Growing Healthy Bones & Muscles...

Kids grow quickly and don’t stay one size for too long. Their bones and muscles are growing and developing every day. Encourage their healthy growth and development by offering them a variety of foods, including protein-rich foods, such as those found in the milk group (milk, cheese, and yogurt) and in the meat and beans group (meat, beans, eggs, beans, chicken, fish and nuts). Foods in the milk group also provide calcium, which we need throughout our lives to help build healthy bones.

Recommended daily amounts for the milk group range from 2 to 3 cups for children aged 8 to 11 where 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese, are equal to 1 cup. Recommended daily amounts for the meat and beans group range from 4 to 6 ounces for children aged 8 to 11 where 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, ¼ cup of cooked dried beans, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds are equal to 1 ounce. Amounts are based on age, gender, and activity level. You can visit http://www.mypyramid.gov to get specific recommendations for your child.

Busy, active bones and muscles are healthy bones and muscles. Physical activity that moves your large muscles, gets your heart pumping and increases your breathing rate is “heart smart.” Not only is good nutrition important for healthy bones and muscles, but regular physical activity helps to strengthen muscles and build bone mass.

Exercise together as a family. Set a good example for your children. Try a brisk walk together, take a jog or ride bicycles around the park, enjoy family swim or skate time, or jump rope for fun.

The Food Safety Zone:

Be Cool With Lunch – Keep Cold Foods Cold!
Packing a lunch? Well, take special care when preparing foods to be eaten several hours later. Follow these food safety steps to be sure the lunch is safe to eat when you’re ready for it.

• Always begin food preparation with clean hands and equipment.
• Keep cold foods cold! (Foods taken out of the refrigerator must be kept cold.) This may apply to foods such as cheeses, meat, tuna, egg or chicken salad, opened canned fruit, yogurt, fresh vegetables.
• Pack a “freeze gel” or a frozen 100-percent juice box to help keep foods cold. The juice box will thaw by lunchtime.
• Be sure cold foods are thoroughly chilled before packing with a freezer pack.
• Save foods that don’t need to be kept cold for an after-school snack such as fresh fruit or a cookie.
• Throw away any leftovers that should be kept cold.

Family Fitness Fun

So, you think you don’t have time to exercise? Being physically active can be fun and easy if you just think of creative ways to fit it into your busy schedule. Try these ideas:

• Do your chores. Yes, if you add a little more movement into those pesky household chores, you can be more physically active. Try mowing the lawn, vacuuming, cleaning your room, raking leaves or taking out the trash with a little more pep in your step!
• Earn money while exercising. Rake a neighbor’s leaves, walk a friend’s dog or wash someone’s car.
• Dance! Pop your favorite CD into a CD player and boogie away!
• Join a sports team at school or through your local park system.
RECIPE FUN:

Cheese Quesadillas

Ingredients:
- Two 8-inch flour tortillas
- ½ cup grated low-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, peppers, green chili peppers (optional)
- Salsa (optional)

Equipment:
- Paring knife
- Cutting board
- Baking pan or cookie sheet
- Disposable plates
- Conventional or microwave oven
- Microwave-safe plate (if using microwave oven)

Procedure:
1. All food preparers must wash their hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before starting to prepare this recipe. Be sure that all work surfaces are clean.
2. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
3. Place one tortilla on a baking pan or cookie sheet. Sprinkle with grated cheese and vegetables, if desired.
4. Cover with the second tortilla and bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until cheese melts. (Note: If preparing this recipe in a microwave oven, heat the tortillas on 100-percent power in the microwave for 30 to 60 seconds or until the cheese melts.)
5. Cut into quarters, serve with salsa.

As Your Child Grows

Trying new foods and turning off the television and computer to encourage your children to get more exercise means making new decisions. Use the decision-making steps that follow to help.

1. Stop – Stay calm. Decide the problem. Why is the situation important to you or to your child? Why is it bothering you?
2. Think – What are some ways to solve the problem? Think creatively. Find some new recipes to try. Plan some fun physical activities.
3. Take action – Try some new foods and physical activities. Talk to your children about what they liked. Ask how they felt about trying new things and what else they might like to do or eat.

On the Web
Check out these Web sites with your child:

- CDC’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Program: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/
- National Pork Producer’s Council: http://www.nppc.org