

Building Blocks

issue 16

A NEWSLETTER PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Provide a Healthy Child Care Environment

Providing young children with healthy snacks, rest time and active play helps keep them energized and on their best behavior. Below are tips that will help you give your children what they need to grow, play and learn.

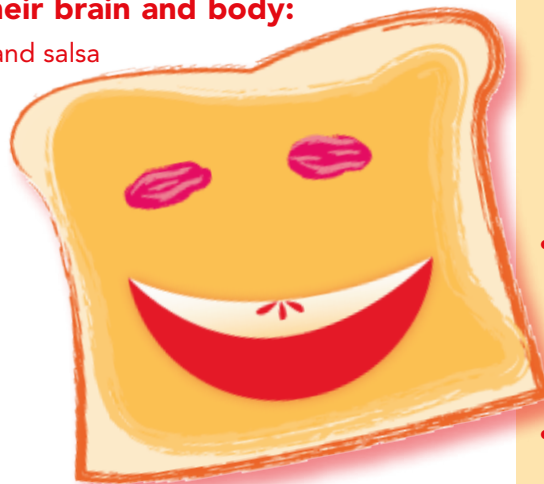
Healthy Snack Tips

- **Keep healthy food group snacks handy.** For example, provide raw vegetables; fruit; low-fat and fat-free milk* and milk products such as cheese and yogurt; 100% whole-grain bread; peanut butter; and hard-cooked eggs.
- **Offer snacks to satisfy hunger, not tears.** Skip the urge to offer a snack to quiet tears, calm children or reward behavior. That can lead to emotional overeating later.
- **Keep snack portions small.** If a child is still hungry, he or she can ask for more. Let the child decide what is enough.
- **Time snacks carefully.** Provide snacks two to three hours before meals. That way, children will be hungry for lunch or dinner.
- **Snack wisely yourself!** Do you snack when you feel stressed or bored – or just when you are hungry? What foods do you snack on? Remember, the children in your care learn snack habits by watching you. Be a great role model!

**Children ages 1 to 2 should drink whole milk. Children ages 2 to 5 should be gradually switched to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

Kid-tested energy snacks for their brain and body:

- Soy chips or baked tortilla chips and salsa
- String cheese and carrots
- Turkey slice rolled inside 100% whole-wheat flour tortilla
- Greek yogurt and granola
- Low-fat cheese stick and bell pepper slices
- Apple slices and natural peanut butter
- Hummus and whole-wheat mini pitas
- Low-fat yogurt and frozen blueberries
- 100% whole-wheat crackers and nut butter
- Veggie sticks and low-fat dip



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Snack Activities

These snacks are a fun way to get kids involved. Children can help prepare their own snack. Adult supervision and age-appropriate tools, such as a spreader instead of a knife, will encourage children to participate in the real work of preparing food.

- **Bagel snake** – Split 100% whole-wheat mini bagels in half. Cut each half into half circles. Spread the halves with toppings like tuna salad or peanut butter. On plates, arrange the half circles to form the body of a snake. Children can also decorate the bagel with sliced cherry tomatoes or banana slices. Use olives or raisins for the eyes.
- **Frozen graham cracker sandwiches** – Mix mashed bananas and peanut butter; spread between graham crackers and freeze. Label the sandwiches with the children's names so they can enjoy the one they prepared themselves.
- **Smiley sandwiches** – Top a slice of whole-grain bread with peanut butter. Children can add an apple slice for a smile and raisins for eyes.
- **Frozen juice cups** – Pour 100% fruit juice into small paper cups. Freeze. To serve, peel off the paper and enjoy.

COPY THE ENCLOSED INSERT AND GIVE IT TO PARENTS.

When to Keep Children Home

Each child care center should have its own policies about sick children, which should be shared with parents. Policies may differ between centers, depending on staffing and space. In individual situations, child care centers may follow a doctor's written recommendations.

The following illnesses may require keeping children home:

▶ **Red Eyes:** This could be conjunctivitis (pink eye). A child with red eyes and drainage from one or both eyes should see a doctor. Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of pink eye. Children can return to child care once they are cleared by their doctor or on treatment for 24 hours.

▶ **Colds and Flu:** Most children have colds every year. Some common symptoms include coughing, sneezing, fever and tiredness. Cold and flu viruses are spread by droplets from the nose or throat of a sick person. Hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of colds and the flu. Children with colds or the flu can attend child care if they don't have a fever.

▶ **Sore Throat:** Colds or allergies can cause sore throats. Strep throat is another common reason for sore throat. Children with strep can have fever and swollen glands. Promote hand washing and avoid sharing cups and eating utensils to prevent the spread of germs. Children with strep throat can return to child care after 24 hours on antibiotics. Children who have a sore throat caused by other reasons can return when the fever goes away.

▶ **Fever:** A child may have a fever for many reasons. Most often it is the body's normal reaction to fight off an infection. Things like overexertion, hot weather and overdressing can also raise body temperature. A sick child with fever usually has other changes, like tiredness or a poor appetite. In general, a child can return when the fever goes away or if the child's doctor says that the cause of fever is not contagious.

What is a fever?

In general, children have a fever if their temperature is 100 degrees F or higher. Babies under three months old have a lower fever limit. If a baby has a temperature higher than 100.8 degrees F, call the parents immediately.

▶ **Rash:** Contagious diseases like chickenpox or hand, foot and mouth disease can cause rashes. Allergic reactions (for example, to insect bites or poison ivy) can also cause rashes. Unknown rashes should be seen by a doctor before a child returns to child care. The child may need to stay home for a longer period of time if a contagious infection is found.

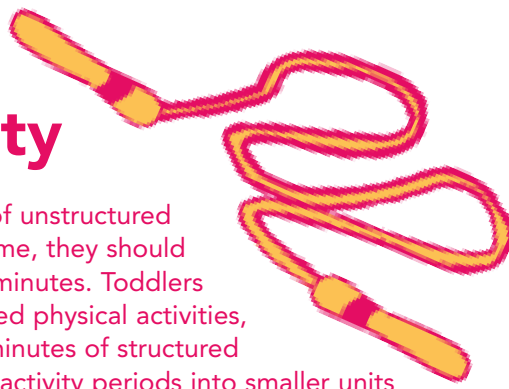
▶ **Vomiting and Diarrhea:** Illnesses that cause vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain can be spread through dirty surfaces, water or food. Children with bloody diarrhea should see their doctor. Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of disease. Always wash hands after diaper changing and before and after preparing food. In general, children may return to child care 24 hours after their vomiting or diarrhea has stopped. If they have certain kinds of diarrheal illness, they may need to stay out longer.

▶ **Nuisance Conditions:** Infections with head lice, ringworm or scabies are common in child care centers and are treatable. Remind parents that family members and close contacts may also need to be checked and treated. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, clothing, hats, blankets and combs. Children with these conditions should not be in child care until they have started treatment.

▶ **Pain:** Ear infections, injuries and toothaches are some common reasons for pain. In some cases, children may need to be evaluated by their medical provider. Children should be sent home if the pain gets in the way of their participation in activities.

This is not meant to diagnose disease or take the place of a doctor's advice.

Physical Activity



Young children need several hours of unstructured play every day. Other than at nap time, they should never be inactive for more than 60 minutes. Toddlers need at least 30 minutes of structured physical activities, and preschoolers need at least 60 minutes of structured physical activities. You can break all activity periods into smaller units of two or 15 minutes each (National Association for Sport and Physical Education). Check out Kids In Action for fun activities for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Go to www.fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction.html.

Children need their zzz's

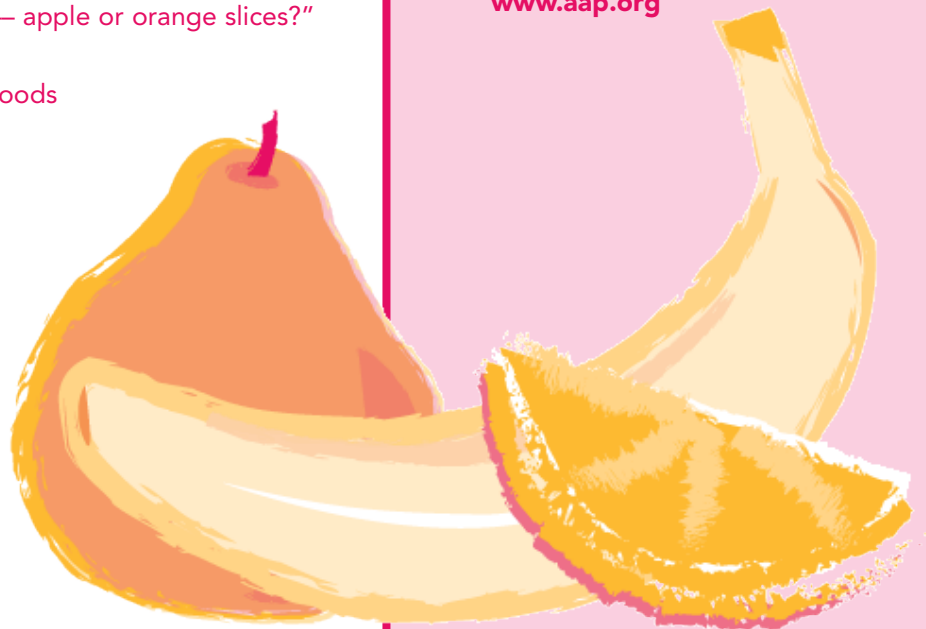
Poor or inadequate sleep can lead to mood swings, behavioral problems, such as hyperactivity, and cognitive problems that impact children's ability to learn.

Did you know?

- Active preschoolers are more likely to be happy. Physical activity helps children learn to feel good about themselves. Want to learn more health and developmental benefits of physical activity for preschoolers? Check out www.MyPyramid.gov/preschoolers.
- Active playtime should never be withheld as punishment, and additional active playtime should be given as a reward. To become active adults, children and youth need to encounter positive physical activity experiences (National Association for Sport and Physical Education).

Working with a 'Choosy' Eater

- **Patience works better than pressure.** Let children choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their choice.
- **Trust the child's appetite.** Don't force children to eat everything on their plate. Forcing a child to eat more encourages overeating.
- **Offer choices.** Ask, "Which would you like — apple or orange slices?" instead of "Do you want apple slices?"
- **Build on what children like.** If a child likes foods that are crunchy (e.g., whole-grain crackers and pretzels), offer other foods that are crunchy too. Try sliced cucumbers, carrots and green bell peppers.
- **Encourage adventurous tasters.** Rather than say, "You won't like that," ask them to tell you whether or not they like a food and why. You can taste it too and share why you like it or how you like it prepared best.



Understanding Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are physical and emotional "meltdowns" common among children ages 2 to 5. Typical behaviors may include screaming, kicking, lying on the floor or even breath holding.

A tantrum is a child's expression of frustration with the physical, mental or emotional challenges of the moment. Physical challenges may include tiredness, hunger or thirst. Mental and emotional challenges are related to a child's difficulty learning or performing a task or expressing thoughts and feelings.

There are two approaches to dealing with temper tantrums: prevention and intervention. Make sure children get enough sleep, eat a healthy diet and have enough playtime. Nobody behaves their best if they are hungry, tired or restless! When a tantrum strikes, as it inevitably will, stay calm, ignore what you can and don't try to talk the child out of it.

For more information about temper tantrums, check out these organizations and their websites:

- National Association of School Psychologists, www.nasponline.org
- Kids Health from Nemours Foundation, www.kidshealth.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org

Pertussis or 'whooping cough'

Pertussis, commonly called whooping cough because of the classic "whoop" sound an infant makes when ill with the disease, is a vaccine preventable disease. Infants and babies lack protection from this serious – sometimes fatal – disease until fully immunized. Given in combination with diphtheria and tetanus, the pertussis vaccine, or DTaP, is administered at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months and 15-18 months of age, with a booster dose at 4-6 years. Most babies will be fully immune to pertussis after their fourth dose.

Recently, there has been an increase in pertussis cases in the United States, placing babies at risk for catching this serious disease. Parents and caregivers can help protect infants by protecting themselves. One dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) vaccine for people who have close contact with infants – including parents, child care providers, siblings and grandparents – can decrease the risk of pertussis for this at-risk population.

Tdap vaccine is available free of charge to child care providers, parents and close contacts of newborns for a limited time at the Anne Arundel County Department of Health.

For more information, contact your primary care physician, go to the Anne Arundel County Department of Health's website at www.aahealth.org or call the Department's Immunization Services Program at **410-222-4896**.



Need More Help?

If you need more information about children's health and safety, here are some local resources:

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
www.aahealth.org

Behavioral Health ▶ 410-222-6785

Communicable Diseases ▶ 410-222-7256

Emergency Preparedness and Response ▶ 410-222-4115

Healthy Babies ▶ 410-222-7223 or www.aahealthybabies.org

Healthy Start ▶ 410-222-7177

Immunizations ▶ 410-222-4896

Injury Prevention ▶ 410-222-4223

Lead Poisoning ▶ 410-222-7003

Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) ▶ 410-222-4792

Smoking Cessation ▶ 410-222-7979 or www.MyQuitKit.org

Smoking Stinks website for kids ▶ www.SmokingStinks.org

Twitter messages from the Department of Health ▶ www.twitter.com/aahealth

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program ▶ 410-222-6797

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
Office of Injury Prevention and Public Safety Education ▶ 410-222-8303

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY POLICE
Community Relations ▶ 410-222-8562

ANNAPOLIS CITY POLICE
Community Safety ▶ 410-268-9000

MARYLAND POISON CENTER
1-800-222-1222 or www.mdpoison.com

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control ▶ www.cdc.gov
Small Step Kids ▶ www.smallstep.gov

Building Blocks is published by the Learn To Live program of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 1 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-222-7979, www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org. The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

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