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Family Matters

Improving Health Together

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Newsletter**

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Get Moving!

By Sheila Gains, Family & Consumer Science Agent, Arapahoe County



Moving your body is fun, feels good and helps you be healthy and strong. Moreover, the more your body does something, the better you can do it. The process involves muscle memory, coordination, fine motor and gross motor skills. For example, the more you practice cartwheels the better you get at performing them, which makes you enjoy doing cartwheels more often. For another example, the more you practice throwing and

catching a ball the better you get at it, making you more likely to enjoy and play sports that involve throwing and catching balls. The eye hand coordination you develop playing catch makes it easier for you to learn and play other sports such as tennis and volleyball that require a similar skill.

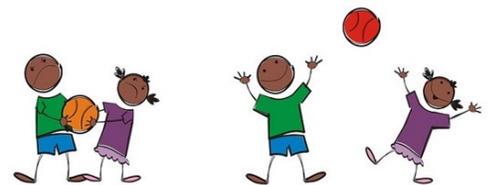
Moving more and sitting less has many benefits for children and adults including:

- Develops and maintains muscle, bone strength and flexibility, which are all needed skills for children and adults to safely explore and experience the world around them.
- Improves body awareness and coordination. As your child learns what their body can do and how to move it, they become less clumsy. Body coordination also helps with overall learning.
- Reduces stress and improves sleep. Being active is a healthy way to get rid of stress for people of all ages. In addition, as your child plays hard they get tuckered out and sleep better.
- Boosts energy by getting blood pumping to all parts of the brain and body.



Children's Active play promotes:

- Learning and confidence. Your child's body and brain develop in coordination with each other. The brain tells the body what to do and the body sends signals back to the brain. When children accomplish a skill such as throwing a ball or learning to skip it gives them the confidence to try other things.
- Curiosity and creativity – as your child explores their environment.
- Cooperation, sharing, taking turns and following directions. This is especially true if active play includes games played with others and the games have a few simple rules.



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Long-term Benefits:

Being active in childhood has so many immediate benefits, but it also has many long-term health benefits such as protecting them from developing diabetes and heart disease later in life. Children should get 60 minutes of active play each day, most days of the week. Adults should get 30 minutes of moderate activity each day, most days of the week. Our bodies are designed to move, so get moving and feel the benefits!

Let's Talk - What can Parents Do?

Children copy what adults do, so be active yourself. Fit activity into your daily life as much as possible. For example:

- When gathering the laundry ask kids to help you. Have them wad clothing into a ball, throw it to you while you hold an empty laundry basket in your arms. Move the basket if needed to help them make a basket. Give them points for every basket they make. Exchange points for extra playtime.
- If outside, let children pull weeds and dig in the dirt. Make it fun by making it a contest to see who can pull more weeds, or consider paying a penny per weed pulled.
- Take a snack or meal to a local park or open space and have a picnic. Bring a ball (softball, rubber ball or soccer ball), Frisbee and jump rope.



Recipe for Health - With all this activity, your body will need water and a healthy snack.

Colorful Quesadillas with Vegetables (serves 6)

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 6 whole-wheat 6-inch tortillas
- 1 1/2 cups shredded low-fat cheese, like Cheddar or Monterey Jack
- 1 zucchini, grated
- 1 carrot, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of chili powder or dash of hot sauce (optional)
- 1 12oz jar of salsa



Directions

1. Wash hands and all food contact surfaces with soap and warm water.
2. Grate vegetables and place in individual bowls. At this point, you can season vegetables with salt, pepper, chili powder or hot sauce to taste. (Tip: placing vegetables in separate bowls allows children to select which vegetables to add to their quesadillas.)
3. Add 1/2-Tablespoon oil to a skillet. Over medium heat sauté each vegetable separately, put them back into bowls, and set aside.
4. Wipe skillet with a paper towel. Spray lightly with cooking spray and place over medium heat.
5. Place 1 tortilla in skillet. On half of the tortilla, place 1/4 cup of cheese and 2-3 tablespoons of vegetables of your choice. Sprinkle with a little more cheese.
6. Fold tortilla in half and press firmly with a spatula, cook two minutes on the first side.
7. Flip and cook on the second side for 2 minutes, or until cheese has melted and tortilla is lightly browned.
8. Repeat spraying, filling, cooking and flipping with remaining tortillas
9. Serve with salsa.

Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods...