

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2015

Lower Township Elementary Schools



BEST BITES

Mini sandwiches

Making a sandwich for your youngster? Try this clever idea. Cut her sandwich into lots of small squares or other shapes. *Tip:* A pizza cutter is a handy tool for this. Then, scatter the pieces on a plate or drop them into a zipper bag, and watch her smile as she enjoys her sandwich—to the last (tiny) bite.



Let's go outside

Start the school year off with a healthy routine: Go outside every day. Being outside naturally gets kids moving. Your child is likely to run around, explore new places, ride a scooter, or toss a ball around. Whatever he does, he'll be working toward the 60 minutes of daily physical activity that's recommended for good health.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oatmeal contains fiber that will keep your youngster feeling full and satisfied through a morning of school. Help her make her own "instant oatmeal" with this easy recipe: Combine $\frac{1}{3}$ cup quick oats, 2 tbsp. golden raisins or dried cherries, and 2 tbsp. nuts (any kind). Add $\frac{2}{3}$ cup boiling water, cover, and let sit for 3 minutes.

Just for fun

Q: What do invisible cats drink?

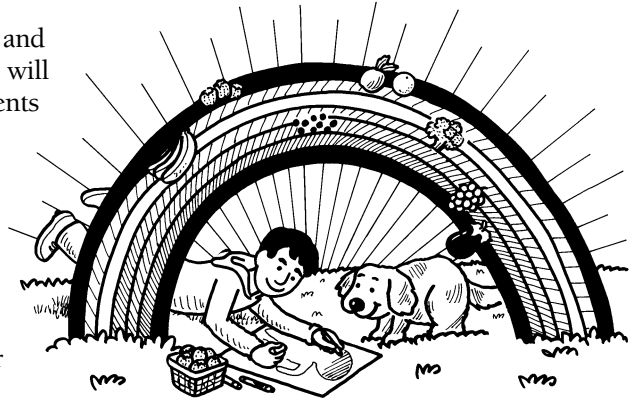
A: Evaporated milk!



Rainbow-licious

True or false: Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors will help give my child the nutrients he needs to stay healthy.

Answer: True! The bright colors not only make fruits and vegetables fun to eat—each color actually indicates a different vitamin or mineral. Try these suggestions to encourage your youngster to "eat a rainbow."



Roy G. Biv

Combine a nutrition lesson with a science one. Have your child learn the order of the colors in a rainbow (or the *visible light spectrum*) by "getting to know" Roy G. Biv: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. He could draw an outline of "Roy" and color it in with each fruit and vegetable he eats. *Example:* Color Roy's head red for strawberries, his neck orange for cantaloupe, and his feet violet for eggplant.

Eat what you wear

Challenge your youngster to eat colors matching his clothes. Say he's dressed

in blue jeans and a white T-shirt with a green and orange design. He might have blueberries for a snack, cauliflower and a green salad at dinner, and an orange before bed. Ask him how many other matching fruits or vegetables he could name. *Tip:* Join your child, and point out produce that matches your clothes, too.

Shop for a rainbow

At the grocery store, let your youngster put a "rainbow" into a child's shopping cart or a separate basket. He might pick one or two fruits and vegetables for each color. When you get home, he could arrange them into a rainbow and take a photo of his creation—before it's all eaten! 🍌

Family fitness time

Get your youngsters thinking about ways to be active by putting them in charge of a regular family fitness night.

Begin by setting aside one night a week for "The Smith Family Fitness Night." Be sure to mark it on your kitchen calendar, along with whose turn it is to be the leader. That person decides on the week's activity. Share these four ideas to get your children thinking.

1. Play kickball.
2. Hold a jump-rope contest.
3. Create an upbeat playlist, and dance to the music.
4. Have wheelbarrow races (hold another person by her legs as she "walks" with her arms). 🍌



Here's why I like school meals!

Eating school breakfast and lunch is not only a healthy option for your youngster, it's a time-saver for you. Encourage her to enjoy cafeteria meals with these stories from other kids:

- "A hot meal tastes better than a cold sandwich."
- "It's fun to be able to choose which fruit to have for dessert. Some days I want apple slices, and other days I'm in the mood for a banana."



- "I used to be a picky eater. But I've gotten used to trying new foods at school. Now Mom buys things like jicama and kiwi for me to have at home, too."
- "The cafeteria workers always smile at me when I take my tray. I think they're happy to see me!"
- "Every night, my dad and I read the next day's menu so I can decide what I'll eat. I like hearing his stories about what school lunch was like when he was a kid."

Note: Your child might qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Call or stop by the school office to ask about this. ♥



O&A Put away the salt

Q: I've read that children consume too much salt. How much is too much, and how can we cut down?

A: The daily recommended amount of salt varies by age: less than 1,900 mg for 4- to 8-year-olds, and less than 2,200 mg for 9- to 13-year-olds.



What people often don't realize is that salt is an acquired taste. If your children get used to having less salt, eventually they won't want salty food anyway—it won't taste good to them.

To start on that path, try to limit foods like these: fast food, canned soups, chips, packaged meals, bacon, processed meats, and soy sauce. Rinse canned vegetables to remove extra salt, and look for items marked "no salt added" or "low sodium."

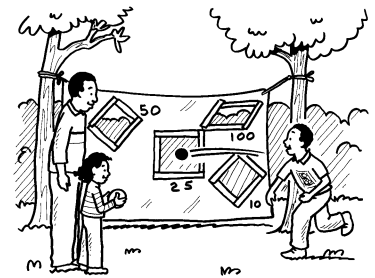
Finally, keep the salt shaker off the table—if it's not there, your family won't use it! ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Take one giant leap...

Extra-big games mean extra-big fun. Here are two active games to play.

Ball toss. Turn an old sheet or tarp into a giant tossing game. With scissors, cut out four shapes, and reinforce the edges of the holes with duct tape. Let your child use a marker to write a point value (10, 25, 50, 100) by each cutout. Punch holes in the top corners, and string the target between two trees. Stand back, and take turns aiming a ball toward the holes. If the ball goes through, score the points marked.



Board game. Have your child use sidewalk chalk to draw a life-size board game on a blacktop, driveway, or sidewalk. He should mark start and finish points and then write active instructions in each block ("Hop 10 times," "Skip in a circle"). Take turns rolling a die. Move the number of spaces shown, and follow the instructions on the box where you land. First one to the finish line—exactly—wins. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

A slice of pizza

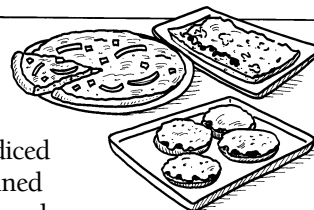
Put pizzazz into pizza dinners with these twists.

Nacho. This Mexican mash-up substitutes a ready-made whole-wheat pizza crust for tortilla chips. Layer the crust with 1 can black beans (rinsed, drained), 2 tbsp. sliced scallions, 1 cup diced tomatoes, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced red bell peppers. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded Monterey jack cheese. Bake at 400° until heated through, 10–15 minutes.

Spinach-artichoke. For a spin on spinach-artichoke dip, top a large whole-grain flatbread with diced artichoke hearts (1 can, drained and rinsed), 2 cups baby spinach,

4-oz. cream cheese (cut into small pieces), and 1 cup crumbled feta. Bake at 400° until the crust is browned, 15–20 minutes.

Mushroom crust. Here's a tasty gluten-free option. Place four portobello mushrooms (stems removed) upside down on a baking sheet. Bake 10 minutes at 400°. Saute 1 can (14-oz.) diced tomatoes with 1 tsp. tomato paste, 1 tsp. oregano, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. sugar. Spoon the sauce into the mushrooms, sprinkle with shredded mozzarella, and bake 10 minutes more. ♥



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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