop sales and clearance racks for last year's styles.



Did You Know?

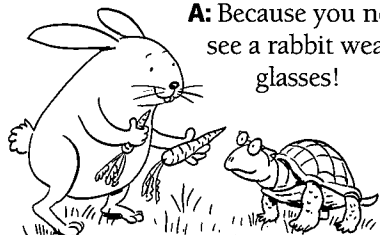
Raw bell peppers are vitamin C superstars!

Compared to a medium orange, a red bell pepper has double the vitamin C and a yellow one has four times the amount. Encourage your tween to enjoy these crunchy vegetables dipped into pesto or chopped into a salad. Or suggest that she cut peppers into thick strips and use them to scoop up hummus.

Just for fun

Q: How do you know carrots are good for your eyes?

A: Because you never see a rabbit wearing glasses!



Whole grains all day long

Working whole grains into your teen's diet can be easier than you think. Try these ideas for adding whole grains to breakfast, lunch, and dinner—and meeting the recommendation to make half of his grains whole.

Make breakfast whole

On weekends, whip up a batch of muffins or pancakes with whole-wheat flour. (If your child isn't used to whole wheat, replace half with white flour.) Freeze, and microwave as needed on busy school mornings. Or have your tween mix whole-grain cereal with his favorite kind. He could increase the portion of whole grain as he develops a taste for it.

Add grains at lunch

Encourage your teenager to choose at least one whole-grain lunch item each day. It could be a corn tortilla for his taco or quesadilla. Or he might try different varieties of whole-grain bread

for sandwiches, such as pita, flatbreads, or mini-bagels.

Eat a colorful dinner

Brown isn't the only color that whole-grain rice comes in—add color to your whole-grain options at dinner with red, purple, and black rice. Prepare them just like brown rice, perhaps adding chicken or vegetable broth for extra flavor. You might cook half white rice and half of another color as a base for a stir-fry or a rice bowl. ♡



Active holidays

These activities can keep your whole family moving at holiday get-togethers.

● **Walk it off.** Full from a big dinner? Bundle up and take a family walk before dessert. You might also plan a longer walk or a hike for the morning.

● **Play a game.** Organize a silly group game like Pass the Pear. Split into two lines. The first player in each line holds a pear between her chin and neck. Pass it down the line from neck to neck and then back to the start. No hands allowed! If the pear falls, your team has to start over. The first team to return the pear to player one wins.

● **Teach a sport.** Encourage your tween to teach younger siblings or cousins a sport she plays. Then, she can organize a lacrosse game or a cheerleading routine. *Tip:* Let the little ones teach the older ones the games they play, too. ♡

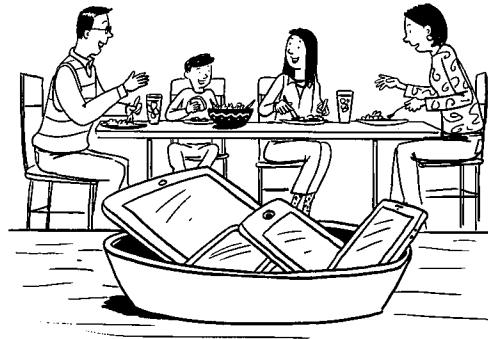


Mindful eating

Eating in front of a television or while swiping a screen can take your child's mind off her food—leading to mindless overeating. Encourage “mindful eating” instead with this advice.

Skip the screens. Turn off the TV, and ask everyone to silence phones and tablets and put them in a basket during meals. Then, carry on a pleasant conversation. *Tip:* Increase mindfulness by talking about the flavors and textures you're enjoying.

Stop before you're stuffed. Have your tween pay attention to hunger cues. When she feels that perhaps she could eat a few more bites but she's satisfied enough to stop, it's likely she has had the right amount of food. ♥



Master mindfulness

This sweet mindfulness exercise may help your tween learn to focus on and savor each bite. Suggest these steps.

1. Hold a raisin. Notice the color and every wrinkle.
2. Smell the raisin, and describe its fragrance.
3. Place the raisin on your tongue. Note the taste and how the texture changes as you chew. Are there any lingering flavors after you swallow?

Idea: Try this with other foods, too!



Q & A Coffee shop smarts

Q: My teenager sometimes goes to the coffee shop with her friends after school. I don't want her to drink caffeine or too much sugar. What should I do?

A: You're right to be concerned. Just one large coffee drink may contain a day's worth of caffeine and sugar for a full-grown adult. Caffeine can increase your teen's heart rate, cause her to feel anxious and jittery, and make it hard for her to sleep.

Before her next coffee shop trip, talk with her about what she might order. You could help her choose decaf, low-sugar options, such as a skinny decaf latte with only one pump of syrup. Or she could opt for herbal tea. Some shops offer lightly sweetened blends in fun flavors like strawberry green tea or pineapple mint. ♥



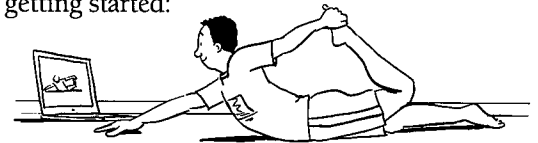
ACTIVITY CORNER

Start a yoga habit

Many teenagers are discovering yoga these days. The popular workout increases balance, strength, and flexibility, and it can reduce stress, too. Share these tips for getting started:

- Contact a community center or visit yogafinder.com for classes in your area. Some are donation-based, where students pay what (or if) they can. Also, see if your high school offers yoga as a PE elective or if there's an after-school yoga club.
- Take up yoga at home with online streaming videos at sites like doyogawithme.com or videos from the library. Or build your own yoga sequence by collecting photos of poses you find online.

Idea: Join your teen in a yoga practice. It's a nice way to connect with him—as well as with your body and mind. ♥



In the Kitchen

Crazy for cauliflower

Cauliflower is a versatile vegetable that can stand in for other ingredients. Enjoy these healthy riffs on teen favorites.

Buffalo “wings”

Toss 8 cups cauliflower florets with 2 tbsp. olive oil and a pinch of salt. Roast on a baking sheet for 30 minutes at 450°. In a bowl, mix 3 tbsp. low-sodium hot sauce with 1 tbsp. melted butter and 1 tsp. lemon juice. Drizzle cauliflower with sauce, and roast 5 more minutes.

Mashed “potatoes”

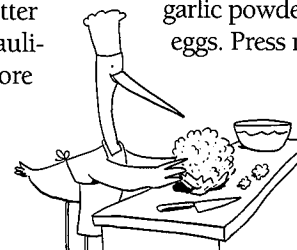
In a medium saucepan, bring 1 cup water to a boil. Add 4 cups chopped cauliflower, cover, and

simmer 12–15 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Mash with a potato masher, then stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light sour cream.

Pizza “crust”

Cook a 16-oz. bag of riced cauliflower according to package directions. Toss with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mozzarella, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each Italian seasoning and garlic powder, and 2 lightly beaten eggs. Press mixture into a round

baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes. Add tomato sauce, cheese, and favorite toppings. Bake 10 minutes. ♥



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