

Young Families

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A family-focused newsletter with young children in mind

Make Good Nutrition and Exercise Part of Your Family Routine

Most adults have heard of MyPyramid by now. But, are they incorporating the recommended advice into their own lives and being good role models for the children in their lives? Below are some nutrition and fitness tips families can do together.

Eat Right

- **Make half your grains whole.** Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, and low-fat popcorn, more often.
- **Vary your veggies.** Go dark green and orange with your vegetables – eat spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.
- **Focus on fruits.** Eat them at meals, and at snack time, too. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and go easy on the fruit juice.
- **Get your calcium-rich foods.** To build strong bones, serve low-fat and fat-free milk and other milk products several times a day.
- **Go lean with protein.** Eat lean or low-fat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Also, include more dry beans and peas in your diet. Add chick peas, nuts, or seeds to a salad; pinto beans to a burrito; or kidney beans to soup.
- **Choose oils wisely.** We all need oil. Get yours from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn, soybean, canola, and olive oil.
- **Don't sugarcoat it.** Choose foods and beverages that do not have sugar and caloric sweeteners as one of the first ingredients. Added sugars contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients.

Exercise

- **Set a good example.** Be active and get your family to join you. Have fun together. Play with the kids or pets. Go for a walk, tumble in the leaves, or play catch.
- **Take the President's Challenge as a family.** Track your individual physical activities together and earn awards for active lifestyles at www.presidentschallenge.org.
- **Establish a routine.** Set aside time each day as activity time – walk, jog, skate, cycle, or swim. Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week; children 60 minutes every day or most days.
- **Have an activity party.** Center the next birthday party around physical activity. Try backyard Olympics, or relay races. Have a bowling or skating party.
- **Set up a home gym.** Use household items, such as canned foods, as weights. Stairs can substitute for stair machines.
- **Move it!** Instead of sitting through TV commercials, get up and move. When you talk on the phone, lift weights or walk around. Remember to limit TV watching and computer time.
- **Give activity gifts.** Give gifts that encourage physical activity – active games or sporting equipment.

Nutrition and fitness tips taken from:
http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/resources/mpk_tips.pdf
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Keep Foods Safe

No one except the grocery shopper can select foods carefully at the store and keep them safe until they're eaten. Follow these food safety tips when shopping.

- Frozen foods must be solid and not feel as if they have begun to thaw.
- Refrigerated foods are supposed to feel cold. Avoid packages with tears, holes, or open corners.
- Put raw poultry, meat, and fish in separate plastic bags before placing them in your shopping cart, so their juices can't leak onto other foods. Shop for these and other cold foods right before checkout.
- Paper bags keep food colder than plastic bags. Packing frozen foods together keeps them cold longer. If the weather is hot, bring a cooler to ensure frozen/cold foods stay cold during the trip home.
- Check "sell by" and "use by" dates on perishable foods such as yogurt and milk. The "sell by" is for the store; if the date has passed, don't buy the item. The "use by" date is your deadline for eating at home.
- Bulges, dents, rust, and other damage are warning signs that canned food may be unsafe to eat.
- Make sure the button is still pushed down on jars with a vacuum seal.
- To keep your purchases safe, put cold groceries away as soon as you arrive home.

For more food safety tips, nutrition information and recipes, visit the Kids a Cookin' Web site at www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu.

Use Good Communication Techniques in Family Discussions

Anger and silence are two tools people use to put distance between themselves and others. This happens when people want to get back at someone else or to achieve something at the expense of others. They get angry easily, often without a good reason, or refuse to talk and communicate as a way to control others. When this becomes a pattern, relationships are hurt; tension and stress increase.

How can parents break this way of handling differences within their family? It takes work, dedication, and a desire to improve family relationships. Learning to talk out problems requires the ability to stop and listen to each other without becoming angry or turning away from each other. Some couples find that taking turns at talking without interrupting helps break the pattern. Some even hold an object, such as a ball, to signal who has the floor to talk and to be listened to.

However, each person must get a turn to talk and be understood without interruption. The listener may need to ask questions to make sure the speaker's message is correctly heard. If the anger/silence pattern is extremely strong between the parents, it may take professional counseling to break the cycle.

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Twelve Tips to Have a Happy, Healthy Toddler

Toddler time is a time of newness and wonder – and a real challenge to parents and caregivers to keep those toddlers healthy and safe. The U.S. Surgeon General, Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H, created the following list as part of his “Year of the Healthy Child” campaign. Are there one, two, or more tips listed that you can improve upon and help a child to grow up healthy and happy?

1. **Teach healthy eating.** Offer children nutritious foods and let them decide how much to eat. Be a good role model.
2. **Begin a habit of good oral health.** Brush your child's teeth twice a day with a soft toothbrush. Begin by brushing when that first tooth appears, and continue until age 3 or 4 when he is old enough to begin learning how to brush.
3. **Don't smoke and don't allow anyone else to smoke around your child.** Disease of the respiratory system (aggravated by secondhand smoke) is a leading cause of toddler doctor visits.
4. **Give positive feedback.** Praise good behavior and accomplishments. Hug, talk, read, share meals, play and TIME together.
5. **Always use a car safety seat.** Be sure your child rides in an age- and

weight-appropriate child safety seat that is correctly installed in the back seat – every trip.

6. **Safety-proof your home.** Prevent accidental poisoning by moving all medications, supplements, and cleaning products to upper shelves. To prevent burns, set the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Never set cups of hot liquid on table or counter edges. Keep small toys that could be choking hazards away from your child. Avoid foods that may cause choking, including hard candy, grapes, large pieces of raw fruit or vegetables, thick peanut butter, and tough meat. Look at your home from a toddler's eye-level – see any tempting hazards?
7. **Never leave your toddler unattended.** Even a few seconds can be too long!
8. **Make sure your child has a primary health provider.** Prevention is the key to a healthy childhood.
9. **Fully immunize your child.** Immunizations have prevented death and disease for millions of children in the United States and worldwide.
10. **Learn child first aid and CPR.** Be prepared, know how to call for help and what to do until help arrives.

11. **Practice prevention and safety.** Teach your child lifelong safety tips, including always swimming with a buddy, wearing a bicycle helmet, sun and water safety. As your toddler grows, be sure she learns her name, parents' names, and phone number. Get your child's fingerprints taken and keep a recent photo in your wallet. Don't feature your child's name on jackets or backpacks – it makes them susceptible to strangers.
12. **Have fun.** Hug, talk, read, eat, explore and play together. Tune in to your stress – parenting is the most difficult job in the world. All parents sometimes feel overwhelmed and frustrated – get help if you feel unable to cope.

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