

# Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Head Start / UPK  
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## BEST BITES

### Edible art

Suggest that your youngster use her plate as a canvas and create a work of art she can eat! Help her select healthy snacks in different shapes and colors. Maybe she'll make a "portrait" with mini turkey-meatball eyes, a cheese-cube nose, a red bell pepper mouth—and a drizzle of marinara hair.



### Active with pets

Need an easy way to encourage your child to move more? Let him help with pet care. He could walk the dog around the block after dinner or throw toys for the cat to chase. *Tip:* If you don't have a pet, he might ask to play with a relative's or a neighbor's pet.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You'll save money *and* boost your youngster's nutrition by using parts of fruits and vegetables that you normally throw away. For example, peel broccoli stems, then cut them into "coins" to add to soups. Also, consider making a pesto out of leafy green carrot tops or grating citrus peel onto steamed veggies.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the golfer have an extra pair of pants?

**A:** In case he got a hole in one!



## Family wellness challenges

How can you motivate your child to live a healthy lifestyle? Turn nutritious eating, exercising, and getting enough sleep into fun family challenges. Use these ideas to get started.

### Challenge #1: Fruit and veggie bingo

Have each person create a bingo card with five rows and five columns. In each square, write or draw produce (*orange, green beans, sweet potato*). Then, swap cards and cross out each one you eat this week (a *strawberry* smoothie counts). Everyone who gets five in a row wins. *Tip:* Involve relatives you'll visit with during the holidays.

### Challenge #2: Fit weekends

Brainstorm fitness-related activities to enjoy together. Some ideas: hold a dance-off, play balloon volleyball, have a snowball fight, visit a recreation center. Ask your youngster to write one on your



calendar every weekend. As you complete each activity, he can color in that day's calendar square.

### Challenge #3: Sleep tracking

Getting enough sleep gives your child energy to run and play. Let him make a "sleep chart" with a column for each family member. For one week, write down the time you turn out the lights and the time you wake up. Draw a star in your column for each night you get the recommended amount of sleep (kids need 9–11 hours, adults need 7–9). ●

## Save on fitness equipment

Inspire your youngster to stay fit by keeping an assortment of sports and exercise gear handy. Consider these suggestions to help her stock up on a budget:

- Ask family and friends if they have equipment they no longer use. Perhaps your brother can pass along a softball mitt his daughter has outgrown. A friend may offer an old tennis racket.

- Search flea markets, thrift shops, and online yard sales. For just a few dollars, you might find a gently used balance ball or yoga mat (disinfect before use). Or you could buy a jump rope, a can of tennis balls, or a Frisbee for less than a dollar.

*Note:* Always make sure used gear is in good condition. ●

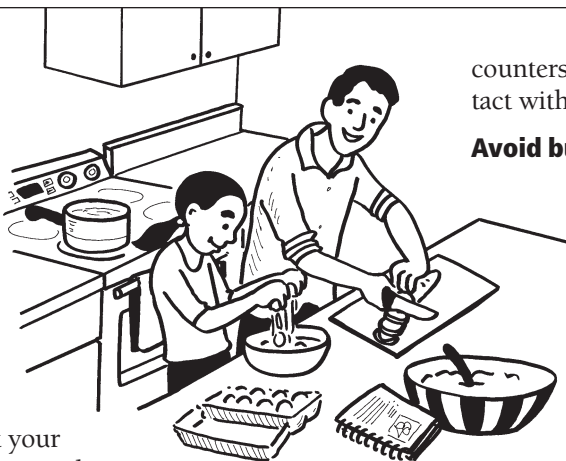


# Kitchen safety for kids

Confidence in the kitchen can set your youngster up for a lifetime of healthy eating. Before the two of you cook together, share these basic safety rules.

*Note:* Always supervise your child in the kitchen.

**Practice cleanliness.** Explain that your youngster should avoid spreading germs by washing her hands in warm, soapy water before and after touching food. Point out that it's also important to wipe



counters and wash cutting boards that come in contact with uncooked meat or eggs.

**Avoid burns.** Show your child how to turn pot handles toward the back of the stove to avoid accidental bumps. Also, teach her to never touch anything hot (pans, plates) with bare hands. She could practice using potholders by carrying dishes that aren't hot.

**Use knives carefully.** Demonstrate the "two-hand" technique: One hand grips the knife firmly while the other holds the food in a "claw" position (fingers curled under). *Tip:* Have your youngster start with a plastic or butter knife and soft foods like bananas or bread. ♥

## O&A

### Healthier beverage choices

**Q:** With holiday parties coming up, how can I help my daughter steer clear of soda and choose healthier drinks?

**A:** One easy solution for parties? Offer to supply beverages!

Drop off a gallon or two of fat-free milk—it's perfect for dunking holiday cookies.

Or let your daughter help you make a bowl of healthy punch to share. She could choose a flavor of sparkling water and decide what kind of fruit to mix in.

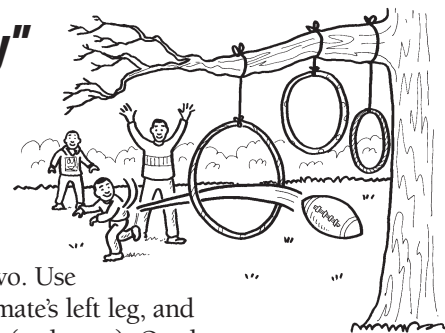
Before you go to a party, talk to your daughter about making good choices. Keep in mind that banning treats completely may make them more tempting to her. For example, suggest that she drink just one glass of chocolate milk or apple juice, then switch to water or regular fat-free milk for the rest of the party. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Winter "field day"

Your youngster doesn't need to wait until spring to enjoy Field Day. Pick his favorite events, and create your own versions at home with family and friends. Here are two.



**1. Three-legged race.** Split into teams of two. Use a scarf to tie one person's right leg to his teammate's left leg, and line up about 25 feet away from a pile of snow (or leaves). On the count of three, teams race around the pile and back. The first team to return to the starting line wins.

**2. Football ring toss.** Tie several hula-hoops or large rings cut from cardboard to a tree branch using different lengths of rope. Assign a point value to each hoop, with higher hoops worth more points. Each person gets five tries to throw a football through any of the hoops. Have each player keep track of his own score. Earn the most points to win. ♥

## IN THE KITCHEN

### Better-for-you appetizers

Chips, mozzarella sticks, and deviled eggs are popular among kids—and they can actually be nutritious. Try these recipes.

#### Tortilla chips

Cut 6 small corn tortillas into 6 wedges each. Combine 3 tbsp. lime juice, 1 tbsp. olive oil, and ½ tsp. salt. Arrange wedges in a single layer on a baking sheet, and brush both sides with the mixture. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes, flipping once.

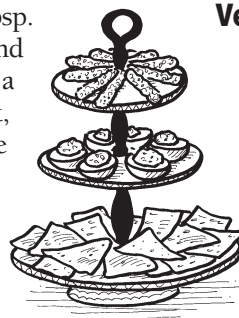
#### Baked cheese sticks

Combine ½ cup whole-grain breadcrumbs with

1 tsp. each onion powder, garlic powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat 1 egg. One at a time, dunk 12 part-skim mozzarella cheese sticks into the egg, then coat with the breadcrumb mixture. Bake at 425° for 10–15 minutes.

#### Vegetable deviled eggs

Peel 6 hard-boiled eggs, and cut in half. Scoop the yolks into a bowl, and add 3 tbsp. fat-free Greek yogurt and ½ tsp. Dijon mustard. Then, stir in 2 tbsp. each diced cucumber and tomato. Divide the mixture among the egg whites. ♥



## 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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