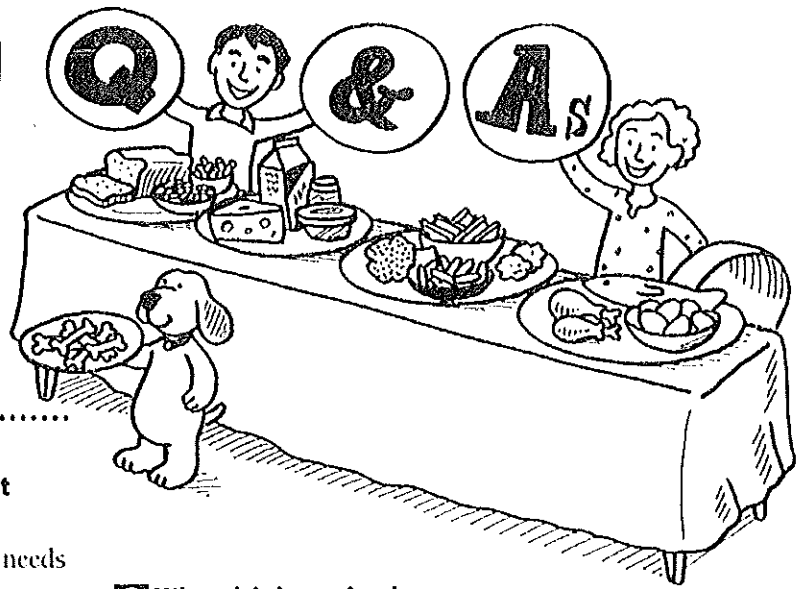


Nutrition

Building good eating habits is a surefire way to boost your child's health. These answers to common questions can help your family make wise decisions when it comes to food choices.



Q What foods should I try to get into my child's diet each day?

A To have a healthy and balanced diet, your youngster needs foods from these groups every day:

- whole grains like whole-wheat bread, brown rice, or multi-grain pasta
- vegetables—raw or cooked, in a variety of colors
- fruit, preferably fresh or frozen with no sugar added
- dairy products (fat-free milk and low-fat cheese or yogurt)
- lean protein from meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or beans

Note: The amount of each food your child needs will vary according to age, gender, and level of physical activity. Ask your pediatrician or school nurse, or look online at www.choosemyplate.gov.



Q My youngster won't eat vegetables. What should I do?

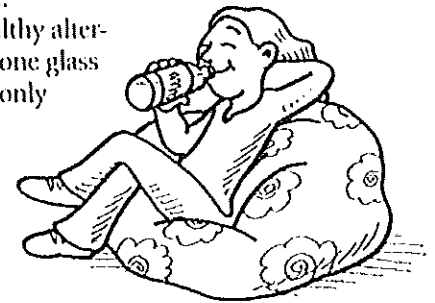
A This is a common problem. Try these ideas:

- Make sampling new vegetables a family adventure. It can be fun to try artichokes or bok choy when it's new to everyone. Let your child pick out a different vegetable during each trip to the grocery store and then help you find a recipe for it.
- Offer vegetables raw. Some children prefer crunchy vegetables over cooked ones. *Tip:* Kids love to dip. Put out vegetables (sugar snap peas, green beans, baby carrots) with low-fat ranch dressing, salsa, or hummus.
- "Hide" vegetables in foods your youngster likes. Try adding frozen chopped spinach (thawed) to his favorite meatloaf or diced cooked cauliflower to macaroni and cheese. For other ideas, look through cookbooks like *The Sneaky Chef: Simple Strategies for Hiding Healthy Foods in Kids' Favorite Meals* by Missy Chase Lapine.

Q What drinks make the healthiest choices?

A Water is the best option—it can keep your child's digestive system healthy and quench her thirst without adding extra sodium, sugar, or calories. It's also important for your child to drink fat-free milk so she gets the calcium she needs for strong bones and teeth.

Fruit juice can be a healthy alternative, if limited to about one glass a day. Make sure you buy only juices labeled 100% real fruit juice.



Q What can we do to make our weekly menus healthier?

A Little changes can mean a lot. You can get started with simple steps like these:

Step 1: Try to eat more foods prepared from scratch. Processed foods (quick-to-prepare boxed dinners, for example) are often high in salt, fat, and calories. To save time, plan a day when you can cook double batches of healthy recipes—then eat one, and freeze the other for later.

Step 2: Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into meals and snacks. You might stir a handful of berries into your child's oatmeal at breakfast, tuck spinach leaves into his sandwich for lunch, give him celery sticks with peanut butter for an afternoon snack, serve asparagus and baked acorn squash with dinner, and offer him a fresh orange or apple before bedtime.

Step 3: Add flavor without adding sugar or salt by trying different herbs and spices. Basil, oregano, and marjoram are good in pasta and tomato dishes, for instance. Dill, chives, and tarragon liven up salads. And red pepper flakes, chili powder, and cumin make spicy additions to Mexican-style dishes like burritos and enchiladas.

continued

Nutrition Nuggets™

Terrific triathlon

A traditional triathlon is a race that involves swimming, biking, and running. Your family can put together your own version using three different activities. You might twirl a hula hoop 30 times, jump 10 times, and run up and down your block 3 times. The first to finish your triathlon is the winner. Then, you could think of three new activities, and have another race!



Go on active outings

When planning family outings, look for opportunities to add in exercise.

Park and a movie

Before or after seeing a movie, go to the park to play. Take along a Frisbee, volleyball, or bat and ball—and a healthy picnic—for an active twist on the traditional movie and dinner.

Local hikes

Visit a nearby nature center, and choose a trail to explore. To make the hike more of an adventure for your children, have them predict the birds, animals, or plants they might see along the way. They can draw pictures or make lists of their predictions. During the hike, they could check off any they see and add others.



A kid-friendly home gym

Use household items to create an in-home fitness center that is just your child's speed. Here are suggestions.

Note: You don't need a big room for your gym—part of your basement or a corner in your family room or youngster's bedroom will work just fine.

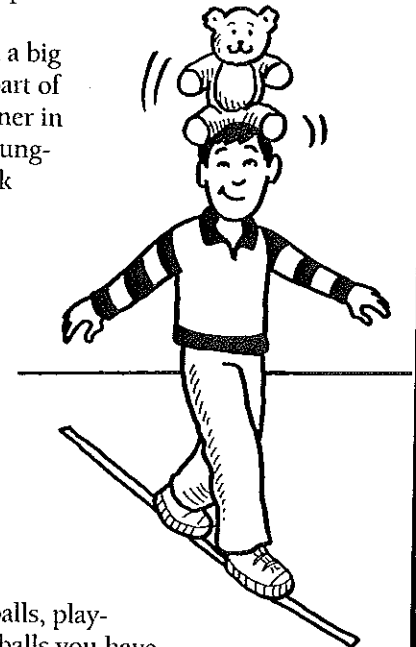
Jungle gym. Instead of steel, lay out boxes to crawl through (cut off the ends).

Pop zone. Save the bubble wrap from packages to make a popping zone. Your child can run in place and pop away!

Ball toss. Put bouncy balls, playground balls, and other balls you have around the house into the "gym." Toss balls back and forth to each other, or bounce them against a basement wall.

Recycled toys. Use outgrown toys for gym equipment. For instance, your youngster could make exercise "stations" with stuffed animals (toss a stuffed giraffe in a bucket, walk a line while balancing a teddy bear on your head).

Floor moves. Together, make cards for "abs" (abdominal, or stomach) exercises. On separate index cards, write instructions and draw stick figures doing exercises like sit-ups, bicycle crunches, and planks. *Tip:* Round up a few thick blankets or towels to use as mats.



Museum tour

History, science, and art museums are great places for learning—and walking. Start off by taking a brisk walk through the whole museum. You'll get a good overview of the museum while enjoying some exercise. Another idea is to walk all the way around the outside of the building. Often, there are outdoor displays as well.

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

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