



# kids quest health

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## COOKING WITH YOUR CHILD

Cooking is a great way to spend quality time with your child. Cooking gives you an opportunity to teach your child lifelong kitchen skills and how to choose healthy meals. Cooking meals, rather than eating out or buying packaged meals, is the healthiest way to eat. Meals cooked in the home tend to have less calories, fat, sugar, and sodium. Reducing these nutrients can help prevent weight gain and the onset of related diseases. Cooking allows your child to be invested in the foods your family eats.

Allow your child to make decisions when helping in the kitchen through structured decision making. For example, allow your child to choose between broccoli, corn, or carrots. Each of the vegetable options are healthy, but choosing between the vegetables gives your child a sense of responsibility and investment. Just remember, that cooking at home can have a different definition for different families. Sometimes cooking from a box mix or reheating frozen meals is considered cooking. This definition really downplays the role of health in cooking at home. Try to recreate your favorite meals from scratch. Try homemade macaroni and cheese instead of the boxed version. Homemade will certainly have less sodium and preservatives than the box mix.

Cooking with children can also broaden their food horizons. Often times, cooking with new recipes allows children to be open minded and willing to try new foods. Even “picky eaters” can be enticed to try new foods when they prepare the food themselves. Having a broad food palate and learning how to cook at home can create healthy values that will last a lifetime



## FAMILY CHALLENGE

Have everyone in the family come up with one small change they can make that will have a big impact on their health. For example: starting each morning with a glass of water, never skipping breakfast, limiting all snacks to “healthy” snacks, not eating in front of the television, or going for a walk each day after school. Stick to this small change for the entire month and talk about it at dinner. At the end of the month discuss the change and the affect it has had and consider making a new change for the next month.

## Kids In The Kitchen

### Fruit Salad

2 cups strawberries (sliced)  
2 cups red or green grapes  
2 bananas (sliced)  
1 cup blueberries or raspberries  
1 1/2 cups of vanilla or fruited yogurt  
Mix fruit and yogurt in a large mixing bowl.  
Serve and enjoy!



## CONSIDER THIS

It can take our bodies up to 20 minutes to recognize when we are full. If you feel your child has already eaten plenty but they are still asking for more, consider distracting them with a fun activity for roughly 20 minutes. If they are still hungry after that 20 minutes then consider giving them more.

**Q** *I am getting concerned about the weight of my third-grader? What can I do to help him lose or maintain his weight without hurting his self-esteem?*

**&** Helping an overweight child lose or maintain weight can be a very delicate situation. Not damaging your child's self-esteem is a priority, therefore, focusing on healthy habits and not his weight is the only method. Try to incorporate family activities that encourage exercise. Have family meals that are well balanced and encourage lots of fruits and vegetables. If you try to make family health the focus of your efforts rather than just one child's habits, then you'll likely make better habits for your son and your entire family.



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*Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. -Joseph Addison*

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## AT HOME HEALTH:

### Sneeze Test

To teach kids the importance of covering up and washing their hands after they sneeze.

**Materials:** baby powder container and dark colored paper to cover a small area.

Explain to your child that the baby powder container will represent our mouth as we sneeze and the powder represents germs. Shake the container and open the top. While holding it on its side give the bottle a tight squeeze onto the paper showing your child how far the powder reaches.

Repeat the procedure but this time squeeze the powder into your child's hand (as if they're covering their mouth as they sneeze). Then ask them to grab a pencil, crayon box, or any miscellaneous items to show how the powder spreads if they don't wash their hands. Explain that germs spread just as easily as the powder did to stress the importance of covering up a sneeze and washing their hands.



### Simple Switches

*Try some of these simple food switches. They're quick and easy changes but can have a big impact on your family's health.*

► **Avocado for Mayonnaise.** Mayonnaise contains added cholesterol, unhealthy fats, sodium, and more calories. Avocados contain fiber, are a healthy fat.

► **Sweet Potatoes for White Potatoes.** Sweet potatoes contain Vitamin A and are full of more Vitamin C and fiber than regular potatoes. They also are about 40 calories less and have fewer carbohydrates than white potatoes.



## Fitness Fun: Card Games

Here's a simple yet fun and challenging fitness activity for the whole family. All you'll need is a standard deck of playing cards with 52 cards. Think of 4 exercises that you and your youngster can both do with little or no equipment. Maybe push ups, jumping jacks, crunches, body squats, or burpees. Then provide a specific exercise for each suit. Example: the spades could be push ups and the hearts jumping jacks. Take turns flipping over the cards and perform the exercise assigned to that suit. Complete the same number of repetitions as is on the card. You can make all face cards worth ten repetitions or mix it up however you see fit. Also consider keeping the joker cards in the pile and making them the most challenging. Perhaps make the jokers 10 repetitions of each of the four exercises.

**Kids Quest Health** aims to provide parents of elementary and middle school aged children with practical health and wellness knowledge and tips that can make a big impact on the current and future health of their children. Kids Quest Health is composed of a team of health professions including a registered dietitian, health educator, physical education teacher, and certified personal trainer. Kids Quest Health is not intended to treat any medical conditions. Please consult a physician before making any serious changes in diet or exercise.