



## Debunking Myths About Children's Nutrition and Health

Much information exists regarding nutrition. The problem unfortunately, is a lot of that information is inaccurate. Let's debunk a few common myths to boost confidence about healthy eating.

### MYTH 1: A CHILD WITH A COLD SHOULD NOT HAVE MILK.

Dairy products do not increase mucus production or thicken nasal secretions. "The cold virus itself causes mucus production in the nose and the back of the throat," explains Kathleen J. Motil, M.D., Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine. You can continue to offer children milk or other dairy products when they are sick with a cold. Give plenty of other liquids as well, such as water, juice, tea and chicken soup. It is important children get plenty to drink to ward off dehydration and keep mucus flowing through nasal passages.

### MYTH 2: CHILDREN NEED RED MEAT TO PREVENT ANEMIA.

Although red meat is a good source of iron, children can get plenty of iron in their diet without consuming red



meat. Other sources include fortified cereals and breads, dried fruits such as raisins, spinach, molasses, beans, lentils, eggs, certain fish and the dark meat of poultry. Iron deficiency is a greater risk among very young children. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reveals that 9 percent of toddlers between the ages of 1 and 2 are deficient in iron. That figure drops to about 3 percent for children 3 to 5 and 2 percent for 6- to 11-year-olds.

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## DID YOU KNOW...

- Studies show babies who are breast-fed are less likely to gain excess weight as they grow.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children should be tested for cholesterol, and that those with a family history of heart disease should be tested by age 2 years.
- Most studies support that one of the direct benefits of exercise for all age groups is improved immunity, especially for moderate exercise with regular training.
- Children and adolescents need 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily. Most of this should be either moderate or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- Children should engage in aerobic activity, muscle strengthening and bone strengthening activities, each at least three times per week.

AAP.org, CDC.gov

### Quotable Quotes

*"An artichoke is the only vegetable you have more of when you finish eating than you had when you started."*

— Eric Tainter  
*I Wish I Had Said That*

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- Recipes
- Sorting Fruits and Vegetables
- Food Funny

# Debunking Myths About Children's Nutrition and Health

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## MYTH 3: TO PREVENT OBESITY, YOU SHOULD LIMIT FAT INTAKE EARLY ON.

Babies and toddlers need about 40 percent of their daily calories from fat because their brains and bodies are developing rapidly. That is why most experts recommend that children under age 2 drink whole milk. Older children still need essential fatty acids in their diet for healthy skin, proper growth and vitamin absorption, but after the age of 2, getting 30 percent of their daily calories from fat is sufficient. Fats also help children feel full, so if a child's fat intake is restricted, they may overeat to compensate.

## MYTH 4: JUICE IS A HEALTHY THIRST QUENCHER.

Though 100 percent fruit/vegetable juice is definitely more nutritious than soda, it shouldn't be the drink children reach for when they are thirsty. Juice decreases a child's appetite for more nutritious foods and may displace milk and water as a beverage. What's more, because of the high sugar content of juice, drinking an excessive amount can harm teeth and contribute to overweight and obesity. Offer whole fruits and vegetables and limit juice to 4 ounces or less per day. Water is a better choice for thirsty children.

## MYTH 5: ALL BROWN BREAD IS WHOLE GRAIN.

Just because a bread is brown does not make it whole grain. Unfortunately many brown breads are simply white bread with caramel coloring added. To make things more confusing, terms like multi-grain do not guarantee a bread actually has whole grains in it. Read the ingredient label to ensure the bread you choose is the healthiest option; the word "whole" should be listed with the primary ingredient, for example whole wheat, or 100% whole wheat. A whole grain has all the grains components: the bran, germ and endosperm. These components have an array of essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals and fiber.

## MYTH 6: SIMPLY SITTING WITH CHILDREN DURING MEALTIME IS SUFFICIENT TO MODEL HEALTHY EATING.

Adults are the best role models for children. Children mimic the behavior and eating habits of adults by watching them. Sitting with children *and* eating the same foods they are



having is the best way to encourage them to try new foods and model good eating habits and table manners.

## MYTH 7: ALL "MILKS" ARE CREATED EQUAL.

Soy, almond, coconut, rice, hemp; we now have many choices when it comes to the type of milk we drink. However, not all "milks" contain the same essential nutrients that are available in cow's milk. The biggest difference is the protein, with cow's milk containing 8 grams in a one cup serving, while most others have only 1 gram or less. Alternative milks may also have added ingredients such as salt, stabilizers, thickening agents and sugar. Fortified soy milk is the best alternative to cow's milk, with 8 grams of protein in a one cup serving and other similar nutrients.

\* \* \*

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF FOOD MYTHS and healthy eating advice on the internet and from well-meaning acquaintances. To uncover the truth behind common food and nutrition myths, trust reliable sources, to discover what's actually backed by science and what is purely science fiction.

— Adapted from: *Parents Magazine*

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

## Indoor Physical Activity Ideas for Kids

**ACTIVITY HELPS CHILDREN** stay healthy and happy. These suggestions are useful during extended rain and snow periods when outdoor play is not possible. Television and use of computer or video games should be limited to 2 hours or less per day.

- Use music for stepping, hopping or jumping in place.
- Have kids make up dances or share the latest popular dances or line dances.
- Play the freeze game in which kids dance and stop to the music starting and stopping.
- Play “Keep the Balloon Up”. Use one balloon per child or one balloon per small group. The group may add additional balloons as they gain control and awareness.
- Practice progressive relaxation; tensing each body segment and then relaxing in turn (head, neck, shoulders, right arm, right hand, left arm, left hand, etc.).
- Try sitting exercises by doing a variety of arm, leg, foot and trunk exercises while remaining seated.
- Play “Follow the Leader” or “Simon Says” using exercises.
- Measure heart rates after various movements (hop, walk, jump, skip, etc.).
- Make up hand jive routines or clapping games, share and teach to others.
- Try juggling, top spinning or yo-yo contests.
- Mimic sports: act out sport movements such as batting, kicking, dribbling, throwing/catching, dunking, swimming various strokes and volleyball passing/serving. Everyone is skillful without the equipment!!
- Collect milk jugs to fill with varied amounts of water to use as weights.



- Make paper airplanes and see how far they can fly—but be sure they don't point them at other people!

**MORE INDOOR ACTIVITY IDEAS:**

- Build a fort out of bed sheets and chairs.
- Play with a pet.
- Play “Hide and Go Seek.”
- Put on a kid's workout video or dance video!
- Play “Charades.”
- Jump rope.
- Spin a hula hoop around your body or try a relay race pushing the hula hoop. The race doesn't have to span any longer than the length of a room.
- Try hopscotch drawn with painters tape on the kitchen floor.
- Play traditional games —“Ring around the Rosie,” “Duck Duck Goose” and the “Hokey Pokey.”
- Toss around a foam ball, play catch or basketball with a basket or pail.
- Introduce activity breaks during commercial breaks any time children watch TV so they don't remain completely sedentary.

— Adapted from: *The National Association for Sport & Physical Fitness* at [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org) <http://www.aahperd.org>

**Online Resources for Indoor Activity**

[www.bam.gov/sub\\_physicalactivity](http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity)

[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/tnrockyrun/moveit](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/tnrockyrun/moveit)

[www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/getactive/children](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/getactive/children)

[www.KidsHealth.org](http://www.KidsHealth.org)

## Brussels Sprouts Slaw with Apples & Cranberries

Brussels sprouts .....	3/4 pound
Apple, cored, chopped .....	1
Cranberries, dried .....	2/3 cup
Walnuts, chopped .....	1/2 cup
Lemon juice .....	1/4 cup
Olive oil .....	1/4 cup
Dijon mustard .....	1 Tbsp
Honey .....	1 Tbsp
Salt .....	1/2 tsp
Pepper .....	1/8 tsp

1. Trim bottom from sprouts and remove any loose or bruised leaves. Place shredding disc in food processor and using feeder tube, gradually shred Brussels sprouts; there will be about 4 1/2 cups. Alternatively, half Brussels sprouts lengthwise and with flat side down on cutting board, slice sprouts into narrow ribbons.
2. Transfer shredded sprouts to mixing bowl. Toss in apple chunks, cranberries and walnuts. Combine lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard, honey, salt and pepper. Pour dressing over slaw and stir well. Cover and refrigerate slaw for 3 hours to overnight. Re-stir before serving. This slaw is best served within 24 hours.

Yield: 10 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable

— American Institute for Cancer Research

## Mac and Cheese with Tomatoes

Macaroni, whole-grain, dry .....	1 cup
Variety of shredded cheese .....	8 ounces total
(sharp cheddar, Monterey jack, mozzarella, provolone, gruyere)	
Sour cream .....	1/3 cup
Tomatoes, canned, petite diced .....	1 (14 ounce) can
Panko crumbs .....	1/2 cup

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a baking dish with non-stick spray.
2. Cook macaroni according to package instructions, drain, and transfer to bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients, blending until cheese is melting.
3. Top with panko crumbs. Bake until bubbling, about 30 minutes.

Yield: 4 servings

Meets requirement for bread/grain (whole grain rich) and meat/meat alternate

— Adapted from Country living

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Sorting Fruits & Vegetables



Children will love looking through the pictures and sorting them into groups, again and again!

To prepare, cut out a variety of pictures of fruits and vegetables from newsprint and magazines, older children can do this part as well.

Next, label two baskets, one **FRUIT** and one **VEGETABLE**.


Spread the pictures out over a table or the floor and help the children choose which basket to put them in.

To make this game more challenging, cut out pictures of all kinds of healthy foods and label more baskets with **GRAINS**, **PROTEIN** and **DAIRY**.

Lay all the pictures out and help the children sort through all the food groups placing the pictures in the correct basket.

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Food  
Funny

Q. What do penguins like to eat?

A. Brrrrrrrritos.