

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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BEST BITES

Prevent overeating

Help your child avoid overeating by taking time to talk about the color, texture, or taste of his food. If you say, "I love the color of carrots," he may respond, "I like how crunchy they are." By stopping to think, he'll slow down his eating pace, giving him time to feel full.

Kangaroo hop

Try this fitness idea from Down Under. Have your children hop like kangaroos by jumping with both feet and holding their hands in front of their chests. They can race each other by hopping from one end of a room or yard to the other. Or they could take turns being the leader and play Follow the Kangaroo.



DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that students who skip breakfast have shorter attention spans and don't do as well on tests. Make sure your youngster gets up in time to have a nutritious breakfast either at home or at school. *Tip:* If she's having trouble waking up early enough, move her bedtime back.

Just for fun

Q: What's the worst thing about being an octopus?

A: Washing your hands before meals!



Snack attack

When your child bursts through the door after school or activities, she'll probably want something to eat. Try these tips for healthy snacks that will give her the energy she needs to play and do homework.

Stock the kitchen

Whatever is in the house is what your youngster will eat—so shop with that in mind. Get interesting fruits and vegetables in different colors. Buy mango or peach salsa, and let your child dip in veggie sticks (bell pepper, celery, jicama). Stock popcorn to air pop (rather than getting less healthy microwave popcorn). Then, offer her choices. She'll have a say in what she eats, but she'll be choosing only from healthy foods.

Have a mini-meal

Breakfast or lunch foods can make a good snack. You could serve oatmeal with bananas and cinnamon, or tuck scrambled eggs into a pita pocket. Or try individual pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins. Top each half with a little

tomato sauce, shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese, sliced mushrooms, and then bake until the cheese melts.

Build your own

Let your youngster get creative in the kitchen, and she'll be likely to eat the results. She can make kebabs by threading strawberries, melon chunks, and cheese cubes onto toothpicks. Put out cookie cutters for her to cut sandwiches into fun shapes. Or she could spread cream cheese on rice cakes or apple slices and decorate them with raisins or dried cranberries. 🍓



Feeling good about sports

Participating in sports can build your youngster up... or drag him down. Make athletics a positive experience for him with these strategies:

- Keep games in perspective. At this age, sports should be about having fun and developing skills. Ask about his favorite part of practice or the most interesting play in the game, rather than focusing on his performance or the score.
- Encourage your child to set goals—but make sure the goals are realistic. He might aim to touch the ball three times during a game or to try a move that he's been working on.
- Avoid comments about your youngster's size or body. Concentrate on his effort and the friends he is making ("I love how you tried to get the rebound"). 🏀

