

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2011

Ladue Schools  
Student Health / Wellness Coordinator

## BEST BITES



### Divide leftovers

Here's an easy trick to help family members avoid overeating. When you're putting away leftovers, package them into individual servings. That can keep your children (or you) from spooning out supersize portions! *Tip:* Stock up on small plastic containers, or put leftovers into teacups and cover with plastic wrap.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Everyday fun and games count



toward the hour of daily exercise recommended for youngsters.

Encourage your child to jump rope, play tag with neighborhood friends, dance to music in the living room, or ride a scooter after dinner. It all adds up!

### Cut the ketchup

Dipping food in ketchup is popular with many children. But there's a downside: ketchup can be high in sodium—and too much sodium isn't good for anyone. Try switching to low-salt ketchup (read food labels to compare amounts per serving). Or put out other options for dipping, such as hummus or mustard.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has 300 feet but no legs?

**A:** A football field!



## A healthy start

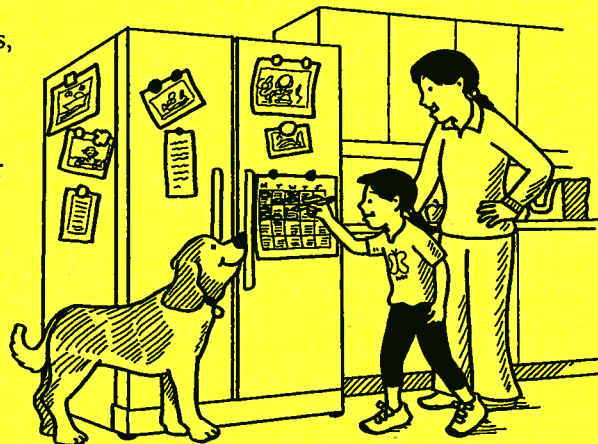
New teachers, new textbooks, new friends ... and new ways to be healthy! Get this school year off to an excellent start with these strategies for helping your child eat well and stay active.

**Go over school meals.** Your youngster can have two healthy meals at school—breakfast and lunch—by making smart choices in the cafeteria.

Together, go over the school menu and discuss healthy options (take extra vegetables, choose fat-free milk). Then, have her circle what she'll put on her tray.

**Keep moving.** School days usually mean more time sitting at a desk and less time running around. Make sure your child stays active during nonschool hours by playing outside. If she'll be in after-school care, look for programs that include daily physical activity, even on rainy days.

**Get a checkup.** Visit a doctor or clinic at least once a year to keep an eye on your



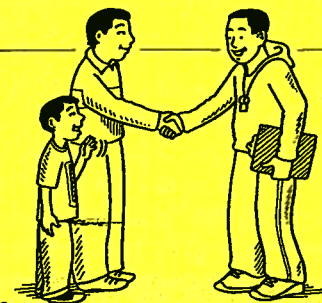
youngster's health. This will also get your child in the habit of monitoring her own health and help her establish a doctor-patient relationship. While there, you can find out if she is at a good weight for her height—and get advice if she's not. Also, be sure that your child is cleared to play sports.

*Note:* Your youngster needs about 9–11 hours of sleep each night. Develop a bedtime routine (bath, book, tuck-in, lights-out) that helps her wind down gently and fall asleep. ●

## Support PE

PE class can be a fun—and an active—part of your youngster's school week. Help him make the most of PE with these suggestions:

- Show interest in what your child does in gym class. Ask him to tell you about the skills he worked on or the games he played. Better yet, let him teach you what he learned—explaining the steps will give him practice and boost his confidence.
- When your youngster is excited about a PE unit (basketball, tumbling), consider enrolling him in a sports league or program. He'll get healthy exercise while doing something he enjoys.
- Introduce yourself to the PE teacher at back-to-school night. Then, from time to time, email or send a note asking about your child's progress. Staying in touch will show the teacher and your youngster that you care about PE. ●



# Outdoor games

School is back in session, but there are still plenty of daylight hours for playing. Keep your youngsters active with games like these.

**Flip-flop golf.** Design a “golf course” with objects outside (fire hydrant, swing set, porch steps). The goal is to get through the course with as few “kicks” as possible. To play, take turns kicking off a sandal toward the first object. When it lands, run to that spot, put the sandal back on, and kick it



toward the next goal. Keep going until you finish the course. The lowest score wins.

**Bounce a ball.** Play this game against the side of a building (your house, a school wall in the playground area). First, mark off a large box on the ground next to the wall. Then, the first player throws a tennis ball against the wall. The second player has to catch the ball—in the air or on one bounce—and throw it back against the wall. If it bounces more than once or bounces outside the box, the other person gets a point. High score wins. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER

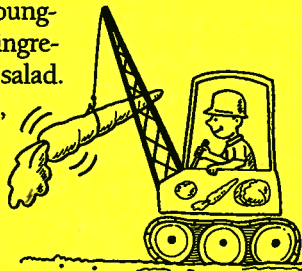
### Build a salad

Combine science and healthy eating by helping your youngster learn about plant parts while making a salad he'll want to eat.

First, take a trip to the grocery store or a farmers' market. Look at the produce with your child, and try to spot different parts of plants, such as:

- Leaves:** lettuce, spinach, swiss chard
- Roots:** carrots, onions, beets, radishes
- Stems:** asparagus, celery
- Fruit:** tomatoes, cucumbers, squash
- Seeds:** corn, peas, sunflower seeds

Let your youngster pick out ingredients for his salad. Back at home, he can put together his creation. Show him how to rinse vegetables in running water. Then, he can tear leaves, peel carrots, shell peas, and—with your help—carefully slice cucumbers or squash. As your family enjoys his salad with dinner, he can point out the plant parts you're eating. ●

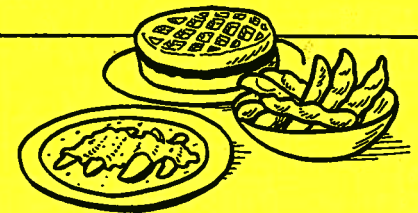


## IN THE KITCHEN

### After-school snacks

Your child comes home from school or after-school care and is starving! What can you serve that is healthy, will fill her up, and won't ruin her dinner? Try these ideas:

- Toast two small whole-grain waffles. Spread peanut butter on one waffle and jelly on the other, and squeeze together for a PBJ-and-waffle sandwich.
- Microwave frozen edamame (soybeans) for a fun-to-eat snack. Your youngster can pop the beans right out of the pods—and into her mouth!
- On a whole-wheat tortilla, layer pear slices and provolone cheese. Microwave



until cheese melts (about 30 seconds). Roll up tightly.

- Make frozen yogurt on a stick. Stir together 2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt and 1 cup blueberries or chopped strawberries (or both). Pour into ice cube trays, stick a pretzel rod into each section, and freeze. ●

## Q & A Liking your body

**Q:** My daughter is only in elementary school, but she's already worrying about what her body looks like. How can I help her feel good about herself?

**A:** Children can be sensitive about their bodies from an early age, so you are smart to pay attention to this now. Try to help her focus on healthy eating and being active, rather than on how she looks. For example, you might compliment her for making a good food choice or for playing hopscotch rather than watching TV. Also, you could

encourage her to join a sports team. Girls who play sports tend to feel better about their bodies and have greater self-esteem.

Make sure your daughter realizes that gaining weight is a normal part of growing up. Discourage her from weighing herself too often or making negative comments about her own body or other people's. Instead, point out that there isn't one “ideal” body size or shape—the important thing is to be healthy. ●



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1935-4630