



Focus on Health Nutrition, and Physical Activity Information for Parents

F.S. 381.0056

St. Johns County School District, Health Services Dept.
School Year 2023-24



Giving Children and Adolescents a Healthy Start Through Nutrition

Source: By LT Dennis Anderson-Villaluz, MBA, RD, LDN, FAND, nutrition advisor, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

The physical, mental, and emotional changes that occur as children transition from pre-school to school age and into adolescence come with diverse opportunities to support a healthy dietary pattern. It's important for parents, guardians, and caregivers of young children to know that it can take up to 10 exposures before children accept a new type of food. Some strategies to increase food acceptance include:

- Offering vegetables in different forms, such as cooked or raw
- Cutting fruits and vegetables into small, bite-sized pieces
- Pairing fruits or vegetables with a food the child enjoys, such as yogurt or peanut butter

Strategies that can help families include:

- **Shared meals** — Early in childhood, shared meals have a tremendous impact on modeling healthy eating behaviors and dietary practices. Making nutrient-dense foods and beverages part of the normal household meal routine helps children observe and learn healthy behaviors that extend into adolescences and adulthood. Home meals also provide an opportunity for repeated exposure to a variety of new foods.
- **Snacks** — Promoting nutrient-dense foods for snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, can go a long way in shaping a child's diet. For example, carrot sticks and hummus or apple slices and peanut butter are better snack options than chips, crackers, or cookies. Pre-cut vegetables in advance, so that they're easy for children to grab and eat.
- **Meal decisions** — Parents and caregivers can involve and guide children in age-appropriate meal decisions, as well as involve them in food shopping and cooking, so children learn to make independent healthy choices. This strategy can also apply when eating at restaurants or ordering delivery.
- **Beverage selection** — Beverages that contain no added sugars should be the primary choice. These include water and unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk (including low-lactose or lactose-free options and fortified soy beverages). Fruit juice with no added sugars is also an option within recommended amounts.

Cooking Healthy Together

Cooking together with your children provides an opportunity to spend time together, talk about the importance of eating healthy, and discuss portion sizes.

Sweet Potato Pancakes

Source: Rebecca Longshore, Cooking Light



Ingredients

1 medium sweet potato, roasted and cooled
2 large eggs, beaten
a dash of cinnamon (optional)
a dash of allspice (optional)
cooking spray

For the Topping

½ cup 2% Greek Yogurt
1 teaspoon maple syrup
a dash of cinnamon

How to Make It

Remove peel and mash potato. Whisk in eggs and spices. Heat a griddle pan over medium-high heat. Coat it with cooking spray. Spoon out ¼ cup of batter onto the griddle. Let cook 5 to 7 mins. These pancakes do not bubble like typical pancakes, so really watch the time! It helps to use two spatulas to flip, so that they stay together. Once you've flipped, cook for another 3-5 minutes, remove, and serve. For the topping mix yogurt with cinnamon and maple syrup. Spoon over pancakes.

Frozen Yogurt Pops

Source: Superhealthykids.com

Ingredients

1 cup yogurt, plain
1 medium banana
1 cup mixed berries, frozen
1/8 cup honey

Instructions

Toss all ingredients into a high-powered blender and puree. Divide evenly between paper cups. Cover with aluminum foil and pierce foil in the center with popsicle sticks to hold sticks in place. Freeze 4-5 hours or until solid.



Key Guidelines for School-Aged Children and Adolescents

Source: CDC Healthy Schools

It is important to provide young people opportunities and encouragement to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety. Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.

- **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 3 days a week.
- **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days a week.
- **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days a week.

For more information go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/guidelines.htm>



Focus on Health
Water Safety Information for Parents

F.S. 1003.225

St. Johns County School District, Health Services Dept.
School Year 2023-24



Water Safety for Kids and Teens

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families; <https://www2.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/summer-safety-tips/water-safety-for-kids.shtml>; and Healthy Children.Org <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Water-Safety-for-Older-Children.aspx>

Teaching water safety and how to swim is a key part of reducing child drownings. In Florida, drownings are one of the leading causes of child deaths.

The following information is important to teach to your teen or younger child:

- **Always supervise; it saves lives.** Remember that knowing how to swim will not "drown proof" a child of any age. Even among older children and teens, most childhood drownings happen when there is no adult supervision. Make sure your teen knows to swim only where there are lifeguards on duty and to never swim alone. Urge them to use the buddy system, even when swimming with large groups of friends. It is important for young children to know that the fun can't begin until a "Water Watcher" is present. Once an adult is watching, the swimming fun can start. Make sure your child knows never to go near the water alone and always has a swimming partner.
- **Wear a lifejacket.** Like adults, adolescents should always wear life jackets whenever they are on boats, jet skis and other watercraft. Younger children should also wear life jackets including while in a floating device or on a dock. If a child cannot swim or is an inexperienced swimmer, lifejackets should be utilized at all times while in the water. Never rely on inflatable tubes and rafts as life preservers.
- **Learn how to swim.** Swimming lessons have been shown to reduce drowning incidents, which is why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 4 and older learn to swim. Even if your child has taken swimming lessons, never assume that their risk of drowning has subsided. Always be cautious of pool floats or toys that could interfere with your child in the water. If your family hasn't been able to learn basic swim and water survival skills yet, it's not too late! Many organizations offer lessons specifically geared toward teens and adults.
- **If there is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or find an adult.** Although a child may have had swimming lessons or is utilizing a life jacket, sometimes water accidents do happen. Make sure your child knows to call for help or find an adult when trouble occurs. When watching a child swim, always make sure to have a cell phone nearby in order to call 911 if a dangerous situation arises. Stress the importance of staying away from pool drains and suction fittings in order to have a fun, safe swimming experience.

To find swimming lessons in your area. Contact your local YMCA, city facilities, or swim school.

YMCAs in St. Johns County are listed below

Brown Family YMCA
170 Landrum Lane
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
Website:
<https://fcymca.org/locations/ponte-vedra-ymca/>

St. Augustine YMCA
500 Pope Road
St. Augustine, FL 32080
Website:
<http://fcymca.org/locations/st-augustine-ymca/>

Solomon Calhoun Community Center Pool
1300 Duval Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Website:
<http://www.co-st-johns.fl.us/recreation/cc/sccc.aspx>

For More Information on Swim Lessons go to <https://fcymca.org/youth-swim/>