

Healthy Kansas Kids

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Points of Interest:

- Have regular family meals.
- Safety first, check your home for dangers
- Winter fitness can be great fun! Just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't find a variety of activities and events to keep you busy and entertained.



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New Year's Resolutions! Healthy, Safe Children!

Whether you have a toddler or a teen, here are five of the best strategies to improve nutrition and encourage smart eating habits in children.

Have regular family meals. This gives you a chance to model manners and eating a variety of foods, as well as connect with your child.

Serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks. Children may need to try a food prepared several ways before they learn to like it. Be a role model by eating healthy yourself. You control what comes in the house! Children can't eat junk food if it isn't there. Avoid battles over food. Remember to evaluate what your child eats over the span of several days rather than at each individual meal.

Keep meal time pleasant and involve kids in the process. Children are more willing to try things they helped prepare.

Keep Your Child Safe!

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, over 17,000 infants and children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year for choking related incidents. Most of these choking incidents occur at home. **Food** is a choking hazard because infants and young children do not chew their food well, and larger pieces can become stuck in their throat. Always supervise young children while eating. Foods that have been identified by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) as presenting choking hazards include: hot dogs, hard candy, chewing gum, nuts, whole grapes, pop-

corn, raw vegetables and raisins.

Balloons are the most common cause of toy-related choking death among children of all ages. Make sure toys are appropriate for your child's age by following guidelines on the packaging. Small parts often end up in little mouths. An inexpensive way to test items is to use an empty toilet paper roll. If it falls through the tube, it could be a choking hazard.

Window blind cords are choking hazards, too. Cut them or secure them out of a child's reach. Never place a baby's crib within reach of a blind cord.

Clothing with drawstrings (on hooded jackets) can get entangled on playground equipment and choke your child.

Help Your Kids Get Moving

What you do with your children today can have a profound effect on their adult lives. Consider these tips:

- Model active behavior; studies show that in families where both parents are active, 95 percent of the children were active.
- Plan family outings around fitness activities, like walking on the trails at a local nature center.
- Buy toys that are fitness related, such as Frisbees, balls, hula hoops, and bikes.
- Allow children time to practice new skills. Mastery of larger muscles (arms, legs and core muscles) leads to mastery of smaller muscles (hands and feet).
- Emphasize the fun and enjoy being together as a family!

Winter Family Fun

Looking for some ideas for winter family fun? Even when the weather is cold and damp, there are plenty of interesting activities to keep the whole family entertained. Here are some suggestions:

1. Museums There is a wonderful variety of museums. The best time to visit many of them is the winter because they are a lot less crowded. Many of the museums have special programs for kids with lots of hands-on activities.

2. Children's Theater Take the kids to a play or puppet theatre and enjoy a family show at a children's theater. Many children's theaters also offer drama education programs.

3. Ice Skating and Roller Skating Take the whole family ice skating or roller skating at a rink. There's even a few special places to ice skate outdoors. Skating classes and hockey teams will keep kids active throughout the winter season.

4. Indoor Playgrounds or Amusement Centers On a cold or rainy (or snowy) day, kids can have a blast romping around these indoor playgrounds and amusement centers.

5. Special Events Attend the best events of the season with great food, music and live entertainment for the whole family. Check out the top festivals at <http://www.travelks.com/seedo>

6. IMAX Movies See images up to eight stories high with wrap-around digital surround sound. State-of-the-art cinematography with stunning scenery lets you feel like you are really at exotic destinations.

7. Movie Theaters Winter is a great time to go to the movies. Find a convenient movie theater and enjoy the latest films.

8. Nature Centers The winter season is a great time to visit a nature

center or attend a naturalist guided event. Explore a nature museum or get outside and take a short walk in the woods.

9. Go see a Game See a football game. Attend a game and teach your child about one of America's most beloved sports.

11. Some days it is just too frigid to go outdoors at all. Then plan some fun family activities inside. It is really about the quality time that you spend with your child.



Ellie's Cherry Vanilla Oatmeal

Oatmeal is a great source of fiber, protein and important nutrients. What a healthy way to start your day on a cold winter morning!

Ingredients

3-1/2 cups water
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
2 cup old-fashioned or quick-cooking rolled oats
1/2 cup dried cherries

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup cherry jam, or to taste
1 cup nonfat milk, or to taste

Cooking Instructions

Combine the water, salt (if using), oats, and cherries in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring a few times, until the oats are tender, about 5 minutes

For old-fashioned oats or 1 minute for quick cooking oats. Remove from the heat. Stir in the vanilla and cherry jam. Place in serving bowls, pour 1/4 cup of milk over each bowl, and serve.

For more of Ellie Krieger's recipes, eat-smart advice, and tips, check out her column, www.kaboose.com



Fit Family Life Month

Is your family healthy? Is your family plagued with stress? Does your family watch excessive amounts of TV and proudly claiming to be couch potatoes? Do you have a history of health problems? Do you make sure that your family gets the right nutrients and sufficient amounts of exercise? How are you helping to improve your family's health and well-being?

Although January is Family Fit Lifestyle Month, integrating healthy habits and becoming health conscious should be a lifelong endeavor. Promoting outdoors and sports activities is a great way of ACTIVELY hanging with the family. The whole family can try indoor rock climbing, capoeira, or related indoor activities. (Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art with over 400 years of history. In recent years capoeira has exploded out of Brazil and continues to grow in popularity. There are now capoeira schools in every continent except Antarctica and over 2,000 schools listed on capoeirista alone.)

Also being "fit" isn't solely about eating better and exercising; being fit all includes doing activities that are intellectually stimulating. Play fun games like chess or sudoku with the family every Friday.

A family gets fit together means there can be much stronger and healthier unit.



Some great websites for fun ideas:

- http://www.presidentschallenge.org/home_kids.aspx
- http://www.bam.gov_sub_physicalactivity/physicalactivity_activitycards.html
- http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/mpk_poster.pdf
- <http://www.bestbonesforever.gov/>
- <http://www.smallstep.gov/kids/redirect.cfm>
- <http://www.brunconsult.com/docs/FitForChangeCalendar.pdf>

Grab your BFF and have some fun~ team sports not your thing? Need some new ideas in the off-season? Here's a list of activities you can do this fall in your own backyard (and beyond) that don't require anything but your energy, enthusiasm, and imagination!



- Check out the changing leaves on a hike with your BFF or family.
- Grab your BFFs and play some old recess games like Red Rover, Red Rover or Red Light, Green Light.
- Throw the Frisbee in the park or, for an extra challenge, play Ultimate Frisbee (learn how at <http://www.ultimatehandbook.com/blog>)
- Host a dance party with your BFFs.
- Check out a workout video from the library and get moving!
- Hiking around the mall is a great way to get moving! Take the stairs and power walk to your favorite stores. Don't forget to grab a smoothie for a yummy calcium boost while you're there!
- Play some active video games — the kinds that get you off the couch and dancing or competing against family members in a boxing match.
- Set up an obstacle course for your family or neighborhood.
- Run or walk in a race for charity.
- Enjoy the cooler weather together as a family by playing lawn games like croquet, badminton, or horseshoes.
- Having a sleepover? Play sardines (reverse hide-and-seek where one person hides and as each person finds the hiding person, they have to pack in with that person, and so on).