

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Worcester County Public Schools  
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## BEST BITES

### Cut the salt

Many jarred and canned foods—like pasta sauce, soup, and gravy—are high in sodium. Consider making your own versions when possible. Instead of salt, add herbs and spices for flavor. *Tip:* Let your child find a new sauce, soup, or gravy recipe she wants to try, and make it together.

### What did you do in PE today?

When you talk to your youngster about his day at school, ask about PE class. You'll show him that physical activity is important. Which activities does he like best? Turn his favorites, such as hula-hooping, into a family activity night. He can be the "teacher" and show everyone how to keep the hoops spinning longer.



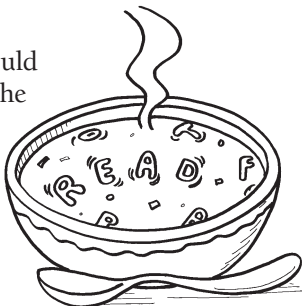
### DID YOU KNOW?

Some fruits and vegetables—including apples, bananas, tomatoes, potatoes, and avocados—give off a gas that makes other produce ripen faster. Prevent spoilage by keeping them separate. Or use this to your advantage! Ripen a green banana by sealing it in a brown paper bag with an apple.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did Sam want alphabet soup for lunch?

**A:** So he could read while he was eating.



## Build character with family meals

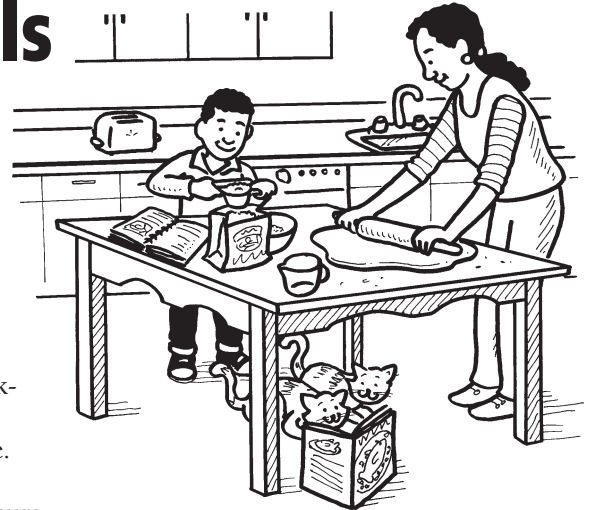
Family meals let you share healthy foods and bond with your youngster. They also offer the chance to instill character traits like independence, politeness, and responsibility. Try these ideas.

### Develop kitchen skills

Teaching your child basic cooking skills is a great way to boost his confidence and independence. Depending on his age, he could squeeze juice from a lemon, measure and mix ingredients, crack eggs, or follow a simple recipe. While the two of you work, talk about healthy cooking methods like steaming vegetables or baking chicken instead of frying it.

### Eat politely

The family dinner table is the perfect place for your youngster to practice manners and graciousness. As you pass dishes around, model saying "Thank you" and "You're welcome" so he will do the same. Also, talk about how to be polite if he's not sure he likes something, perhaps by



taking a small amount and trying a bite or two. *Tip:* Be sure to remind him to thank the cook.

### Use teamwork to clean up

Your child can learn about cooperation and responsibility by pitching in after a meal. Give each person a job like carrying dirty dishes to the sink or wiping off the table and counters. You might also show your youngster how to put leftovers into containers, label with the contents and date, and store in the refrigerator or freezer. ♥

## Fun autumn outings

Get your youngster moving with active outings perfect for the season. Here are suggestions.

● **Pumpkin farm.** Your child could run through a corn maze or navigate an obstacle course at a local pumpkin patch. Let her pick the perfect pumpkin to take home—then carve it, and roast the seeds for a healthy snack.

● **Fall festival.** Look in the newspaper or online for events like a harvest festival with fun runs, relay races, or other activities for kids. If there's live music, encourage your youngster to dance to the beat! ♥



# Looking for grocery "treasure"

The next time you go grocery shopping, bring your youngster along for a "treasure hunt" to find healthy foods. You'll teach her to make good choices in every aisle.

**Produce section.** Ask your child to look for a fruit grown in your state. Or let her seek out vegetables of a particular color (say, orange or purple). Another idea is to search for an exotic fruit she's never tried, perhaps jackfruit or guava.



**Meat department.** Challenge your youngster to compare ground meats like beef, turkey, and chicken. She can put the one with the least fat and sodium into your cart. Also, have her look for cuts of steak or pork that include the word "round" or "loin"—explain that these are typically leaner.

**Dairy case.** Have your child name her favorite flavor of yogurt, perhaps blueberry or vanilla. Then, help her read nutrition labels to look for the one that's labeled "nonfat" and has fewer than 10 grams of sugar

and at least 5 grams of protein. Or she could search for cheese labeled "part skim" or "made with 2% milk." ♡

## Q&A

### Why whole grains?

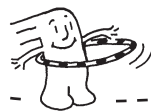
**Q:** I know whole grains are healthy. But how can I explain to my daughter why they're good for her and get her to eat them?

**A:** Here's a fun way to present this: Tell your child that a whole grain is like a superhero with a cape! Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel, while processing removes the nutrient-rich *bran* (the "cape," or outer part) and *germ* from refined grains.



You can also explain that whole grains give her more energy to run faster and play with her friends. They help her think better at school, too.

To get your child used to eating more whole grains, try mixing brown and white rice or whole-wheat and regular pasta—half and half. Then gradually increase the whole grains. Once she gets used to the flavor, she probably won't even miss refined grains. ♡



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Fairy tale workouts

Your child can get exercise while acting out scenes from his favorite fairy tales. Share these activities.



#### The Gingerbread Man

Have your youngster draw a gingerbread man on brown construction paper and cut it out. Then, one player hides it while the others run around to find it. The first person to spot the "cookie" gets to hide it next.

#### Jack and the Beanstalk

At the playground, let your child climb up a ladder or rock wall. He's Jack climbing the beanstalk high into the sky to see what's at the top!

#### Hansel and Gretel

Suggest that your youngster collect a dozen pebbles and pretend they're breadcrumbs. He can skip along a path, scattering them behind him one at a time. When he has dropped them all, he could skip back, bending down to pick them up. ♡

## IN THE KITCHEN

### Not your average breakfast

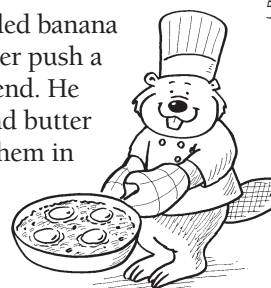
Take a break from scrambled eggs and cereal with these unusual breakfast recipes that you and your child can make together.

**Banana pops:** Cut a peeled banana in half. Let your youngster push a craft stick into each cut end. He can spread 1 tbsp. almond butter over each half, and roll them in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup crushed granola.

**Shakshuka:** Add 2 cups marinara sauce and a pinch each of coriander

and cumin to a frying pan. Simmer on medium-high heat until it comes to a boil. Crack 4 eggs into the sauce, each one in a separate spot. Cover, and cook 5–8 minutes on low heat. Serve with pita wedges.

**PB&J in a bowl:** In a blender, mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup nonfat milk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen pineapple,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen mixed berries, and 2 tbsp. peanut butter. Pour into a bowl, and top with halved fresh strawberries or grapes. ♡



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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