



Healthy Living With Head Start Spring into Shape

Get Active in April

After being cooped up inside during the long winter months, everyone is ready for a little fresh air when spring weather starts again. Taking advantage of the warmer days is a great way to get kids up and moving.

- **Digestive health** - Exercise can prevent constipation by keeping our digestive system moving. Taking a walk after dinner is a great way to keep your family healthy.
- **Healthy weight** - When we move and exercise, we use up the calories our food provides instead of storing those calories in fat. Extra fat can lead to serious health complications like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.
- **Social and emotional health** - Physical activity helps build confidence and self esteem. Enjoying some play time as a family can boost everyone's mood.
- **Healthy bone development** - Exercise can help improve our bone strength and prevent bone fractures and bone disease by strengthening bone structure and promoting healthy growth.
- **Cardiovascular fitness** - Like other muscles, our heart gets stronger when we put it to work. Exercising in ways that get our heart pumping and blood flowing will help keep it working longer.

Get out and Play

Everyone should aim to get at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity. Spend quality time together outside exploring, running, playing, and jumping to stay healthy as a family.

Here are some ideas to keep your family active this spring:

Play Tag - Staying active can be as simple as a game of tag. You can make the game more interesting by varying the rules:

- * Playing in teams can be a good way to get other families in your neighborhood involved. Split up by family, shirt colors, or name your own teams.
- * Freeze Tag works well with smaller groups. In this variation, the tagged person must stand still (frozen) until another player tags them to unfreeze them.
- * Color Tag is an interactive way to help children learn colors. When someone is tagged they become frozen. To be unfrozen, a person has to shout out an object they see and the color of that object.

Take a Walk - Walking is free, easy, and almost anyone of any age can take part. This is a great time to go out exploring as a family.

- * Walk with a mission - collect wild flowers and create a pretty bouquet, name different types of trees, or spot birds' nests and other wildlife in your neighborhood.
- * Walks don't have to be a sunny-day-only activity - throw on a raincoat and boots, give everyone an umbrella, and enjoy jumping in the puddles.
- * Walk in different areas and explore new paths to give everyone interesting surroundings to look at and learn about.

Gardening - Gardening is inexpensive, educational, and fun for the whole family. The fun keeps going as everyone gets to tend to the plants and watch them grow.

- * Some soil, a packet of seeds, and time is all it takes to grow herbs, flowers, or even fresh vegetables.
- * Gardening is not only a way to get out and be active, but also teaches children about earth science, plant biology, and where our food comes from.
- * Kids will love watching their plants progress from seeds to blossoms, and finally to food. This is a great way to teach kids about nutrition, too.

Creative Container Gardens

Spring is blooming and it's time for some outside fun! What better way to enjoy the beauty of the season than by planting colorful flowers and vegetables with your children in your outside garden.

Materials Needed:

- * Old laundry basket
- * Newspaper
- * Potting soil
- * Garden shovel
- * Seeds (of your choice)
- * Water and sunshine



Directions:

- * Line the inside of your laundry basket with newspaper to help contain the soil in the basket.
- * Fill the basket 1/2 - 3/4 full with the potting soil.
- * Place seeds on top of the soil and cover with the amount of soil specified on the seed package.
- * Place in a sunny spot and water the seeds daily.



Making Mealtime Memories

Pretzel Butterflies

Pretzel Butterflies have lots of fiber, protein, vitamins, and minerals that will help keep your family healthy. The best part of this snack is how much fun you can have when you put them together.

Ingredients

- * Celery stalks
- * Peanut butter
- * 1/4 cup raisins (optional)
- * 1/2 cup small pretzel twists

Directions

- * Wash and cut celery stalks into 2 inch pieces.
- * Measure 1 tablespoon of peanut butter and spread on each piece of celery.
- * Insert one pretzel twist on each side of the celery for wings.
- * Add 3 raisins (optional) in a row down the middle on top of the peanut butter.
- * Try using different foods for wings and decorations.



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