

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

October 2017

Coal City Community Unit School District  
Food Service Department



## BEST BITES

### Mason jar omelet

Here's a fun breakfast to make with your youngster.

Crack 2 eggs into a Mason jar. Add chopped veggies like bell pepper and tomatoes, plus 1 tsp. shredded cheese. Screw the lid on tightly, and let him shake it well. Remove the lid. Microwave 2–3 minutes until eggs are set. Cool, and enjoy. *Note:* You can also make this in a mug. Whisk the mixture instead of shaking.

### Burpees for kids

Show your child how to do burpees, a great cardio exercise with a silly name.



Stand up straight, then squat down and place your hands palms-down in front of your feet. Kick back and do a

push-up. Jump your feet back toward your hands and leap up. How many burpees can she do?

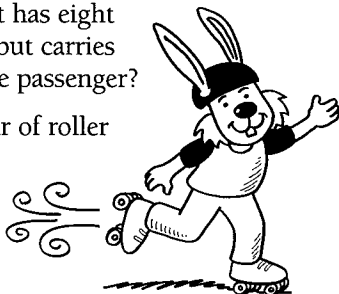
### DID YOU KNOW?

Quinoa (pronounced “keen-wah”) is prepared like a grain, but it's actually a seed from the same plant family as spinach and beets. It packs a whopping 8 grams of protein and 5 grams of fiber in each 1 cup serving! Consider tossing cooked quinoa into your youngster's favorite soup, casserole, or salad for a healthy (and tasty) twist.

### Just for fun

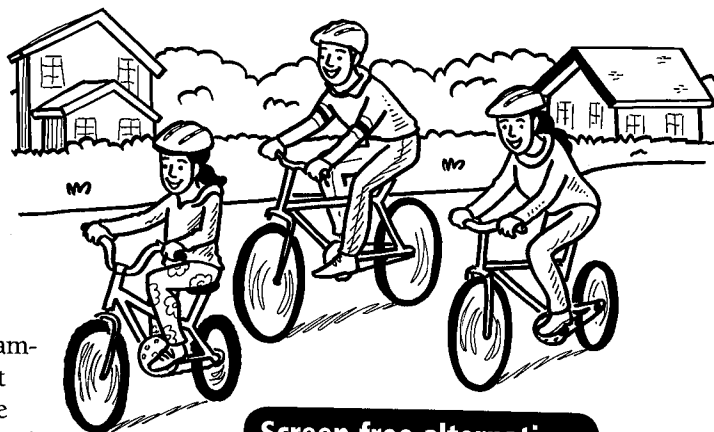
**Q:** What has eight wheels but carries only one passenger?

**A:** A pair of roller skates.



## Encourage active time

Want to get your child away from video games, television, or computers? Try these tips for helping her spend less time in front of screens and more time being active.



### Involve everyone

At breakfast, have family members talk about how they'll get exercise that day. You might mention a lunchtime walk you've planned with coworkers, and your youngster could explain a game she's going to play at recess. *Tip:* Let your child see you being active. When you put away your laptop and announce you're going for a run, you're setting a great example.

### Set ground rules

Come up with rules that encourage physical activity and limit electronics. For example, you might require your youngster to do at least 60 minutes of physical activity before playing video games—and limit video game time to 30 minutes a day. Your child could write the rules on signs to post around the house, perhaps on the

### Screen-free alternatives

Let your youngster plan activities that don't involve sitting in front of a screen. She might:

- create a workout routine that you can record for your family to follow along with later.
- map out new routes through your neighborhood for family bike rides.
- organize a neighborhood kickball or softball game.

front door or by the TV. Encourage her to use clever wording (“Turn me off. I need a break!”) and illustrations (a drawing of a tired TV). ●

### A puzzle full of nutrition

Help your youngster “puzzle” out what a balanced meal looks like with this food-group activity.

First, talk about what makes up a healthy meal.

*Tip:* Show him the MyPlate guide at [choosemyplate.gov/myplate](http://choosemyplate.gov/myplate). He'll see that his plate should include about a quarter each of vegetables, fruits, grains, and protein. On a paper plate or a circle cut from construction paper, he could use crayons to draw a balanced meal. Maybe he'll include chicken, brown rice, green beans, and oranges.

Have your child cut the plate into puzzle pieces, and see if you can put his puzzle back together. Then, create more healthy food puzzles for each other to assemble. ●



# Healthier fast food

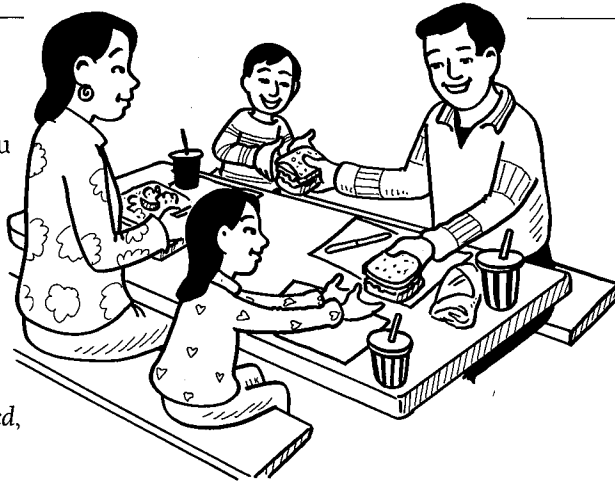
When your family's busy schedule leaves you eating on the fly, use these strategies to keep everyone's nutrition on track.

## Know the facts

Teach your youngster to spot healthier menu items. Words and phrases to look for include *grilled*, *thin-crust*, *baked*, and *roasted*. On the other hand, he'll want to stay away from anything labeled *fried*, *loaded*, *stuffed*, or *bacon-wrapped*.

## Split it

Your child asks for french fries, but you want him to eat carrot sticks. The solution? Order both! Get a small order of



fries for the whole family so everyone gets just a few—and several orders of carrots so everyone fills up on the good stuff. Or share an oversized sandwich. Ask for it with a whole-grain bun (or wrapped in lettuce), mustard instead of mayo, and extra veggies.

## Bring your own

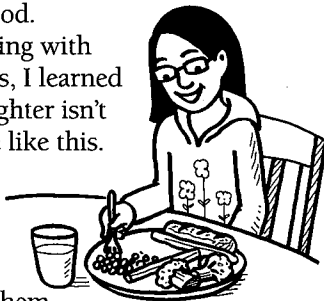
Grab a piece of fruit, string cheese, and a bottle of water for each person before leaving the house. You'll save money, and everyone will be guaranteed healthy side items and drinks to pair with your drive-thru order. ●



## PARENT TO PARENT Foods can't touch? No problem!

My daughter doesn't like it when the food on her plate touches—even if she loves each food.

After talking with other parents, I learned that my daughter isn't the only one like this. Now I'm trying strategies that have worked for them.



First, I let her spoon her foods into separate tiny bowls. She enjoyed arranging the bowls on her dinner plate, and she ate all the healthy foods—separately. Another time, she put colorful cupcake liners into a muffin tin and filled each one with a different food. Then, just yesterday, we used a carrot stick and a green bean to keep her food apart. When she finished everything else, she even ate the dividers!

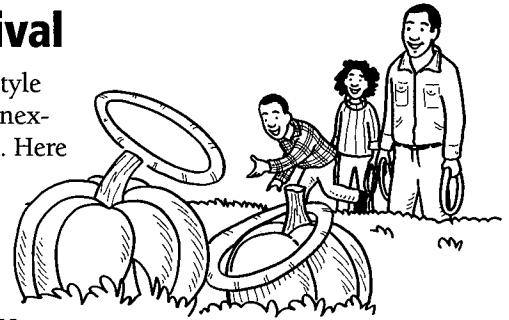
With these simple changes, my daughter now eats without a fuss, making mealtimes happier for everyone. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### A fitness carnival

Homemade carnival-style games can be a fun and inexpensive way to be active with your child. Here are two ideas to get him started.

● **Ring toss.** Make rings by cutting the centers from sturdy paper plates. Line up a few pumpkins with good-sized stems. Step back a few feet, and take turns trying to toss a ring onto each pumpkin. *Idea:* For a glowing good time, get glow-in-the-dark necklaces at a dollar store to use as rings, and play after the sun goes down.



● **Cup pyramid.** Help your youngster build a pyramid with 10 plastic cups (four on the bottom row, then three, then two, and finally one cup on the top). On each turn, throw a Wiffle ball toward the pyramid twice, scoring 1 point for each cup knocked down. Restack. The winner is the first player to reach 50 points. ●

## IN THE KITCHEN

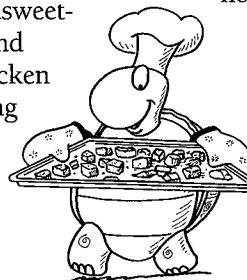
### A harvest feast

Take advantage of fall's harvest with these good-for-you recipes.

■ **Pumpkin apple soup.** In a large pot, heat 2 tbsp. olive oil over medium heat. Sauté 1 cup diced onion and 2 cups diced apples for 3–5 minutes. Add 3 cans (15 oz. each) unsweetened pumpkin puree and 5 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes. Leave chunky, or puree in a blender (a few cups at a time).

■ **Pear grilled cheese.** Thinly slice 1 pear. On a piece of whole-wheat bread, layer 1 tbsp. shredded cheddar cheese, pear slices, and another 1 tbsp. cheese. Top with a second piece of bread, and brown in a heated skillet (coated with nonstick spray), 2–3 minutes per side.

■ **Baked butternut squash.** Peel and cube 1 large squash, or buy it already cubed. Toss in a bowl with 1 tbsp. olive oil, spread on a baking sheet, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 30–40 minutes at 400°, turning once, until golden brown. ●



**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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# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2017

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## FAST TAKES

### Rinse produce first

Fruits and vegetables cover a lot of ground before reaching your plate. Just before eating, remove dirt and germs by rubbing your produce under running water. Use a brush to scrub produce with rinds (melons, oranges) or potatoes. Rinse more delicate fruits like berries in a colander.



### Fall foliage "tour"

Enjoy the autumn display of color with a family walk or hike. You might stroll through your town, trek through a park trail, or even visit a neighboring county or state to check out the changing leaves. Consider taking weekly walks, and have your tween snap pictures of trees so she can document the changes.

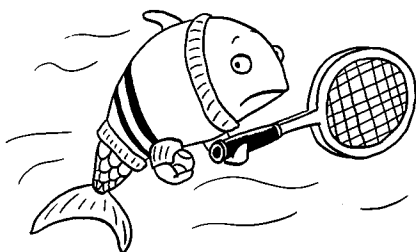
### Did You Know?

Being overweight often affects self-esteem and may even lead to depression. If your child is overweight, ask the school nurse or his doctor for advice. They can offer strategies for handling any issues and for getting to a healthy weight. Your teen may also benefit from talking to his school counselor.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why aren't fish good at tennis?

**A:** They don't like getting close to the net.



## Start with breakfast

Beginning the day with a healthy meal lets your teen "fuel up" and keep her motor running through morning classes. Make sure she doesn't miss this key meal with these easy suggestions.

### Look to leftovers

What could be quicker than having last night's dinner for breakfast today? Your teenager can simply reheat spaghetti or soup. Or she might chop up cooked mushrooms or green beans and stir into scrambled eggs just before they set. This could be a way to switch things up *and* to fit a few vegetables into breakfast.



### Opt for overnight oats

On a Sunday afternoon, encourage your teen to put together overnight oats for the week. For each serving, she should layer  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup uncooked oats,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Greek yogurt, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk (any kind) in a jar and refrigerate. In the morning, she can top with her favorites—bananas and berries for sweetness, nuts for crunch, nut butter for creaminess—and stir to blend the flavors.

### Set it up

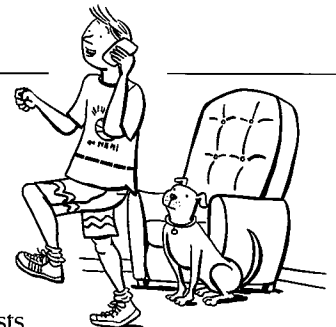
Make breakfast setup part of your family's dinner cleanup routine. While one person clears the table and another does the dishes, someone else could get things ready for the next morning. For instance, ask your tween or teen to put out cereal boxes, bowls, and spoons. Then, she might cut up fresh fruit and put it in the refrigerator alongside cottage cheese cups, yogurt, or other items to easily grab for breakfast. ♥

## Bits of fitness

Little bursts of physical activity spread throughout the day add up. Encourage your tween or teen to incorporate these ideas into his routine:

- Instead of sitting or standing still while talking on the phone, jog in place or walk laps around the room.
- Use television commercial breaks for exercise contests.

Who can do the most crunches or jumping jacks before the show resumes? Or compete against yourself—counting the number you do during one break and trying to beat it the next. ♥



# Snack-bar eats

When your teen is out with friends at a football game or the movies, the concession stand can be tempting. But hot dogs, fries, and nachos don't have to be his only options. Share these tips to help him make healthier choices.

**Eat first.** Having a healthy meal or even a glass or two of water will help keep his hunger at bay. When possible, arrange for him to be at home for lunch or dinner before heading out to an event.

**Take your own.** Suggest that your teen pack snacks. Apples, sunflower seeds, string cheese, rice cakes, and trail



mix are nutritious—and easy to carry to a game.

**Share with a friend.** Splitting a soft pretzel or a large (plain) popcorn will not only save money but also cut down on calories.

**Look for the healthy stuff.** Concession stands often sell better-for-you options these days. Encourage your teen to go for fresh fruit or a grilled chicken sandwich. Instead

of soda, he should stick to water or even bring his own bottle to refill at a fountain. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Becoming a vegetarian

We are all meat eaters in our family, so I was surprised when my son, Aidan, decided to go vegetarian. I knew I didn't want to make two dinners every night, so I asked a vegetarian friend for strategies.

Sara gave me tips that are helping me cook for vegetarians and meat eaters. For instance, I've made big salads with edamame

or chickpeas for protein and then put chicken on the side. Or Aidan will stir-fry veggies, remove them from the wok, and I'll stir-fry beef to serve separately.

She also suggested that I find meatless dishes everyone will enjoy, such as eggplant parmesan or veggie chili. And here's a bonus I never thought of. Sara mentioned that cooking for a vegetarian is a good way to get everyone eating more vegetables—and I can already see that's true! ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Build core strength

For teens who want to be stronger, core strength is where it's at. The core muscles—those in your torso and upper legs—are part of almost every move your teen or tween makes. Help her go beyond sit-ups with these three core exercises.

#### 1. Standing crunch

Stand with your feet hip-width apart and hands locked behind your head. Lift your right knee while lowering your left elbow—so they meet midway across your body. Return to start, and repeat on the other side.

#### 2. Seated leg lift

Sit with your legs extended out front, arms straight, and palms on the floor. Lift one leg about 6 inches off the floor. Hold 5 seconds and release. Alternate legs.

#### 3. Spider crawl

Start in a plank position (like a push-up position, but rest your weight on your forearms). Bending your right knee, bring your right leg to your right elbow. Return to plank position. Repeat on the left side. ♥



## In the Kitchen

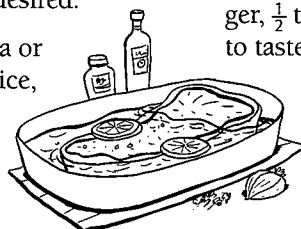
### Healthy marinades

Marinades can take a meal from “meh” to marvelous. Put 1 lb. of your favorite protein (chicken, fish, steak, pork, tofu) in a zipper bag. Mix up one of these combinations, pour over the protein, and marinate between 20 minutes and 24 hours in the refrigerator. Then, bake or grill as desired.

**Chili lime:**  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup canola or olive oil,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lime juice, 1 tsp. chili powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. each garlic and onion powders, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. coarse salt.

**Lemon parsley:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh chopped parsley, 3 crushed garlic cloves,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. pepper, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. coarse salt.

**Honey ginger soy:**  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup low-sodium soy sauce, 2 tbsp. orange or pineapple juice, 1 tbsp. honey, 1 tsp. minced ginger,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. minced garlic, and pepper to taste.



**Food safety note:** Throw away any uncooked marinade that touches raw meat. ♥

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