

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

December 2014



Suffolk Public Schools

Mr. Brian K. Williams, Coordinator of FNS

## BEST BITES

### Break for activity

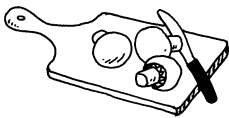
Encourage your youngster to build active breaks into times when she's normally sitting down. For instance, after a half-hour of studying, she might go for a brisk walk around the block. Or she could do jumping jacks during television commercials or squats each time she passes a new level in her video game.

### Count on calcium

How many foods containing calcium can your child think of? Together, make a list. Start by naming those with milk (yogurt, ice cream). Then, look online or in a book for others (spinach, kale, canned salmon, sardines). He might decorate his list with markers, hang it up, and put a star by each one he eats.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The hearty flavor of mushrooms can mimic meat—which makes them perfect for mixing into burgers, meatballs, and meatloaf.



You'll add nutrients and also stretch your dollars because mushrooms cost less than meat. Simply chop and mix them into lean ground beef or turkey before shaping and cooking. *Tip:* Aim for a 50-50 blend.

### Just for fun

**Q:** How long should a racehorse's legs be?

**A:** Long enough to reach the ground!



## Fit in breakfast

After 12 hours without food, a child surely would be hungry! Yet many kids go to school without eating breakfast because they're too rushed or tired, or they don't feel like eating. Use these ideas to make sure your youngster isn't one of them.

### Prepare ahead

The first trick is to make sure you have breakfast food in the house. Stock up regularly on items like healthy cereal, fat-free milk, frozen whole-wheat waffles, and fruit. Then, set up for the next day's breakfast as you clean up from dinner.

### Wake up earlier

Stressing about being late for school or work is no way to begin the day. As a family, decide to get up 20 minutes earlier so you have time to eat without rushing. *Idea:* So that your child can focus on eating, have him come to the table dressed for school and with his backpack ready.

### Breakfast exchange

Talk to your youngster about what she would like for breakfast...because that's what she's most likely to eat. Then, try to give her what she wants—with a healthy spin.

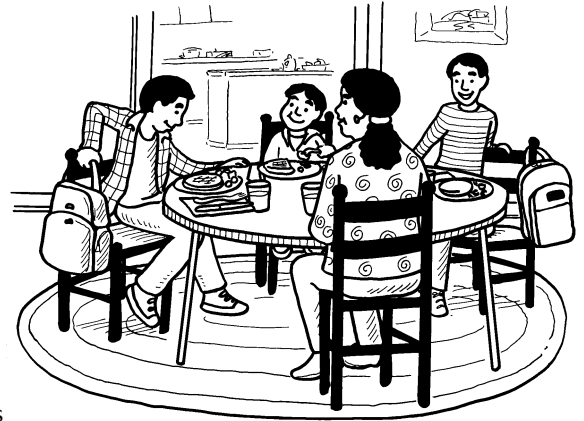
#### If your child asks for:

**Fast-food breakfast sandwiches...** fill a whole-wheat roll with scrambled eggs, a slice of tomato, and a slice of ham.

**Sugary cereal...** let her pick out new varieties that meet the "5 & 10 test." Help her read nutrition labels to find boxes with 5 or more grams of fiber and 10 or fewer grams of sugar.

**Toaster pastries...** try a new toaster oven treat. You might layer apple or pear slices and shredded cheddar cheese on whole-wheat bread and toast until the cheese melts.

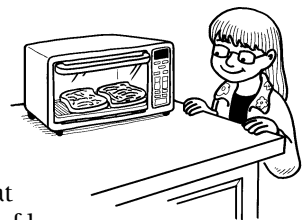
**Anything but breakfast food...** serve last night's leftovers, or make her a sandwich or taco.



### Spread the word

On blank mailing labels, create stickers that say "I ate breakfast today!" or "I love breakfast!" When your youngster finishes eating, give him a sticker to wear to school or to put on a favorite stuffed animal or action figure. You'll send the message that you think breakfast is important.

*Note:* Another way to ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast is to have him eat it at school. Check the options at his cafeteria.



# Clues to fitness

Appeal to the detective in your child with this idea for combining fitness with a little mystery. It's as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Hide play equipment around your house and yard. For instance, tuck a jump rope behind the family room couch. Bury 3-lb. weights in a basket of mittens and gloves. Or place a softball in a bush outside.
2. On sticky notes, write clues leading to each item. Then, on the object itself, put a note with an activity to do. *Example:*



Stick a note to your youngster's bedroom door saying, "Walk down one level." At the bottom of the stairs, another note could say, "Hop to the place where we cuddle and read." When she eventually finds the jump rope, the activity might be, "Jump rope while singing 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame.'"

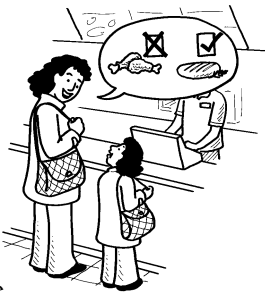
3. After she finds all of the objects and does the activities, hide them in new places, and write new clues. *Idea:* Let her hide equipment and write clues for you, too! ♡



## PARENT TO PARENT Set a good example

People often say that my daughter, Gabby, is my "mini-me." She looks like me, and she even sounds like me. Unfortunately, I realized she is eating like me—and that's not a good thing. I decided if I want her to eat better, I would have to set a better example.

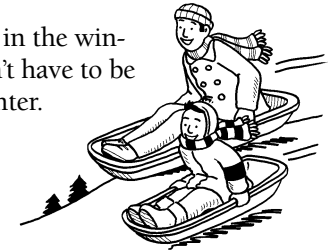
Now when I'm making food choices, I think through my decisions out loud so she can hear my thought process. I might say, "The fried chicken looks good, but fried foods have a lot of fat and oil. I'm going to get the grilled chicken instead." At snack time, I let her see me reaching for fruits and vegetables, and then I ask which one she wants.



Next, I'm going to work on drinking water rather than soda. That is really going to be hard for me, but I will keep reminding myself that Gabby is picking up on my habits—so I want them to be good ones. ♡

## ACTIVITY CORNER Staying active in the winter

Is your youngster much less active in the winter? While that's not unusual, it doesn't have to be the case. Try these tips for keeping him moving all winter.



### Create a space

Make room for active play inside your home. For instance, clear the area around a doorway, and hang up an over-the-door basketball hoop. If you have a garage, park the car outside so he can play hockey there. Or make room on a tile or wood floor for "speed skating" (gliding around with socks on).

### Go inside—somewhere else

After school or on weekends, go places where your family can be active. Try bowling alleys, open-gym hour at your community center, a rock-climbing facility, or an indoor pool.

### Go outside anyway

As long as your child dresses for the weather, he can enjoy playing outside. He might play backyard games, ride a scooter, go sledding, or build a snowman. If you have a dog, they could *both* get exercise by running around outside together. ♡

## IN THE KITCHEN Slow-cooker meals

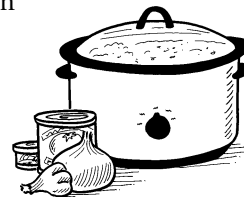
A crockpot can be a busy parent's best friend! Dust off the one you got at your wedding shower, or pick up one at a discount store or garage sale. Then, experiment with recipes like these.

**Orange-honey drumsticks.** In a bowl, combine 1 can frozen orange juice concentrate (12 oz., thawed) and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup honey. Place 12 drumsticks in a crockpot, and pour in the sauce. Cook on high for 2–2½ hours.

**Pulled pork.** Spread 2 sliced onions in a slow cooker, and top with 3-lb.

boneless pork shoulder. Add 1 cup barbecue sauce,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup apple cider vinegar, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chicken or beef broth (low-sodium). Cook on high for 5–6 hours. Shred the pork, and stir back into the sauce. Serve in whole-wheat buns.

**Marinara sauce.** In a skillet, saute 1 chopped onion and 1 minced garlic clove until soft. Put into a slow cooker, and add 2 tbsp. olive oil, 2 28-oz. cans whole tomatoes, 2 tbsp. tomato paste, and a pinch of sugar. Cook on low for 4–5 hours. Serve over pasta. *Note:* Freezes well. ♡



### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com

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

ISSN 1935-4630