

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2007

Medford Township Public Schools  
Tips for Healthy Eating

## BEST BITES

### Still hungry?

If your child cleans his plate and wants more, give him second helpings of vegetables and fruits. That will help him reach the recommended 5–9 servings a day. Plus, the seconds on fruits and veggies will give him important nutrients as well as fiber.

### And this month...

Get your family exercising together by brainstorming a new physical activity to do each month. This month could be race-walking through the neighborhood, next month might be a hula hoop contest, and after that could be swimming at an indoor pool.



Keep the ideas coming, and you won't hear the complaint that exercise is "boring."

### DID YOU KNOW?

Many schools have students taste-test the food they're thinking about putting in the cafeteria. Ask your cafeteria manager if your school does this, and then see if your child can participate. If she gets a vote, she'll be more likely to eat the food served at school.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the elephant stand on the marshmallow?

**A:** So he wouldn't fall into the hot chocolate!



## Drink up!

What are the healthiest drinks for kids?

- A. fat-free milk
- B. water
- C. fruit juice
- D. diet soda
- E. sports drinks

Answer: A and B

Get your child in the habit of reaching for milk or water when he's thirsty, and he'll be a step ahead on the road to good health. Try these strategies.



### Go for flavor

Many youngsters don't like plain milk or water. To punch up the taste, stir chocolate or strawberry syrup into fat-free milk, or add slices of lemon, orange, or lime to water. *Idea:* Buy unsweetened carbonated water (seltzer, club soda) in kid-pleasing flavors like wild cherry, lemon-lime, or mandarin orange.

### Limit juice

Keep juice to 8–12 ounces a day—and be sure it's 100%. Too much fruit juice fills kids up, keeping them from eating more nutritious foods. *Tip:* To

wean your youngster off juice, mix it with sparkling water, and decrease the amount of juice in the mixture each day.

### Drop the soda

Try to get your child away from soda completely. It has no nutritional value, contains lots of sugar and sodium, and often has caffeine. *Note:* Diet soda is no better—it still has caffeine and sodium, plus it contains artificial sweeteners.

### Substitute for sports drinks

Young athletes often think they need power drinks. Unless your child has been exercising really hard for an hour or more, steer him toward water instead. *Tip:* Make water seem more fun by putting it in a colorful plastic bottle. ♥

## Support for PE

Physical education class can be a highlight of your youngster's week. She gets a break from sitting still and has time to play games while she learns new skills. Here are ways you can support the program:

- Make sure your child wears sneakers and proper clothing (no dresses or baggy jeans) on PE day.
- When she comes home, ask questions: "What games did you play?" "What muscles did you use?"
- If you have time, volunteer in class. Maybe you can time the children during fitness tests or lead group games.
- Help organize a Field Day. You might line up volunteers, send out announcements, or make construction-paper medals for participants. ♥



# Around the world

Teach your youngster about other countries, and add nutrition to her diet—all by taking a world tour from your own kitchen.

Make a list of places your child would like to “visit,” and then work together on a healthy menu. Stamp your family’s passport for:

**India.** Try a snack of Bhel Puri. Combine 2 cups brown puffed rice, 1 cup baked corn tortilla chips (broken into small pieces), 1 diced cucumber, 1 chopped tomato, and 1 diced baked (or microwaved) potato. Toss with the juice of one lime.

**Japan.** Serve rice bowls for lunch. Make brown rice, and top it with cooked meat (steak, chicken) and vegetables, such as



broccoli, corn, peas, and green beans. Drizzle low-sodium teriyaki sauce on top.

**The Middle East.** Have falafel for dinner. Mix 1 can chickpeas (mashed), 2 crushed garlic cloves, 1 egg, 1 chopped scallion, and a dash of ground cumin and pepper. Shape into 1-inch

balls, and bake for 30 minutes at 400°. Tuck into whole-wheat pitas with chopped tomato and cucumber and plain nonfat yogurt.

*Idea:* Hang a world map on your kitchen wall, and put a sticker on the countries you “tour.”

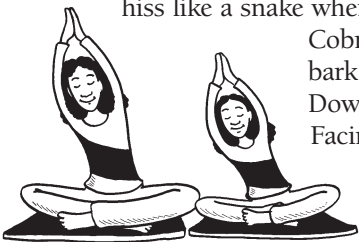
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Yoga for kids

Looking for a gentle way to introduce your child to regular exercise? Try yoga. It’s a great way to stretch muscles, and it helps youngsters (and adults) relax.

Get a yoga video from the library, and use these ideas to get started:

- Find a quiet spot (no television or restless siblings). Sit on a carpet or mat, and make sure you each have room to stretch out your arms and legs.
- Make yoga fun by letting your child “act” the part. For example, she can hiss like a snake when she’s in



Cobra pose or bark while doing Downward Facing Dog.

- Set a regular time for yoga (Tuesdays before dinner, Saturday mornings). Try it for 20 minutes, ending with a few minutes of deep relaxation (lying down with eyes closed).

## Q & A High cholesterol

**Q:** I was shocked when the doctor said my son had high cholesterol. What should we do?

**A:** Unfortunately, more and more young children are being diagnosed with high cholesterol. Luckily, there are ways you can help.

First, make sure your son gets lots of exercise. Being active helps keep “good” cholesterol levels up. Second, serve foods that are lower in cholesterol (fish instead of shrimp, soy products that look like chicken nuggets or sausage). Together, read food labels, and aim for less than 300 mg of cholesterol a day. Steer your child away from foods with saturated and trans fats. Remember, this routine is good for everyone. If you can make it a family affair, your youngster will be more apt to go along.

*Note:* Your doctor will decide if your son needs medication and when he should be rechecked.



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Super soups

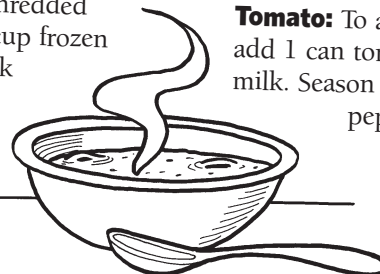
As the winter chill sets in, a bowl of hot soup sounds just right. You can make things easy by starting with low-sodium canned soup and adding your own healthy ingredients.

**Beef Noodle:** Heat up a can of beef broth. Stir in ½ cup cooked multi-grain noodles, shredded leftover meat, and ½ cup frozen mixed vegetables. Cook until heated through.

**Mushroom Barley:** Prepare cream of mushroom soup with fat-free milk.

Add 1 cup cooked barley and ½ cup sliced mushrooms. Simmer until hot.

**Tomato:** To a can of chicken broth, add 1 can tomatoes and ¼ cup fat-free milk. Season with salt (go light) and pepper, and serve with crumbled whole-grain crackers on top.



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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