

# GameDay Gazette



a newsletter for healthy kids and their families

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## Nutrition Bites

### Pleasing the Picky Eater

School-age children are always full of surprises. And it's perfectly normal for youngsters to have strong ideas about what they eat. Here's some advice on how to avoid school-age food fights.

#### What's On the Menu?

Elementary-age children can eat what the rest of the family eats, provided that family meals feature a variety of healthy foods, in moderation. Depending on his or her age, an active child's energy needs rival those of some grown women. While there's no need to track a youngster's calorie consumption, it is important to make calories count. A young child's eating plan should consist mostly of healthy foods, such as lean meats, poultry, seafood, eggs, and beans; whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread and cereals; at least two servings of dairy foods daily; and fresh or lightly processed fruits and vegetables. There is room for treats, but it should be limited.

#### Make Time for Meals

While the ritual of regular meals is comforting to kids, dining with youngsters can be chaotic and messy. Expect spills and some sloppy eating as your child hones his self-feeding skills. Refrain from being a "clean freak" to minimize mealtime stress.

#### Monkey See, Monkey Do

Want your child to accept baked potatoes instead of fries, and to prefer milk to sugary soft drinks? Then you must, too. Studies show that children adopt their parents' eating habits starting early in life. Don't expect your child to eat better than you do, one expert says. Capitalize on a youngster's natural curiosity by substituting healthier foods at the dinner table. Chances are, he'll have what you're having, and you'll be broadening his food horizons while arousing a minimum of suspicion.

#### Snacks Fill Nutrient Gaps

Scheduling meals and snacks helps ensure a healthy diet for children. Young children don't always follow a rigid eating plan. Healthy between-meal snacks help fill in nutrient gaps in a diet. The best snacks are nutritious foods eaten in amounts that take the edge off hunger. Don't worry if they're not ravenous at their next meal. Also, sitting down to eat, and only to eat, helps children pay attention to their feelings of fullness.

## Fit and Fun

### Active Video Games: Kids Feel the Burn

There is still no substitute for outdoor sports, but active video games can help your kids break a sweat and burn calories. Experts say that if kids are going to play a video game, physically active games are better for their health than just moving their thumbs with traditional joysticks. And because the virtual exercise platforms meet gamers in the comfort of their own homes, they can help encourage shy children to exercise.

A recent study showed that kids burned two to three times as many calories when playing active video games than when engaging in traditional handheld video games. Heart rate increased from 80 to 120 beats per minute, approximately the same rate achieved when walking.



But not all active games are created equal, experts agree. Certain games burn more calories than others, but any active game is going to be better for your child than a handheld one, researchers say.

While newer, active video games help to burn calories, experts agree that there is no substitute for children being outside and engaging in active sports with friends. However, active video games offer a fun, easy way to incorporate fitness into kids' lives.

# Your Monthly Guide to GameDay Activities

## Kindergarten

**Did you Know?** Our bodies are made of all different types of things. Bones make up our skeleton and teeth. Muscles help move the bones. Organs like the heart, stomach, and brain help the body work. Fat protects the organs. Blood and water move important nutrients through the body. Learning the location of various body parts is important at this age.

**Activity:** Play a game of "Simon Says" and identify different parts of the body. For example, "Simon says, point to your heart" or "Simon says, put your hands on the organ that holds the food you've just eaten."

## First Grade

**Did you Know?** Muscles are made up of fibers very much like rubber bands. When a rubber band is loose (or flexible), it can move in many different directions. When a rubber band is tight, it has trouble moving, or may even break. This is how muscles work, too.

**Activity:** When you move different parts of your body, lots of muscles get involved. Try to identify the muscles used when moving your fist to your shoulder (biceps, triceps) or sitting down in a chair (quadriceps, gluteals, abdominals). What muscles are involved when you stand on your tiptoes? Or when you bend over to touch the floor?

## Second Grade

**Did you Know?** Different parts of the body have different density and weight. *Density* is when particles are very close together or when something is thick or crowded. Dense things sink in water; less dense things float. *Weight* is how heavy something is. Things may be the same size but have very different density and weight.

**Homework:** Think of different parts of your body and see if you can

tell which are heavier or more dense than others. For example, which is heavier: your head, your foot, your ear, or your big toe? Which do you think is more dense? Which body part is the least dense: your brain, your spine, or body fat? How are density and weight related?

## Third Grade

**Did you Know?** Pushing, pulling, and lifting objects incorrectly can cause all kinds of injuries including muscle strains, falls, pinched fingers, and bumps and bruises. Proper pushing and pulling technique is important to help prevent injury. Always have a wide base of support (legs shoulder-width apart), bend the knees, and tighten the abdominal muscles to protect the back.

**Activity:** Experiment with pushing and pulling with a friend. Sit on the floor back-to-back with your legs extended in front of you. Interlock arms with the person behind you. Now push the ground with your feet like you are back in a corner and try to get up. Your friend will do the same to you. You will be pushing each another off of the ground without using your arms. You must both be pushing at the same time in order for this to work. How fast can you get up? Try doing this activity slowly. Which was easier? Which muscles were you using?

## Fourth Grade

**Did you Know?** You are your own best competitor! It's far more important to see how you improve throughout the year, than to measure yourself against other students. Your "personal best" is the best measure of your physical fitness.

**Homework:** See how many sit-ups you can complete in one minute using proper form. Write that number down. Over the next month, do sit-ups for one minute every day. Count how many you

can do at the end of the month. Did your number improve? This method of improving your "personal best" can be used for fitness, school, sports, and more.

## Fifth Grade

**Did you Know?** There's a simple way to measure how hard you are exercising, just by counting to 10. The Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale is different for every person, but always ranges from one (sleeping) to 10 (the hardest activity you can do).

**Activity:** On a piece of paper, write down the numbers one through 10. Start with number one as sleeping, and continue through number 10, listing activities as you go. The activities should get more difficult as you move toward number 10. Number 10 should be the hardest activity you could possibly do; something you don't think you could do for more than a minute or two. Compare your list with other people in your home.

## Sixth Grade

**Did you Know?** There are five parts to every physical fitness plan. Cardiovascular exercise gets your heart pumping (jogging). Muscular strength involves the strength of your muscles (push-ups). Muscular endurance involves using muscles for a long period of time (long-distance running). Flexibility involves the range of motion of your joints (stretching). Body composition involves the different things of which your body is comprised (fat, bones, muscle, etc.)

**Activity:** Create a physical fitness plan that includes each of the five components of fitness. Use a variety of exercises that you enjoy. Be sure to include the time you will perform each activity and the intensity (1-10).