



Fuel Their Minds

Ideas for Better Eating and Active Play with Young Children



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Anemia Prevention

Many parents and caregivers are unaware that children may become anemic due to an absence of iron-rich foods in their diet. Iron is important to maintain healthy blood, normal brain development, and cognitive function. Preventing anemia is important during the early years of life.

What is anemia?

Anemia occurs when there is not enough iron in the body to make hemoglobin or to help with other bodily functions such as making red blood cells. Hemoglobin helps carry oxygen throughout the body and is important for our brain and nerve function.

What causes anemia?

Anemia is caused by eating a diet low in iron. Although the rate of iron deficient anemia has been decreasing in children due to fortified cereals and breads, it is still something to keep in mind when preparing meals. Serving children a variety of iron-rich foods for meals and snacks will help prevent anemia. Children do not need to take iron supplements or drops unless specifically instructed by a pediatrician. Too much iron can also make a child sick.

What are the signs and symptoms of anemia?

A few signs to look for with iron deficient children are:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Pale skin
- Rapid heart beat
- Irritability
- Loss in appetite
- Dizziness or lightheadedness



If you notice a child with any of these symptoms, an appointment with their pediatrician is recommended for further diagnosis.

How can anemia be prevented?

Provide a variety of food sources that contain iron, such as:

- Breads
- Iron-enriched cereals

- Egg yolk
- Peas, beans, and lentils
- Fish
- Tofu
- Lean meats (beef, pork, turkey, and chicken)
- Whole grain crackers
- Broccoli
- Artichokes
- Dark Leafy greens (collard, spinach, kale, chard, etc.)
- Raisins, prunes, and dried apricots (for children over 4)



Vitamin C helps the body to absorb iron. Serving snacks and meals that contain both iron and Vitamin C will ensure your children are absorbing enough iron. Foods high in Vitamin C are:

- Oranges
- Strawberries
- Grapefruit
- Cantaloupes
- Kiwi fruit
- Mangoes
- Peppers
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Tomatoes
- Dark Leafy Greens (collard, spinach, kale, chard)
- Cabbage



Children who do not consume enough iron are usually not eating a variety of foods throughout the day. Many parents and caregivers refer to these children as “picky eaters.” Serving and preparing food for picky eaters may be challenging but providing at least one iron rich food per snack or meal will ensure that the child is being offered plenty of essential nutrients. Picky eaters can still receive the recommended amount of iron by mashing, pureeing, or chopping unfamiliar foods and serving with accepted foods for a snack or meal.

Harvest Pumpkin Scones

Fall means pumpkins, and pumpkins mean delicious food like pancakes, pies, breads, and scones! Use this delicious recipe to introduce this vegetable to your children. This recipe freezes well so double the recipe and bake some later. Allow the children to assist in preparing this recipe if possible.

Ingredients

- 1 3/4 cups All-Purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
- 2/3 cup canned or fresh pumpkin
- 2 eggs
- Milk
- Sugar



Recipe from kingarthurfLOUR.com

Instructions:

1. Wash your and your children's hands with soap and warm water.
2. Place the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice into a large mixing bowl.
3. Cut the stick of butter into small pieces and mix with dry ingredients. Work in the butter just until the mixture is unevenly crumbly; it's okay for some larger chunks of butter to remain. If you have a blender available, place dry ingredients in blender and blend, then add the butter and blend again. Place ingredients back into large mixing bowl.
4. Place pumpkin and eggs into a small mixing bowl. Whisk to combine, then add to dry ingredient bowl.
5. Mix ingredients to form a shaggy (somewhat sticky, not smooth) dough. Don't mix longer than needed. Too much mixing and handling will cause the scones to be tough.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. If you do not have access to parchment paper, use the baking sheet without adding any oil. Sprinkle a little flour on top of the baking sheet. Place the sticky dough onto the floured baking sheet.
7. Divide the dough in half. Make each half into a 5" flat round circle. The circles should be about 3/4" thick.
8. Brush each circle with milk and sprinkle with a little bit of sugar.
9. Run a knife under cold water and slice each circle into 6 wedges. Carefully pull the wedges away from the center to separate them. Leave about 1/2" between each wedge.
10. For the best texture and highest rise, place the uncovered pan of scones in the freezer for 30 minutes.
11. While the scones are chilling, preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
12. Bake the scones for 22-25 minutes, or until they are golden brown. You can also test the doneness by inserting a toothpick into the center of a scone, and if it comes out clean, it's done.
13. Let the scones cool on the counter.
14. Cut the scones into smaller portions and serve to the children as a morning snack with non-fat milk.



Freezing Instructions: If you do not want to bake the scones right away, or would like to freeze an extra batch, shape, place on a pan, and cut into small wedges. Do not brush with milk, nor sprinkle with sugar. Cover with plastic and place in freezer until solid. This will take about an hour. Remove scones from the pan, place in an airtight bag, and return them to the freezer. When you are ready to bake the scones, no need to thaw them out, simply place them on a pan, brush with milk, sprinkle with sugar, and bake as directed above. Bake an additional 5 minutes in the oven to allow the scones to fully cook.

Healthy Celebrations



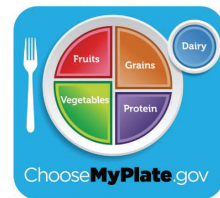
Classroom celebrations are unavoidable. Children and parents look forward to bringing sweets and goodies to class for birthdays and holidays. Celebrations do not have to be loaded with sugar; this year make your classroom a healthy celebration room. Celebrating birthdays and holidays can be simple and healthy. Provide parents with guidelines for any food that will be brought into the classroom. Establish healthy habits and rules early. Try these easy suggestions for your classrooms next celebration.

Holidays

- Have the children make cards to give to nursing homes, hospitals, or homeless shelters.
- For Halloween, have each child bring a mini pumpkin to paint in class. Encourage parents to bring in candy-free treat ideas such as spider rings, bracelets, maze games, or yo-yo's. Parents can also bring healthy treats such as apples and cheese, yogurt and fruit, or celery with cream cheese and honey. Add a little food coloring and you can make any snack orange and black.
- Celebrate Thanksgiving by having the students draw a picture, or tell a story about being thankful for someone or something. Pop whole ears of dried corn for a healthy whole grain snack.
- Have students bring in their favorite holiday music CD. Have each child tell why the holiday is special to their family. If time allows, play one child's favorite song each day of the week leading up to the holiday break. Let the children dance to the music. String together cereal to make a necklace or to be used as garland for the fireplace mantel or kitchen table.

Birthdays

- Create a "VIP Birthday Kit" for the class with a birthday crown, button, and name tag. Let the birthday child be first in line for snack, recess, or lunch on their special day. Have the child's parents bring in a healthy snack using foods from 2 out of the 5 sections on MyPlate.
- Start a tradition of having the birthday child bring in their favorite book to class. Read the book aloud to the rest of the class.
- Allow the birthday student to bring in something from home to "show & tell." The student can tell their classmates what they brought and why it is their favorite item.
- Have the birthday child prepare a poster of memorable events from each year of their life to share with the class.
- Add the book *On the Day You Were Born* by Debra Frasier to your library collection and read to each child on their birthday.



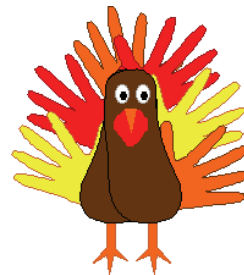
Article adapted from California Children's Power Play! Campaign

Thanksgiving Turkey Art Project

Have your students make this easy and creative art project for Thanksgiving. The turkey is made from each child's hand and foot prints. Extend the activity by asking each child what they are thankful for and writing their answers on the fingers of their turkey. Send the craft home with the children to use as a placemat or for table decoration during family meals.

Supplies Needed:

- Brown, red, orange, and yellow construction paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Googly or paper eyes



Instructions:

1. Have the child use a pencil to trace around their shoes onto brown construction paper.
2. Have the child use a pencil to trace their hands onto red, orange, and yellow construction paper. Each construction paper color should have a right and left hand tracing.
3. Place the two footprints together to make the body of the turkey. Glue the heels together to make the head of the turkey.
4. Cut out a round wattle and an orange beak. Glue the wattle, beak, and googly or paper eyes to the turkey's head. Make two legs from orange construction paper and glue them to the back of the turkey's body.
5. Glue the handprint feathers to the back of the turkey. If you are extending the activity, add what the child is thankful for to a few of the fingers. Make sure to write the name and age of the child on the back of their Thanksgiving turkey.

Activity from www.enchantedlearning.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 cooking clubs, 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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Fill Up On Fiber

“Eat fruits and vegetables” is the constant advice we hear, but what makes them so important? Fruits and vegetables are nature’s multivitamin. They provide us with lots of vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, and fiber too! Fiber is key for good digestive health. It helps reduce constipation, lowers blood cholesterol, and helps us feel full longer. It is recommended that children 3-8 years of age get 19-25 grams of fiber per day. A good source offers 3 grams of fiber or more per serving. Depending on the fruit or vegetable, one serving has 2.5 to 5 grams of fiber.

Generally, fruits are preferred among children because they are often juicy and sweet. Juices offer very little fiber, so limit fruit juices to 6 ounces or less per day, and remember to only offer 100% fruit juice. It is best to offer whole fruit to children daily, replacing 100% juice, with meals or as a snack for optimal nutrients.

Vegetables tend to be bitter and may be the most difficult for a child to accept. Try offering sweeter tasting vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots, or pumpkin squash to very picky eaters. Here are some other kid friendly ways to include vegetables into meals and snacks.



- **Mix in or offer a new vegetable along with a known favorite.** This familiarity will increase the chances of a child accepting the new food.
- **Have children help in the preparation of vegetables.** With an appropriate knife and adult supervision, little ones can wash and cut softer vegetables like tomatoes, lettuces, and mushrooms.
- **Puree new vegetables into soups, stews, casseroles, or baked goods.** For example, if you have offered cooked carrots as a side dish at one meal and they were rejected, offer them in a new way. Use the leftover cooked carrots in a vegetable soup or puree them and add to a spaghetti sauce. This will not only prevent food waste but will also increase the chances of a child trying the new vegetable.
- **Offer washed, cut up vegetables as a snack.** Children tend to enjoy dipping their food into a sauce or dip; offer vegetables with a favorite bean dip, salad dressing, ketchup, or cheese dip.
- **Include vegetables in fruit smoothies.** Fresh spinach blends easily with strawberries and bananas in a kid friendly smoothie.
- **Practice variety.** Children may prefer a fruit or vegetable if it is offered fresh, dried, or cooked. Experiment with different ways to offer a new food. For example, a child may refuse cooked broccoli but really like fresh, raw broccoli. Don’t give up if the food is initially rejected. Keep offering fruits and vegetables with every meal or snack.
- **Buy fruits and vegetables in season.** Produce in season is the freshest, tastes the best, and cost the least. If your family’s favorite fruits or vegetables are out of season, try buying canned, dried, or frozen versions. Remember with canned or frozen vegetables to look for low/reduced sodium or no salt added. For canned or frozen fruits look for low/reduced sugar or no sugar added on the food label.
- **Remember what you say is as important as what you do.** Don’t threaten or force a child to try a new fruit or vegetable. Instead, use encouraging and positive words like, “You must be proud of yourself for trying broccoli today!” or “Which one of these vegetables is your favorite and why?”



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Disfrute Fibra

"Comer frutas y verduras" es el asesoramiento constante que escuchamos, pero que los hace tan importante? Frutas y verduras son el multivitamínico de la naturaleza. Nos proveen gran cantidades de vitaminas, minerales, fitoquímicos y fibra! La fibra es la clave para una buena salud digestiva. Ayuda a reducir el estreñimiento, reduce el colesterol de la sangre y nos ayuda a sentir más satisfecho. Se recomienda que los niños de 3-8 años de edad reciben 19-25 gramos de fibra cada día. Una buena fuente ofrece 3 gramos de fibra o más por porción. Dependiendo de la fruta o verdura, una porción tiene 2.5 a 5 gramos de fibra.

Generalmente, frutas son preferidos entre los niños porque son jugosas y dulces. Jugos ofrecen muy poca fibra. Limitar solamente 6 onzas o menos de jugo por día, y recuerde que sólo ofrece 100% jugo de fruta. Es mejor ofrecer fruta entera a los niños diariamente con sus comidas o como un bocadillo. Sustituir jugo 100% de fruta con fruta entera le ayudara recibir nutrientes óptimos.

Verduras tienen la tendencia de ser amargos y pueden ser lo más difícil para un niño aceptar. Trate de ofrecer verduras que son más dulces como camote, zanahoria o calabaza para ayudar a los niños que son melindrosos. Aquí hay algunas maneras para incluir verduras en las comidas y bocadillos.



- **Mezcle o ofrece una verdura nueva junto con otro alimento favorito conocido.** Esta familiaridad aumentará la posibilidad de un niño aceptando los nuevos alimentos.
- **Pedir ayuda de su hijo mientras prepare las verduras.** Con un cuchillo apropiado para niños y la supervisión de un adulto, niños pueden lavar y cortar verduras suaves como tomates, lechugas y hongos.
- **Puré verduras nuevas en sopas, guisos, o alimentos horneados.** Por ejemplo, si usted ha ofrecido zanahorias cocidas como un guarnición en una comida antes y fueron rechazadas, ofrece zanahorias en una manera diferente. Utilice las sobras cocidas de zanahorias en una sopa de verduras o puré y agregar a una salsa de espaguetis. Esto no sólo evitará los desperdicios de comida, pero, también aumentará posibilidades de un niño intentando la verdura nueva.
- **Ofrece verduras lavadas y cortadas como bocadillos.** Los niños disfrutan alimentos con un tipo de salsa. Ofrece verduras con puré de frijol, aderezo de ensalada, ketchup o salsa de queso.
- **Incluye verduras en licuados de frutas.** Espinacas frescas combinan fácilmente con fresas y plátanos en un licuado.
- **Practique variedad.** A veces, los niños prefieren una fruta o verdura si es ofrecido fresca, seca o cocido. Trate diferentes maneras de ofrecer un nuevo alimento. Por ejemplo, un niño puede rechazar broccoli cocido, pero le gusta brócoli fresco y crudo. No se desanime si el alimento es rechazado inicialmente. Mantenga el optimismo y ofrece frutas y verduras con cada comida o bocadillo.
- **Compre frutas y verduras de temporada.** Productos de temporada son más frescos, tienen un mejor sabor, y el costo es más mínimo. Si las frutas o verduras de su familia están fuera de temporada, trate de comprar versiones de esa verdura. Como enlatadas, secas o congeladas. Recuerde que si son verduras enlatadas o congeladas, trate de buscar productos con sodio baja o reducido, o sin sal agregada. Busque frutas enlatadas o congeladas bajo o reducido de azúcar, o sin azúcar añadido en la etiqueta de los alimentos.
- **Recuerde lo que dices es tan importante como lo que haces.** No amenacé o force a su hijo a probar una nueva fruta o verdura. En cambio, use palabras alentadoras y positivas, "Usted debe estar orgulloso de ti mismo por probar el brócoli hoy!" o "Cual uno de estas verduras es tu favorito y por qué?"