

# Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

October 2010

Flinthills Health and Wellness Committee



## BEST BITES

### Awesome applesauce

Here's a simple recipe you can use to make homemade applesauce this fall. Peel and core three apples, and cut them into pieces. Place in a microwave-safe bowl, and add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. cinnamon. Microwave for 5–6 minutes. Put the mixture into a blender, and blend until chunky.



### Ready to play

Keep play equipment handy, and your children will be more likely to use it to stay active. Try organizing items into plastic bins in your hall closet or garage. For example, one bin could be for balls (soccer, basketball, tennis, football). Others could hold skates, a jump rope, a Frisbee, or badminton and tennis racquets.

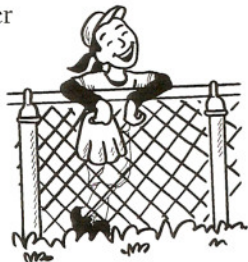
### DID YOU KNOW?

Certain foods can help your youngsters' teeth stay healthier by removing sugar and protecting against plaque. Good choices include mozzarella and other cheeses, peanuts, yogurt, fat-free milk, and sugar-free chewing gum. *Note:* Be sure your children brush their teeth twice and floss once every day.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What runs around a baseball field but never moves?

**A:** A fence!



## Calcium counts

Most kids want to be strong. Let your child know that calcium builds strong bones, and she may be more inclined to meet the calcium challenge. Try these ideas.

**Calcium bank.** Your youngster can think of her bones as being like a bank account—and eating foods rich in calcium is like making deposits in the bank. Encourage her to get enough calcium by having her make a piggy bank out of a plastic milk jug.

Lay it on its side and cut a slit in the top. She can glue on pictures of foods with calcium (milk, cheese, dark green leafy vegetables). Each time she has one, she can put a penny in her bank. How many pennies can she add each day?

**Every meal.** Get your child used to having calcium at every meal. You can point out the foods she's already eating (milk on her breakfast cereal, macaroni and cheese for lunch), and help her think of more she could have (cheese on her sandwich, banana yogurt as a dip for fruit). If she's a milk drinker, you're in luck. An 8-ounce glass with each meal will give a 4- to 8-year-old child the calcium she needs each day, and four glasses daily will supply almost enough calcium for a 9- to 12-year-old.

**Calcium cooking.** You can add calcium to your youngster's diet by using dairy products and other calcium-rich foods when you fix meals and snacks. For instance, use fat-free milk instead of water when heating up canned tomato or mushroom soup. Melt cheese onto cooked broccoli or green beans. Put tofu into a stir-fry, or add white beans to chili.



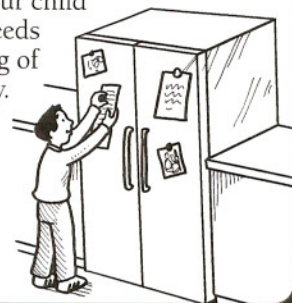
### Where is it?

Calcium is found in a variety of foods. Hang this list on your refrigerator as a guide.

| Food                             | Serving           | *Calcium (mg) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Orange juice (calcium-fortified) | 1 cup             | 350           |
| Cereal (calcium-fortified)       | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup | 350           |
| Milk (fat-free)                  | 1 cup             | 300           |
| Yogurt                           | 1 cup             | 300           |
| Cheddar cheese                   | 1 oz.             | 200           |
| Spinach, cooked                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 140           |
| Tofu                             | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 130           |
| White beans                      | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 113           |
| Instant oatmeal                  | 1 cup             | 100           |
| Almonds                          | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 90            |
| Bok choy                         | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 75            |

\*Calcium amounts vary by brand.

*Note:* If your child is 4–8, he needs about 800 mg of calcium a day. If he's 9 or older, he needs about 1,300 mg.



# Quick cooking tips

Getting healthy meals on the table can be a challenge for busy families. Here are a few suggestions:

- Set aside a weekend morning or one evening a week to do “prep” work for future meals. You might dice onions and celery or make bread crumbs (grind bread in a food processor or blender). Freeze the items in separate zipper bags.
- At night or in the morning, prepare ingredients for your next dinner. For example, sauté vegetables that go into a dish, or prepare parts of a casserole. *Tip:* Before you begin cooking, get all the ingredients and utensils out that you will need.



- Think through what you’re making, and look for ways to use pockets of time. For instance, while the water boils for pasta, prepare the vegetables and heat the sauce. Or thaw the meat in the microwave as the oven preheats.

- Cook with leftovers in mind. You might double the batch when you make rice and use the extra in soups or stews. Or roast two chickens, and freeze one for another night. If you’re grilling, cook two meals at once (put tomorrow night’s chicken skewers on, along with tonight’s salmon). ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Fall adventures

This fall, find active ways for your family to enjoy the new season. Here are three ideas:

**1.** Read the classic tale of Hansel and Gretel, and recreate their “bread trail.” Have your child gather pebbles and put them in a small bag. Then, take a walk together (through a park or your neighborhood), and have her drop pebbles along the way. Turn around, and follow her trail home.

**2.** Check the newspaper or search online for farms or orchards that have fall activities. You might find corn mazes to run through, haystacks to climb on, or materials for making scarecrows.



**3.** Sign up for fun runs or walks. Many charities hold these events in the fall. Your family can get exercise—and maybe contribute to a good cause, too. ♥

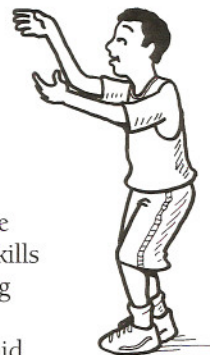
## PARENT TO PARENT

### Self-esteem and sports

My son Nick struggles with reading, and as he has gotten older, I have seen his self-confidence begin to drop. When I spoke with his school counselor, he gave me good advice, including one idea that had nothing to do with school.

Mr. Forest suggested that we encourage Nick to play sports. He said being part of a team can boost a child’s self-esteem. As his skills improve, Nick would feel a sense of accomplishment, and hearing others cheer him on would make him feel good about himself.

He suggested that we let Nick pick the sport to try. He also said it was important for him to be on a team that is friendly and supportive—with a coach who is interested in teaching skills and puts fun over winning. So I spoke to other parents and local league officials for help in finding the right team. Nick has decided on basketball, and I’m hoping that he’ll dribble his way to more self-confidence! ♥



## IN THE KITCHEN

### Egg-stra good

Eggs have it all: they’re full of protein, they don’t cost much, and they can be prepared many quick and delicious ways. Try these egg dishes at breakfast time—or any time.

**Egg in a cup.** Press a slice of oatmeal bread into a muffin tin. Crack an egg into the bread. Add 1 chopped asparagus stalk, and sprinkle with shredded cheddar cheese. Bake at 325° for 10–15 minutes until the egg is fluffy.

**Mexican scrambled eggs.** Whisk 2 eggs with fat-free milk, and set aside. Heat a skillet coated with cooking spray. Cut 2 corn tortillas into thin strips, and sauté until crisp. Add ¼ cup sliced scallions and ¼ cup chopped



tomato, and sauté another minute. Pour in the eggs, and stir with a wooden spoon until set.

**Egg casserole.** Spray a square baking dish with cooking spray, and line with 4 slices whole-wheat bread. In a bowl, beat 4 eggs with ½ cup fat-free milk. Pour the mixture over the bread, cover, and refrigerate overnight. Then, bake (covered) at 350° for 25 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle with 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, and bake 5 minutes more. ♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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