HeadStartNews

Soups and Stews

Hearty soups containing meats, vegetables, or legumes can be the main part of a meal. Or combine a soup with a sandwich, fruit or vegetable, and a beverage to make a complete meal. Soups and stews can be a quick meal for tired working parents, a good way to sneak new vegetables into a child's diet, or an important part of a weight loss plan.

Commercial soups are often high in salt and fat, and low in nutrients. For example, 1 cup of packaged or canned soup can contain 900 mg sodium—more sodium than a child needs in a whole day. Most commercial soups contain only small pieces of meat and vegetables. Try making your own soups. Homemade soups are usually more hearty, and you control the amount of salt and fat.

To make soup (homemade or canned) more hearty and healthful:

- Add rice, noodles, barley, dried beans, or potatoes.
- Float a piece of cheese on top right before serving.
- Add vegetables such as turnips, mushrooms, or okra. Soups are a great way to introduce new vegetables to children.
- Keep a container in the freezer for leftover meats and vegetables. Add them to soups or stews.

All cultures seem to have a favorite stew. A few well-known stews are goulash, gumbo, chili, paella, jambalaya, and stroganoff. A stew is a rich dish full of meat and vegetables, held together by a gravy. Cook stews in the oven, on top of a stove, or in a crockery pot. The secret of a good stew is slow, gentle simmering in a heavy pot.

Soups have more liquid than stews. The secret to a good soup is to start with a hearty broth or stock. Canned broth is often high in fat and salt, but the fat can be skimmed off. Low-salt canned broths are also available. Homemade broth is easy to prepare. Just add water, onion, and celery to meat scraps, such as chicken. Simmer for at least 1/2 hour. Broth freezes easily. Add noodles, rice, pasta, dried beans, and almost any kind of vegetable to the broth to make soup.

To lower the fat content of soups and stews:

- Start with low-fat ingredients.
- Precook meats and remove visible fat before adding to recipes.
- Prepare soups and stews in advance. Chill. The fat will harden at the top. Remove fat with a slotted spoon.

Chicken-Vegetable Soup

Use any vegetable in this soup, but try to introduce a new one now and then.

What You Need:

- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 pound boneless and skinless chicken breast, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 medium white turnip, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1/2 pound carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 parsnip, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 5 cups chicken broth

How To Fix:

1. In fry pan, cook onion in small amount of water, just until tender. Add chicken and stir.
2. Add potatoes, turnips, carrots, and parsnip. Cook about 2 minutes. Put all ingredients into large, heavy pot.
3. Add broth. Salt and pepper as desired. Bring to boil.
4. Reduce heat and partially cover pot. Simmer at least 30 minutes. Cooking longer will improve the flavor. Serves 8. (113 calories and 1 fat gram per serving)

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Infant Exercise

Set aside the bouncy seat, stroller, baby seat and playpen and let your baby roll around in a safe place on the floor. Babies that are confined roll over and sit later than babies that have more freedom to exercise.

TV can keep toddlers from playing and making friends. It's okay to let your toddler watch a few special programs, but TV is not a good babysitter for toddlers. Toddlers can become hooked on TV and watch it for hours.

Make physical activity a part of every day, even for infants and toddlers.

Early Morning Wakers

Is there an early morning waker in your family? Many young children, who wake before the rest of the family, will keep themselves busy talking, singing or playing with stuffed animals until a later hour. At about the age of three, a child is able to understand that waking you too early without a special reason isn't okay.

If a child insists on waking early, try:

- Setting an alarm clock or radio to go off when it's okay to wake you.
- Leaving a special box of toys or books beside the bed.

Make sure there will be enough light in the room in the morning. This may mean leaving on a low-watt bulb in the winter.

Strangers

It's normal for an eight-month-old child to hide against a parent's shoulder and not even look at another person. At about eight months, an infant's memory grows enough to know that parents are the ones who give comfort and support. But at this stage, an infant may still not be sure about other people. This is a good sign of attachment between an infant and parents. Also, when a baby loses sight of his parent, he thinks they may be gone forever. Infants don't have any sense of time. As infants mature, they learn people still exist when they can't be seen.

When your infant goes through this stage, don't force him to go to another person. Accept your infant's fear and reassure him that you are there. Allow your child time to get used to the new person. Stay close and show your infant that you trust the other person. Finally, be calm and understanding. Your child will slowly get used to other people and once again be friendly and outgoing. This will happen faster if you are patient.

A preschool child is still dependent on you but can remain calm for minor separations. He can understand you are going some place and will come back. He begins to have a sense of time and knows there are others he can trust.

Why Mommy?

"Why is the sun out, Mommy?" "Why is Tommy a boy?" "Why" questions aren't always easy to answer and too many questions can wear a parent out quickly.

When children ask questions they are learning to think for themselves. Instead of accepting spoon-fed facts from adults, children learn to think about answers they receive. This leads to curiosity. Curiosity is the desire to learn; a great gift adults can promote in children.

Parents begin to ask "why" of their child around the age of two. "Why are you crying?" "Why can't you sit still for one minute?" Children begin to know that "why" questions are most often followed with a "because." Around the age of three, children begin to ask their own "why" questions.

Children may first ask just "why," but soon learn to add a sentence. "Why won't it go?" It takes a while to figure out how to use the word "why" in a way that can be answered wisely.

Parents don't have to answer all questions. Some "why" questions don't have answers. Sometimes it's best to answer "That's just the way it is." Then go on with another sentence. This helps a child figure out that some questions don't have easy answers. Short and simple answers are best to "why" questions. Children need to feel safe in asking questions. They don't need a lecture. Children will ask when they want to know more.

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PEAS

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INJURY PREVENTION

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO WARM UP YOUR MUSCLES BEFORE STRETCHING TO HELP REDUCE STIFFNESS AND POTENTIAL INJURY. AFTER EACH EXERCISE SESSION COOL DOWN AND STRETCH TO PREVENT INJURY. CROSS-TRAINING GIVES YOUR BODY AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WORKOUT. OVERTRAINING THE SAME MUSCLE GROUPS LEADS TO AN INCREASED RISK FOR INJURY. STAY HEALTHY AND AVOID BOREDOM BY INCORPORATING A VARIETY OF FITNESS ACTIVITIES INTO YOUR EXERCISE PROGRAM.

TIP: REMEMBER THE RICE METHOD FOR SWELLING MANAGEMENT-REST, ICE, COMPRESSION AND ELEVATION.

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