

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

May 2007

Santa Ana Unified School District

BEST BITES



Throw it here

How many ways are there to throw a ball? Challenge your child to find out. He can toss it high or low, throw it backward, or bounce it to you. See if he can come up with 10 moves.

Each time your youngster tries, he'll be working out his arm muscles.

A free lunch

If your children qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches, they may be able to get free meals over the summer, too. These meals are often part of activity programs, such as summer camps run by your school or parks and recreation department. *Tip:* Check with your school to find nearby programs.

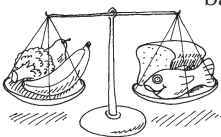
Moving lively

You can get everyone in your house moving a little more by playing music. Put upbeat tunes on the radio or CD player, and you'll find your kids walking with more spring in their step. Grab your child's hand and dance to the music, and you'll add even more physical activity.



DID YOU KNOW?

Children who are overweight by age 11 are likely to be overweight or obese as adults. To help prevent obesity in your youngsters, encourage healthy eating and lots of physical activity now. Your best bets: help them eat a balanced diet, stay away from soda and junk food, and get an hour of exercise a day.



Summertime is active time

The long, lazy days of summer are the perfect time to get your children to be more active. You can start with these games—they're designed for families, a group of friends, or even a summer birthday party. You're sure to see smiling faces all around!

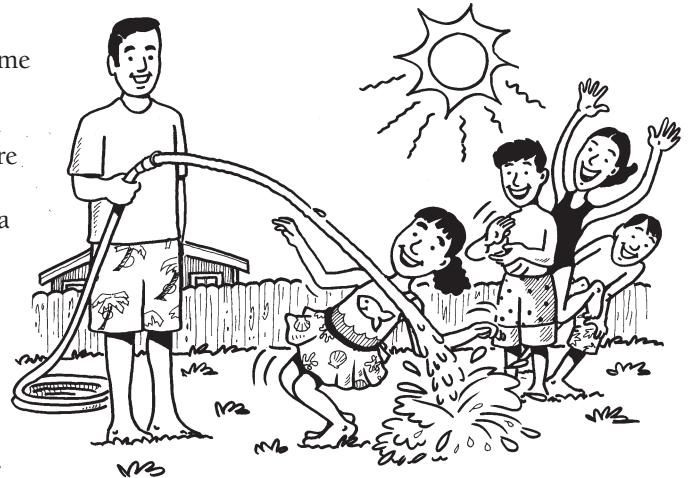
Backyard bowling.

Line up empty cereal boxes or water bottles in rows like bowling pins. Have children stand about 20 feet away, take a running start, and roll a ball to knock down the "pins." Players score one point for each pin that's knocked down.

Wet limbo. Make the water from a garden hose into a limbo stick. Hold the hose so the water sprays horizontally, and let youngsters run under the water. Lower the hose each time they go through. Who can go the lowest without getting soaking wet?

Penny races. Put a penny on a "start line" for each child. Challenge them to run a course (around the house, down the sidewalk and back). When they get back to the start line, they collect a penny.

Freezer pool. Fill a kiddie pool with cold water. Add ice cubes, plastic rings, or other objects that float. Have



youngsters get in the pool and try to pick up the items with their feet. There will be lots of squirming, movement—and laughter—as they try to get all the objects out. *Note:* Be sure to watch children whenever they're around water. ♥

Picnic safety

Picnics are a great way to bring your family together for a fun meal. Use these tips to make it a safe meal, too:

- Chill food thoroughly and pack it in coolers just before you leave the house.
- Use plenty of ice or freezer packs to keep food cold.
- Take two coolers—one for food and one for drinks—so food isn't exposed to warm air every time someone wants a drink.
- Keep coolers in the car (rather than in the trunk) on your ride, and in the shade at your picnic.
- Don't eat food that's been left out of a cooler for more than an hour. Throw out leftovers if the ice has melted. *Note:* Be especially careful with meats as well as sandwiches or side dishes made with mayonnaise. ♥

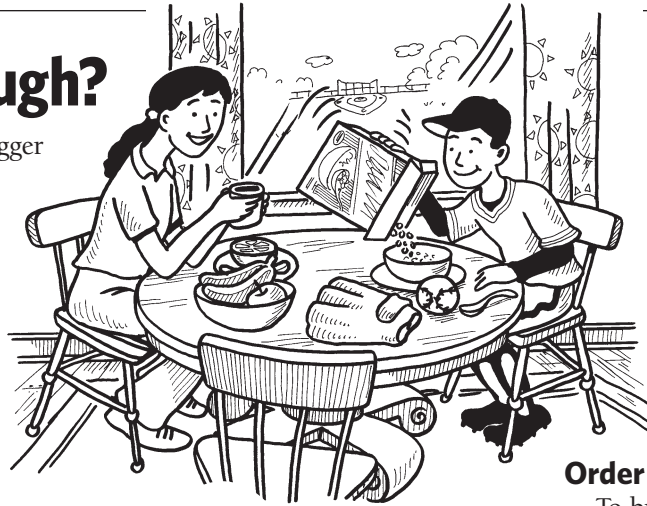


How much is enough?

When it comes to food portions, bigger is not always better! Help your child keep his servings a healthy size with these ideas.

Picture it

Teach your youngster what healthy portions look like. To help him remember, relate them to things he knows. For example, 1 cup of cereal is the size of a baseball, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter looks like a Ping-Pong ball, and 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish is the size of two dice. *Note:* To find healthy serving sizes, ask your school's cafeteria manager, or see www.mypyramid.gov.



Limit amounts

Instead of serving meals family style, consider filling plates for each person. You'll be able to control portion size and also be sure everyone has a variety. *Tip:* Let your child help you put vegetables and fruit on half the plate, meat or meat alternatives on a quarter, and grains on the other quarter.

Order carefully

To bring restaurant portions down to a healthy size, consider splitting entrees. Or, if you each order your own meal, you can ask that half be packed for carryout ahead of time. That way you—rather than the restaurant—will decide how much your youngster gets. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Take a hike

Start hiking with your children when they're young, and they're likely to appreciate the outdoors—and the physical activity—forever. Try this plan:



1. Begin with short hikes—say, 20 minutes in a nearby park. Work up to longer distances so youngsters enjoy the hikes without feeling tired. Build in breaks to skip stones in a stream, look at leaves, or find bugs.

2. Use activities to keep kids interested. Try singing songs and making up stories together. Or play games like I Spy: "I spy something brown, green, and gray. What is it?" (a tree with a squirrel on it). Challenge your children to count the yellow flowers or red birds they see.

3. Take along food and water. Make sure everyone drinks frequently. Have healthy snacks, such as bananas, granola bars, or trail mix, to keep energy levels up. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Cheese melts and more

What kid doesn't like grilled cheese? Try these healthy versions of an old favorite.

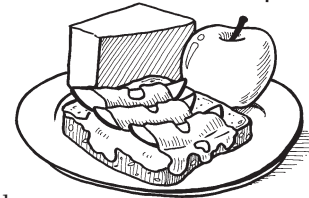
Tuna twist. Mix water-packed tuna with light mayonnaise, and spread on a slice of whole-grain bread. Top with low-fat Monterey Jack cheese. Bake until hot.

Apple melt. Put apple slices on a piece of whole-wheat bread, and cover with shredded low-fat cheddar cheese. Broil until cheese bubbles.

Pizza toast. On a whole-wheat English muffin, layer skim mozzarella

cheese, sliced tomatoes, and mushrooms or other vegetables. Sprinkle with dried oregano, and toast until cheese melts.

Egg dip. Make a sandwich of lean turkey and low-fat Swiss cheese on whole-grain bread. Press together, and cut in half. Whisk together ¼ cup fat-free milk and 1 egg or egg substitute. Dip sandwich halves into the mixture, and brown them in a hot pan (coated with nonstick spray). ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Fruit of the week

For a long time, my daughter refused to eat any fruit except oranges. I had read that a variety was important, so I asked Mandy's teacher for ideas. Here's what we ended up doing.

Each week when we go shopping, I ask Mandy to pick out a new fruit. The first week, she chose kiwi. When we got home, we talked about its color and shape (brown, oval). Then, we tasted it together. Finally, I

had her draw a picture and write a few words describing it (soft, sweet).

In the past few weeks, Mandy has tried a mango, pineapple, and plum. Some weeks she likes what she chooses, and some weeks she doesn't. But at least she is willing to taste new things—now that she is involved. Plus, we have a beautiful collection of Mandy's fruit pictures hanging on our kitchen wall! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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