

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

February 2017

Lower Township Elementary Schools



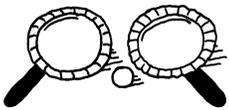
## BEST BITES

### Easy access

Make healthy snacks the first thing your child sees when she's hungry. Pick a cabinet or pantry shelf that is at her eye level, and stock it with raisins, baked crackers, and whole-wheat pretzels. The same for the fridge: Put string cheese, broccoli pieces, and fruit within easy reach.

### Paper plate Ping-Pong

Here's a fun idea for indoor physical activity. Let your youngster make paddles by gluing jumbo craft sticks to the backs of two sturdy paper plates. Use the paddles to lob a Ping-Pong ball back and forth in the air. Or he could just hit a ball against a garage or basement wall for solo practice.



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### DID YOU KNOW?

More restaurants are adding calorie counts to their menus. The numbers can help you make smart choices for your family when you go out. You may opt to skip extras when you see how many more calories they have. And remember that calories are hard to burn off—a 65-pound child has to ride a bike for about 30 minutes to burn 90 calories.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the giant eat a volcano?

**A:** He wanted a hot lunch!



## On tonight's menu...

Streamline weeknight dinner planning, and give your family interesting meals to look forward to, by coming up with daily themes. Let your child help you brainstorm ideas and menus. These thoughts will get you started.

### Meatless Monday

**What:** Go vegetarian once a week.

**How:** Make whole-grain bowls. Top cooked brown rice, farro, or quinoa with vegetables and a protein like beans, a fried egg, or grilled tofu.

### Tortilla Tuesday

**What:** Tortillas are a versatile base for a healthy meal.

**How:** Use any combination of meat, cheese, and veggies, and roll up into a burrito. *Example:* Grilled chicken, arugula, feta cheese. Or layer the ingredients instead to make tostadas.

### Waffle Wednesday

**What:** Don't limit your waffle maker to breakfast!

**How:** Get your youngster grilling panini-like sandwiches using soft whole-grain bread, roasted vegetables, and provolone



cheese. *Tip:* Brush a little olive oil on the outside of each slice so it browns.

### Throwback Thursday

**What:** Spotlight oldies but goodies.

**How:** Let your child list old family favorites, perhaps meatloaf or baked ziti. Then, look for ways to make them healthier (use lean ground beef or whole-wheat pasta, for example).

### Stir-fry Friday

**What:** This is the night for anything stir-fried.

**How:** Get out the wok or a deep skillet, and stir-fry vegetables with shrimp, chicken, or pork. To create a noodle dish, add rice noodles to the mixture. ●

## Chores reinvented

Chores are an easy way to add physical activity—and responsibility—into your youngster's routine. Try these twists.

**Sock dusting.** Have your child wear a pair of old white socks on her hands. Then, she can clean surfaces all over the house with her "sock hands."

**Undercover chores.** Refer to chores using code names. Picking up a messy room could be "Mission Impossible." Signal it's time to change the bed with "Inside Out." And "Dust Bunny Detail" might be code for sweeping the floor or vacuuming.

**Dance party.** Turn chore time into party time by putting on some tunes. Dance and sing your way to a clean house together. ●



# New spins on salad

Want your youngster to eat more vegetables? Go beyond the traditional salad bowl with these clever suggestions.

**Chopped salads.** Cut salad ingredients into small pieces. Begin with a sturdy lettuce like romaine. Have your child select three or four other ingredients, perhaps cucumbers, bell peppers, and avocado. She could rinse the items and help you chop them. Then, let her toss everything in a large bowl with a bit of her favorite dressing.



**Stick salads.** No utensils needed when you put salad on a stick! Help your youngster spike her preferred veggies on a toothpick. Encourage her to try new tastes by skewering cherry tomatoes, cucumber chunks, and spinach leaves. Or try chunks of mango, papaya, and pineapple with turkey cubes.

**Finger salads.** Kids love finger foods, so why not make salad something your child can eat with her fingers? Fill Belgian endive leaves with shredded carrots and roasted beets. Or cook and chill jumbo pasta shells and stuff with chickpeas, marinated artichokes, and diced tomatoes. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER



## Be active— 10 minutes at a time

Inspire your youngster to get fit with 10-minute bursts of activity. Here are ways to put him on the road to getting 60 minutes, or more, of exercise a day:

✓ Do a routine with jumping jacks, toe touches, knee lifts, squats, and lunges. One person can be the leader, and the other follows his moves.



✓ Take “power walks” around the block or up and down the stairs in your apartment building. Pump your arms as you go.

✓ Start a skipping contest. You could skip across the backyard, through a nearby field, or down the sidewalk.

✓ Grab a ball, Frisbee, or beanbag, and play catch outside. Mix things up by catching with both hands, with one hand, or over your head. *Bonus:* Your child will also practice hand-eye coordination. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

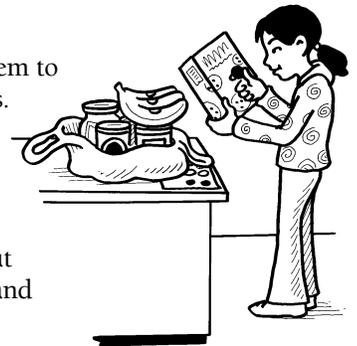
### Green means go!

I was frustrated because I couldn't seem to get my children to choose healthy foods.

While sitting at a red light one day, an idea suddenly dawned on me. Why not try a traffic-light approach to the foods in our house?

So I bought red, yellow, and green stickers and went home to discuss the plan. First, we talked about what makes a food healthy—it is high in nutrients and low in sugar, fat, and salt. Then I suggested we put a green sticker on foods to “go on” (fruits, vegetables), yellow on “sometimes” items (apple juice, cold cuts), and red on foods to “stop and think about” (cookies, ice cream).

Now when we get home from shopping, my kids have a job: label each item red, green, or yellow. And I'm happy to say they're going for the green most often! ♥



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Fishing for tacos

Eating fish will give your youngster essential nutrients to keep his heart and brain healthy. Follow these steps for delicious fish tacos your family is sure to enjoy.

**1. Make the fish.** In a skillet coated with 1 tbsp. olive oil, saute four 4-oz. tilapia fillets for 3 minutes on each side. Or rub four skinless 4-oz. salmon fillets with olive oil, place on a foil-lined sheet pan, and roast at 400° for 12 minutes.



**2. Prepare the vegetables.** Heat 1 tbsp. olive oil in a skillet, and saute 1 sliced onion, 1 sliced green bell pepper, and ½ lb. sliced mushrooms until soft.

**3. Mix the salsa.** Stir together 1 cup chopped pineapple, 2 chopped plum tomatoes, ½ cup chopped red onion, ¼ cup chopped red bell pepper, 1 minced jalapeño pepper, and juice of 1–2 fresh limes.

**4. Assemble the tacos.** Break the fish into chunks, mix with the vegetables, and divide among eight taco shells. Top with salsa. Yum! ♥

## 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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