



# Fuel Their Minds

Ideas for Better Eating and Active Play with Young Children



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## Apple & Orange Juice is Safe to Drink



Have you heard the recent buzz about Arsenic in apple juice and Carbendazim in orange juice? Recent findings by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) uncovered trace amounts of a naturally occurring substance of Arsenic in apple juice and a fungus pesticide called Carbendazim in orange juice.

Though 100% fruit juices are convenient and a nutritious alternative to sugar sweetened beverages such as colas, punches and aides it prompts the question, is my apple and orange juice safe to drink?

Arsenic is presently found in our environment, both naturally and artificially. The natural, or organic form of arsenic is harmless and does not pose a health concern for consumers of apple juice. It is also a naturally occurring element that can contaminate groundwater used for drinking and irrigation. The Environment Protection Agency periodically tests our water system for pollutants to ensure its safe for usage. However, the inorganic form of arsenic introduced into the environment from agricultural farming as lead-arsenate insecticide, was once widely used in cotton fields, orchards, and vineyards until banned in the 1980's. Even long after its ban traces of residues in the soil can still contaminate crops. Major affected areas include New England, the Mid and Southwest.

Arsenic in high level amounts can cause bladder, lung and skin cancer and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease. For this reason, the FDA controls the acceptable amount of known substances present in our food supply.

A study conducted by Consumer Reports revealed that higher than normal arsenic levels were found in apple juice samples. These high arsenic levels could well be from testing the total amount of arsenic versus only testing for the inorganic or 'harmful' levels. Additional testing by the FDA revealed no threat to consumers as stated in a recent report by FDA Deputy Commissioner, Michael R. Taylor, "We are confident in the overall safety of apple juice consumed in this country because we continue to find that apple juice, on average, contains low amounts of arsenic."

Another fruit juice currently under scrutiny is orange juice. A fungus killing chemical called Carbendazim, often used in areas of Brazil to preserve agricultural crops, has found it's way into cartons of orange juice. Carbendazim is sprayed on orange trees to treat a problem of black spot mold found on oranges. The FDA has also been persistent about testing samples of orange juice and has found low or nonexistent levels of carbendazim.

### Ways to Reduce your Family's Risk:

- ◆ Limit Juice Consumption. Nutrition guidelines recommend young children should drink no more than six ounces a day and older children & adults no more than twelve ounces a day.
- ◆ Meal Times. Make half your plate with fresh fruits and vegetables and choose milk or water as a beverage instead of fruit juices.
- ◆ Drink a Variety. A cornerstone of good nutrition is including a variety of foods in your diet. Vary the types of juices your family drinks to minimize risks and increase the benefits found in all types of juices.



Article adapted from [Foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov) & Consumer Reports Magazine: January 2012; Arsenic in your juice.

## Keeping Children Active While Learning

Keeping kids physically active is important for their overall health but can be challenging when the time and resources are limited. Studies have shown children who are receiving at least the recommended 60 minutes of active play per day are more academically focused, perform better in school, and have less behavioral issues than their peers. Intertwining preschool standards with active structured play will not only ensure you are fulfilling the necessary academic requirements, but will also allow your students to release built up energy. Below is a 10 minute activity that includes both gross motor movement and mathematics with musical patterning.



### Catch the Beat

1. *Start the Beat.* Start a rhythm pattern with 2, 3, or 4 beats. For example, jump, clap, tap your foot, then repeat.
2. *Everyone joins in.* Repeat until everyone has joined in and is successfully repeating the pattern. Once all the students have joined in, call out “freeze” and ask:
  - What comes next in the pattern?
  - What is the whole set of actions that we repeat each time?
3. *Multiply it.* Repeat the pattern a couple more times, then ask the students:
  - How can we double the pattern? (jump, jump, clap, clap, and tap, tap)
  - How can we triple the pattern?

**Extended Activity: Share the Beat.** Have the children line up and explain that they are going to follow a pattern. Have the first student jump, second clap, third tap, and continue to repeat until all students have followed the pattern. Double or triple the pattern to increase difficulty or add in more pattern variations using new local motor movements you may be working on with your class.

Activity from [Mixinginmath.terc.edu](http://Mixinginmath.terc.edu)

## Should I Eat a Gluten Free Diet?



The Gluten-Free diet has become a recent popular diet craze. Many claim that a gluten-free diet helps them boost their health and energy, lose weight and cope with symptoms of headaches, but experts claim otherwise. **Who should really be eliminating gluten from their diet?**

People who are diagnosed with Celiac Disease, or have a confirmed gluten sensitivity, should be clinically prescribed this diet. Celiac disease is a gastrointestinal disease that damages the lining of the small intestine and prevents it from absorbing parts of food that are important for our health. Individuals suffering from this condition lack the enzyme

to properly digest the protein found in grains called gluten. If you suffer from persistent, on-going GI issues, you should see a physician.

**What does going gluten-free mean?** Going gluten-free means eliminating foods containing the protein gluten completely from the diet. Gluten is found in foods made from wheat, barley, rye and oats. Many of the foods we eat contain this protein like bread, cereal, crackers, flour, cookies, pasta, etc. Whole grain foods are important for a healthful diet so we encourage their consumption in people who do not have Celiac Disease. There are no known benefits of eliminating gluten from the diets of healthy individuals.

If you choose to purchase gluten-free products, be careful when sifting through the shelves next time you're at the grocery store. These products tend to be higher in carbohydrates, fat, sodium and lower in fiber. Instead consider making your own homemade grain products like bread and cookies using certified gluten-free grains such as quinoa, amaranth, or millet. Quinoa, amaranth and millet are great grains which are high in fiber and protein.

## Asparagus in a Blanket

Asparagus is a wonderful vegetable that is in season from March until June. Asparagus provides a good source of vitamin A, vitamin C, magnesium and zinc with no added fat or cholesterol.

### Asparagus in a Blanket

Makes 8

#### Ingredients:

1 package whole wheat croissant dough  
8 slices low-fat cheese, any variety  
8 asparagus spears

#### Equipment:

Medium microwavable bowl  
Cookie sheet



Recipe Adapted from Diane Forley

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to the correct temperature on the croissant dough package.
2. Wash your hands and the children's hands with soap and warm water.
3. Give each child an asparagus and have them wash their asparagus under cold running water to remove any dirt.
4. Have the children remove the woody bottom from their asparagus by holding both asparagus ends with their fingers and lightly bending it until it snaps (see picture below). This is the natural breaking point which removes the woody bottoms. Keep the asparagus ends for the math activity.
5. Place the asparagus and just enough water in the bottom of a clean medium microwavable bowl to cover asparagus.
6. Place the bowl in the microwave. Cook for 5-10 minutes checking for tenderness.
7. While asparagus is cooking, have each child flatten their piece of croissant dough.
8. Have the children place a slice of cheese on their piece of dough and place their asparagus on top of the cheese.
9. The children can roll up the asparagus inside the dough.
10. Have the children place their asparagus in a blanket onto a clean cookie sheet.
11. Place the cookie sheet in the oven. Cook for the amount of time shown on the croissant package.
12. Remove the cookie sheet from the oven and place on a towel or oven mitt to cool.
13. Let cool for 2-3 minutes. Serve and enjoy!

### Asparagus Math Activity

1. Collect all asparagus ends that were saved from the recipe.
2. Lay the asparagus ends out on the table and have the children arrange them:
  - a. From shortest to longest in length.
  - b. From lightest to darkest in color.
  - c. From smallest to biggest in width.
3. For the older children, let them try a combination of two.



Allowing children to practice using their eyes for visually measuring objects will help increase their math skills.

## Gardening Project: Growing Your Name

This activity helps celebrate the arrival of spring while teaching children basic gardening skills!

#### Materials Needed:

Wheat berry seeds (available at your local natural food store)  
Bowl of water  
Shallow, rimmed tray or baking pan  
Potting soil, moistened  
Letter cookie cutters (optional)



#### Directions:

1. Soak the wheat berry seeds in the bowl of water overnight.
2. Fill the tray with about an inch of moist potting soil. Arrange the seeds in the shape of the child's name, then gently press the seeds into the soil with your fingertip (Alphabet cookie cutters can be used as a guide. Place the letters on the soil, then remove after the seeds are pressed in place).
3. Mist the soil around the seeds using a spray bottle, don't pour water directly on them until the roots are established. Place the tray in a sunny window, and the seeds should sprout within a few days.
4. Wheat grass can be cut and juiced, adding a refreshing tang to smoothies. Or layer baby sprouts on a sandwich.

Activity from Disney® FamilyFun kitchen.com

## Activity Kits Free From the University of California

Do your part to impact childhood obesity and malnutrition. Local, state, and federal initiatives (and funding) urge a coordinated approach to addressing these issues. The University of California has prepared activity kits to help you teach nutrition and physical activity concepts to your children, while integrating math, language and science concepts that address CDE standards. **These lessons come “ready-made”** with all of the materials you need to teach a fun and interactive lesson with your students. The curriculum was developed by the University of California.

**We will bring the materials to your site, free of charge,** and we can even provide you or your staff with trainings and additional resources to increase confidence in these topics. If you are interested, we can also plan classroom food-themed parties, special events, and other fun sessions.

If you are interested in signing up to receive these materials, please contact us.

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Fuel Their Mind Nutrition Newsletter Enclosed

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# Fuel Their Minds-Parent Newsletter



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## Pass up Fast Food and Sail into Better Health

As busy parents with an endless to-do list, fast food can seem easy, convenient, and readily available. But, fast food is usually too high in calories, fat, sugar and sodium, and usually costs more than home cooked foods. Drive time can also eat away at precious evening minutes, so it's not always more convenient than something you can prepare in less than 15 minutes. Diets heavy in fast food can lead to Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and weight gain. Make eating together, whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner, a priority. Research also shows that families who sit down and eat together have children that perform better in school, feel more confident and secure within themselves and their families, and are less likely to try drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes later on in life. Your child's behavior will improve if they are receiving healthy, nutritious meals and snacks day in and day out. There are many convenient home cooked meals! Sometimes it can be quicker than a car ride to the local restaurant. It just requires you to plan ahead a bit, and have the foods on hand at home.



Here are some easy tips to help put healthy meals on the table:

- **Meal plan.** Write down what you have at home and what you need from the store. Stock up on a few quick dinner ingredient lists (whole wheat tortillas + vegetarian beans + shredded cheese = burritos. Whole grain bread + lowfat cheese + canned low sodium soup = grilled cheese. Frozen spinach raviolis + jarred marinara sauce + frozen broccoli = raviolis)
- **Use "convenience" appliances.** Crock pots, bread makers, rice cookers, and pressure cookers all provide ways to make "hands off" meals. Prep everything the night before, put it together in the morning, and when you walk in the door your meal is ready.
- **Stock up on all forms of fruits and vegetables.** Fresh, frozen, dried, and canned all offer quick ways to add more nutrition. Look for low sodium, no salt, packed in own juice, and no sugar added, on the labels of packaged products. Stay away from fruit packed in heavy syrup. Serve fruits and vegetables with every meal; bananas, apples, grapes, broccoli, and cherry tomatoes all need very little prep work.
- **Think about "other" foods.** There are no rules about what can be served for dinner. Mix it up by having "lunch foods" for dinner- like quesadillas, tuna sandwiches, or turkey burgers. Have a "pajama dinner" and serve scrambled eggs, whole wheat toast, and cut up fruit- these all take less than 15 minutes!
- **Cook once and eat twice.** Make larger quantities of casseroles or soups. Freeze them and reheat on another night. Or use part of the dish two ways. Ground turkey in a pasta sauce one night, then in a taco the next.
- **Use packaged convenience foods smartly.** Top a frozen cheese pizza with veggies, serve berries on top of instant oatmeal, shred a cooked chicken into a pita, throw a bag of frozen veggies in with your canned soup, top salads with canned beans, blend a smoothie with frozen fruit.
- **Get the whole family involved.** Children can help set the table, wash produce, stir, mix, and chop if age appropriate, and help clean up after meals. Mom or dad can **turn off** the television, video games, cell phones, and **turn on** relaxing music instead. Meals are prepared fast with help.
- **Make fast food or restaurant trips a once in awhile treat or special occasion.** Plan ahead and pack the cooler with sandwiches if you will be out and about at night. Stock a "pantry" in the car with trail mix, whole grain crackers, dried fruit, bottled water and jerky to avoid drive-through emergencies.





# Fuel Their Minds-Parent Newsletter

Ideas para Comer Mejor y Estar Activos con Niños Jóvenes



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## Pase la Comida Rápida y Navegaremos Hacia una Mejor Salud

Como padres ocupados con una lista interminable de pendientes, comida rápida puede parecer fácil, conveniente y fácilmente disponible. Pero, comida rápida es demasiado alto en calorías, grasa, azúcar y sodio y normalmente cuesta más que los alimentos cocinados en su hogar. Tiempo en manejando también puede gastar minutos preciosos y no es mas conveniente que algo que se puede preparar en menos de 15 minutos. Dietas fuertes en comida rápida pueden conducir a la diabetes de tipo 2, hipertensión arterial, las enfermedades cardiovasculares, y aumento de peso. Hacer comer juntos, ya sea desayuno, almuerzo o cena una prioridad. Estudios muestran que las familias que comen juntos tienen hijos con un mejor rendimiento académico, se sienten más seguros de sí mismo y de sus familias y son menos probable de probar drogas, alcohol o cigarrillos más adelante en la vida. El comportamiento de su hijo mejorará si están recibiendo alimentos sanos y nutritivos y bocadillos cada día. Hay muchas comidas cocinadas en casa que son convenientes! A veces puede ser más rápido que viajar al restaurante local. Sólo se requiere planear un poco y tener los alimentos en mano en casa.



Aquí están algunos consejos fáciles para ayudarle poner comidas saludables sobre la mesa:

- **Planear las comidas.** Escribe lo que tienes en casa y lo que necesitas de la tienda. Compre más de algunos ingredientes para un cena rápida, en su lista (tortillas de trigo + frijoles vegetariano o de la olla no fritos + queso rallado = burritos. Pan de grano entero + queso bajo en grasa + lata de sopa baja en sodio = grilled cheese. Raviolos congelados de espinaca + salsa marinara + brócoli congelado = raviolos)
- **Use dispositivos de “conveniencia”.** Crock pots, máquinas de pan, ollas de arroz y ollas de presión proporcionan maneras de hacer las comidas mas rapidas sin un esfuerzo. Prepare todo la noche anterior, mezclar los ingredientes en la mañana y cuando llegas a la casa la comida está lista.
- **Compre más ingredientes en frutas y verduras.** Frescos, congelados, secos o enlatados ofrecen formas rápidas para añadir más nutrición. Busque baja en sodio, sin sal, enlatados en su propio jugo y sin azúcar agregado en las etiquetas de productos. Manténgase alejado de fruta enlatado en almíbar pesado. Sirve frutas y verduras con cada comida; plátanos, manzanas, uvas, brócoli y tomates necesitan muy poca preparación.
- **Pensar en “otros” alimentos.** No existen reglas acerca de lo que puede servir para la cena. Mezcle “alimentos de almuerzo” para cena como quesadillas, sándwiches de atún o hamburguesas de pavo. Tenga una “cena de pijamas” y sirva huevos revueltos, pan integral tostado, y fruta cortada-todo esto toma menos de 15 minutos!
- **Cocinar una vez y comer dos veces.** Hacer grandes cantidades de guarniciones o sopas. Congelarlos y recalentarlos para otra noche. O utilizar parte de la comida de dos maneras. Pavo molido en una salsa de pasta una noche y en taco la siguiente noche.
- **Utilizar alimentos empacados.** En una pizza congelada de queso, agregue verduras, servir bayas arriba de su avena instantánea, cortar en tiras un pollo cocido en una pita o tortilla, agregue una bolsa de verduras congeladas en con su sopa enlatada, agregue frijoles enlatados en su ensalada, mezcle un licuado con frutas congeladas.
- **Participación de toda la familia.** Los niños pueden ayudar a establecer la mesa, lavar las verduras, mezclar, cortar (edad apropiado) y ayudar a limpiar después de las comidas. Mamá o Papá pueden **apagar** la television, juegos de video, teléfonos celulares y **iniciar** música en su lugar. Las comidas se preparan rápido con ayuda.
- **Hacer viajes al restaurante o comer comida rápida como una vez al mes o para un ocasión especial.**

Planea con tiempo y empaquetar una nevera con unos sándwiches si va a estar afuera de su casa por la noche. Tenga bolsas con alimentos de bocadillos a mano en su coche como mezcla de trail mix, galletas de grano integral, frutas secas, botellas de agua y carne seca-jerky para evitar pasando por los restaurantes.

