Nutrition Nuggets™

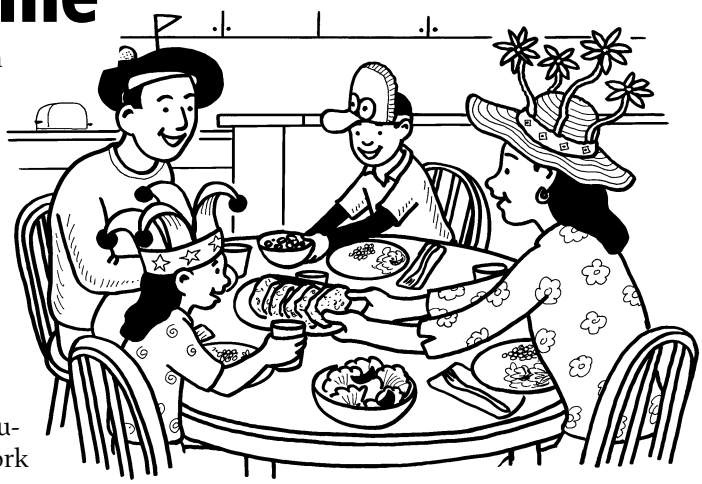
Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2019

Covington County Schools

Child Nutrition Program

Table time



Eating together can build family bonds and inspire your youngster to eat healthier foods. Use these ideas to plan regular meals that he will look forward to.

Make it a habit

Sharing meals as often as possible will get everyone in the routine. Set times that work for your family. That may mean you have a late dinner after soccer practice one evening and an early breakfast before work and school on another morning.

Involve your child

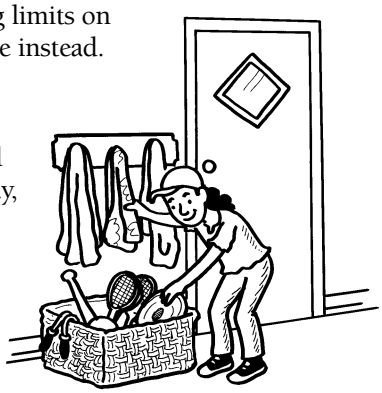
Your youngster will be more interested in eating the meal if he helps to prepare it. He might make a healthy dish like fruit salad. He could also set the table and fill water glasses. *Idea:* Let him create place mats by cutting pictures of nutritious foods from old magazines and gluing them on construction paper.

Add excitement

Turn the table into a playful place with special-event meals. You might have a "silly hat dinner" (everyone wears a hat that they made or decorated). Use the hats to spark conversation. ("What a great hat. How did you think of it?") Or have each person pick a storybook character and pretend to be that character throughout the meal.

Turn off the screens, turn on the fun

Boost your child's physical activity by setting limits on screen time and encouraging her to play outside instead. Try these strategies.



- **Establish rules.** Tell her when she can and can't have screen time. For example, on school days, you might allow it only after outdoor play, homework, and dinner.
- **Provide inspiration.** Have your youngster fill a basket with active toys like a jump rope, balls, a bat, and a Frisbee. Then, place the basket near the door so it's easy to grab equipment on her way outside.
- **Plan ahead.** Let her make outdoor plans with friends. She could organize a weekly game of kickball or hide-and-seek, for instance.

BEST BITES

Foods to sing about

Get your youngster excited about eating new foods by encouraging her to make up songs about them. She could pick a familiar tune (say, "Mary Had a Little Lamb") and change the words to describe the food's taste, color, texture, or scent. *Example:* "Mary had a roasted yam. It tasted sweet like jam."

Recess games

Head outside with your child, and teach him playground games you enjoyed at his age, such as freeze tag or capture the flag. He'll discover new ways to be active at recess—and learn games to share with his classmates. *Idea:* Ask him to show you a recess game that you've never played.



DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly one in five children in the U.S. is obese. Since September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, consider making a family pledge that will help everyone maintain a healthy weight. For instance, maybe you'll agree to take walks after dinner and drink only water and fat-free milk.

Just for fun

Q: What food has no beginning and no end?

A: A bagel.



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Waste not, want not

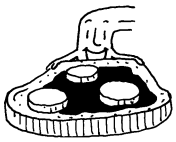


Did you know that nearly one-third of the world's food ends up in the trash? Your family can avoid wasting perfectly good food—plus save money *and* help the environment—with these tips.

Stick to a list. Reducing food waste starts with buying only what you need. Ask your child to help you plan a week's worth of healthy meals and make a grocery list. Go shopping together, and get only what's on the list.

Take what you'll eat. Encourage your youngster to put on her plate only what she'll eat. Here's a good strategy: She should serve herself less than she thinks she wants—then she could get seconds if she's still hungry.

Store leftovers wisely. Have your child label containers of leftovers with dates and contents. Keep fresh foods with older dates in the front of the refrigerator so you won't forget about them. If you won't use leftovers quickly, move them to the freezer.



Q&A Handling food allergies at school

Q: *My daughter is allergic to eggs, and she's starting school this year. What steps should I take to help her stay safe?*

A: Begin by talking to your daughter's teacher, the cafeteria manager, and the school nurse. They'll explain the policies for protecting students with allergies, such as how your child can choose safe foods in the cafeteria.



At the same time, help your daughter learn to take responsibility for managing her allergy. For example, she should only eat her own food and not accept food from other students. Explain that she can't eat homemade goods, such as birthday cupcakes, since there's no way to be certain they're egg-free.

Finally, make sure she knows the symptoms of a reaction, and tell her to get adult help immediately if she notices any or if she thinks she was exposed to eggs.

OUR PURPOSE

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

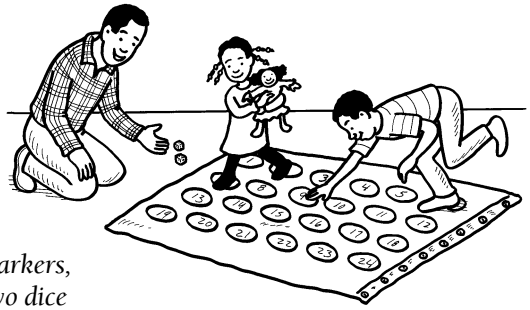
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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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ACTIVITY CORNER Math-ercise



With this homemade "twist" on Twister, your youngster will improve his balance and flexibility while he practices math facts.

Materials: *washable or dry-erase markers, soup can, old shower curtain (plain), two dice*

1. Let your child turn the shower curtain into a Twister board. He should trace around the soup can to make 4 rows of 6 circles, then number the circles 1–24.

2. One person is the caller. On each player's turn, the caller rolls the dice, uses the numbers to make a math problem, and says which hand or foot the person must put on the circle containing the answer. So if he chose left foot and rolls 2 and 3, he could say, "Left foot on 2 x 3." The first player would place his left foot on 6 and keep it there until his next turn.

3. Continue until all but one person has fallen out of position—that player wins.

Note: If a player needs a circle that's already covered, the caller gives a new problem.

IN THE KITCHEN Turn toast into art

Let your child "paint" a slice of whole-wheat toast with mashed black beans and decorate it with avocado slices, corn kernels, and chunky salsa. That's just one fun way to create an edible work of art! Here are more.

Parfait

Paint: Fat-free cream cheese
Decorations: Blueberries, sliced strawberries, sprinkle of cinnamon

Mediterranean

Paint: Hummus
Decorations: Cucumber rounds, cherry tomato halves



Rain forest

Paint: Nut or seed butter
Decorations: Banana slices, shaved coconut

Pizza

Paint: Tomato sauce
Decorations: Low-fat shredded mozzarella cheese, spinach leaves, sliced mushrooms

Garden

Paint: Mashed cooked peas
Decorations: Radish slices, crumbled feta cheese