

# Wellness Roundup

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## Strategies for Raising a Healthy Family

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Nutrition & Wellness  
Committee  
Lang Ranch PTA

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### Helpful Websites:

◆ [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

Great information for the whole family on nutrition, health and exercise.

◆ [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

Information on the new food pyramid and eating tips for adults and kids.



As parents we all strive to raise healthy, happy children. In a world filled with less than healthful temptations it's sometimes difficult; but it's one of the most valuable gifts you can give- a gift that can last a lifetime. A balanced diet, regular exercise and not smoking can eliminate 80% of heart disease and 70% of some cancers writes author Walter Willett, MD in his book 'Eat, Drink and Be Healthy'. Studies have also indicated that children who learn healthier food choices in elementary school will keep up those habits as they age. Here are some strategies to help steer your whole family toward a healthier lifestyle.

**HEALTHY EATING:** Good nutrition is the cornerstone of lifelong health. \*Stock up on healthy snack options and limit junk food in the house. Have fruits and vegetables washed, cut up and ready to

eat. \*Eat dinner as a family- Studies show that families who dine together have healthier eating habits. (See Melissa Dorval's article below for more.)

\*Eat breakfast- Skipping breakfast can affect a child's mood and ability to concentrate. Sugary processed foods can make matters even worse. Try whole grain toaster waffles, yogurt, bananas and whole grain breads with nut butters. \*Be consistent- Offer a variety of healthy options frequently and consistently and eventually your kids will choose foods they enjoy.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** Studies show that people who are active as children are more likely to stay active throughout their lives. \*Make exercise a family activity- Exercising as a family helps build close bonds and will help the whole family get healthier.

\*Make exercise fun- Try to include your child's friends or their favorite music and consider their interests and personality when choosing an activity. \*Motivate with encouragement- Don't make exercise a punishment or chore; try to make every active experience a positive one and build on successes.

**STRESS MANAGEMENT:** Adults and children experience stress and anxiety- learning how to handle stress when you're young can help prevent future health problems. \*Keep your cool- Don't overreact to stressful situations. Teach children to think before they act and to consider alternative ways to solve problems. Teach them strategies for controlling their temper and dealing with anger and frustration.

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## FAMILY MEALTIMES: BACK TO BASICS By Melissa Dorval, R.D.

It's the end of summertime. No more of those lazy night barbeque dinners, as it's right to bed after homework and baths. With all the extra chores, such as homework and preparing lunches for the next school day, it's no wonder that family meals may be the

first to go by the wayside. However, in addition to strengthening your family ties and keeping track of your child's daily life, family meals can actually lead to better physical and mental health for your children. Studies show that frequent family meals improve the

nutritional intake of our children and decrease their risk for unhealthy weight-management practices and substance abuse. A Harvard study concluded that eating family dinners together on most days of the week was

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## FAMILY MEALTIMES: BACK TO BASICS . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

associated with healthier diets; higher amounts of nutrient intake such as calcium, fiber, iron, vitamins B, C and E, as well as an overall lower consumption of dietary fat. Another study, published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, found that children who ate family meals consumed more fruits, vegetables and fewer snack foods than those who ate separately from their families. These children also tend to do better in school, which is of course important to all of us Lang Ranch parents. When you cook and serve meals at home you will have more control over the quality and quantity of your family's food choices.

It is important to be cognizant of the fact that children tend to model your behavior and mimic your attitudes

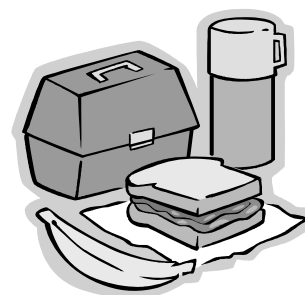
about food. Your kids will not perceive healthy eating as important if it is not something they see you doing. To make family meal times more meaningful and conversations more dynamic, turn off the TV, computer and any video games during the family meal.

We all know time is of the essence, so go ahead and keep your meals simple yet still nutritious and interesting. Offer a variety of foods from the major food groups. Consider cooking on the weekends and doubling up your favorite recipes, enjoying one meal now and freeze the other to enjoy at some other evening when you don't have time or are simply too tired to cook. Also, why not involve your children in the family meal preparation; after all, team work is an

excellent skill to nurture while your children are young. Time spent enjoying meals with your family can help your children form positive attitudes about food and eating and help create wonderful family memories that will last a lifetime.

**Bon Appetit!**

By Melissa Dorval, R.D.  
Registered Dietitian



fruit in heavy syrup.

\*Use **WHOLE GRAIN** breads or crackers. Refined breads are missing valuable antioxidants and fiber.

\*Limit sending flavored milk or sweet drinks and instead send non/low fat milk or water.

\*Take your kids to the market with you and teach them to make their own healthy choices! This important lesson will carry them through their lifetime.

## Healthy Lunches = Happy Wranglers . . . by Lisa Ross

Packing a healthy lunch that your kids will love is so important for so many reasons! According to the American Dietetic Association, "what you pack in your child's lunchbox can determine his or her appetite for learning. Kids who are nutritionally fit are more likely to have the energy, stamina and self-esteem that enhance their ability to learn." Choosing foods that are low in saturated fats, have little or

no high fructose corn syrup, that are high in fiber and nutrient dense is key. Here are some additional guidelines to ensure your child's lunch is healthy:

\*Include a **PROTEIN** food; such as low fat, lean meat, tuna or natural peanut butter. Avoid fatty meats and processed spreads with added sugars.

\*Pack a **FRESH** fruit and/or vegetable instead of sugary fruit rolls or canned

## Healthy and Delicious Zucchini Muffins

Using mini-muffin pans for these works well for recess snacks. Have your kids help you make them— after they taste them, their opinion of zucchini may change for the better! Add 3 Tbsp. flax seeds for an extra-healthy option. Use cooking spray on pans.

1 whole egg plus 2 egg whites

1 1/2 cups sugar

1/3 cup vegetable oil

2/3 cup nonfat plain yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups whole wheat flour

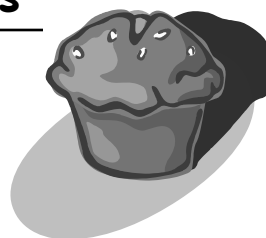
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons baking soda

3/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

2 cups grated fresh zucchini



Blend wet ingredients, (except zucchini) then dry ingredients in separate bowls first. Combine wet & dry ingredients, stir well and then fold in zucchini. Pour

into prepared muffin pans and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes. Makes 24 regular or 48 mini muffins. They freeze great. Enjoy! Lisa Ross

## BUILDING RESILIENCE IN OUR CHILDREN- Strategies to Help Our Children Manage Every Day Challenges

By Karen Begun, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

As parents, we want our children to be happy, safe and secure. We can't protect our children from all of the emotional hurts and traumas of childhood, but we can help them thrive by teaching them the skills of resilience. According to the American Psychological Association, building resilience- the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats and other significant sources of stress- can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. We can all develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned over time. Following are 10 research-based resilience skills:

**1. Make connections:** Teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends.

**2. Help your child by having them help others:** Children who feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some tasks that your child can master.

**3. Maintain a daily routine:** Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives.

Encourage your child to develop their own routines.

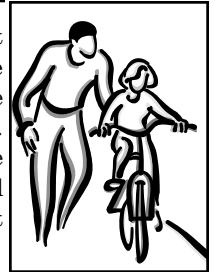
**4. Take a break:** Teach your child how to take a break from worrying by focusing on something else. Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be the news, the Internet, overheard conversations or peer problems.

**5. Teach your child self-care:** Make yourself a good example and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Build in unstructured time during the day to relax. Caring for oneself and having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times.

**6. Move toward your goals:** Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then move toward them one step at a time. Giving your child praise and encouragement will focus your child on what she has accomplished and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges. At school, break down large assignments into small achievable goals.

**7. Nurture a positive self-view:** Help your child remember ways that they have successfully handled hardships in the past and then help them understand that these past challenges help them build the strength to handle future challenges. Help your

child learn to trust themselves to solve problems and make appropriate decisions. Teach your child to see the humor in life and the ability to laugh at one's self.



**8. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook:** Even when your child is facing very painful events, help them look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. An optimistic and positive outlook enables your child to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times.

**9. Look for opportunities for self-discovery:** Tough times are often when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever he is feeling can teach him "what he is made of."

**10. Accept that change is a part of living:** Change can often be scary for children. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

Developing resilience is a personal journey and you should use your knowledge of your own children to guide them on their journey.

## How to Fuel for After School Sports

By Debbie Aleman, cpt

If your child is active in after school sports, how do you make sure they're getting all the right foods, at the right times and in the right amounts? The more kids exercise, the more calories they need to fuel the additional demands on their respiratory, cardiovascular, muscular and skeletal systems. Here are some guidelines. First of all, do not limit fats in an active child's diet. Fat is a major source of energy and provides most of the fuel for endurance events, as well as being essential for hormone production. Just make sure you choose

healthy fats like nuts or nut butters. Stay away from junk foods and foods high in saturated or trans fats. Encourage kids to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise, and have them consume extra carbohydrates about one hour before a game or practice. Make sure kids eat a balanced breakfast and lunch and encourage healthy snacking to ensure adequate energy supplies throughout the day. Don't forget to re-fuel right after a game- the first 15 to 60 minutes after exercise your body is most efficient at



replenishing energy stores. Have a light meal that's rich in carbohydrates and follow it with a balanced dinner that contains complex carbohydrates, some healthy fat and lean protein to help promote muscle recovery. Pack an energy bar in your gear bag so you always have a healthy snack handy.

# KID'S CORNER

What does 'HEALTHY' mean to you?

We all know that our Lang Ranch Wrangler's are a pretty special bunch of kids, but even we were impressed by the great answers we received when we asked the kids this question:

*"What does HEALTHY mean to you?"*

"Healthy is good to me because you get to eat many tasteful fruits and other treats. McDonald's, Burger King and Taco Bell is what kind of food you do not want to eat. Here is some good healthy treats to eat- apples, oranges, grapes, corn and much more. That's what you should eat." Alexander Golden - 4th grade

"I think that being healthy means to be fit and strong" Dominique Nguyen - 5th grade

"Healthy means strong bones and good teeth, big heart and smart brain, huge muscles and a lot of exercise!" Brendan Reader - 4th grade

"Healthy means you have to eat vegetables and whole wheat bread and exercise!" Katelyn Ross - 1st grade

"Healthy means to me well being. Being healthy is not just fruit and vegetables. It is exercising, sports and eating the right food. You should have a good balance of it also. That's what healthy means to me." Ceilidh Croall - 4th grade

"Veggies are good for you." Alexis - 2nd grade

"I think being healthy means you will hit the ball and kick the ball much harder and you will get a lot of exercise and you will be happy and feel good." Haley Begun - 2nd grade

"Healthy means getting exercise and eating the right amount of each food group." Eliana Lasarow - 5th grade

"Strength and energy." Sean Jacobson - 4th grade

"Healthy means eating healthy and exercising." Alex Dye - 4th grade

## Strategies for Raising a Healthy Family...continued from page 1

**\*Keep communication open-** Engage your kids in meaningful conversation. Be sympathetic- not judgmental or dismissive of their problems and feelings.

**SPEND TIME IN NATURE:** Research has shown that more time spent outdoors leads to increased physical activity and psychological well-being. Time spent outdoors, especially as a family, encourages vigorous exercise, healthy relationships and creativity, as well as respect for the natural world. Play freeze tag at the park, have a campout in the backyard or take advantage of the many hiking trails in the area. Take time to notice the beautiful details that surround you and let your kids set the pace.

**TEACH BY EXAMPLE:** The best way to teach healthy values as a parent is to express them in your daily life and in your interactions with your children. Treat your body with care, treat each other with respect and teach children to respect and appreciate the world they live in. Help children understand that a



healthy body is a valuable gift and that they should take good care of it.

We will be expanding on many of these topics in future issues of the 'Wellness Roundup'. Look for articles on family-friendly hiking trails, how to make healthy choices at fast food restaurants; tips and recipes for healthy breakfasts and after school snacks, and much more. If you have any questions for our committee, or if there's a topic you'd like us to cover, please contact us through "PTA Hotmail" at:

langranchpta@adelphia.net

We look forward to your input!

The Nutrition & Wellness Committee