



## Celebrate National Nutrition Month® 2023

**THE THEME FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2023** is “Fuel for the Future.” When we make changes to our own practices, we also model better behaviors for the children we care for. As Hippocrates said, “Let thy food be thy medicine,” here are some tips to launch you into a healthy future!

### GO, GO, H<sub>2</sub>O!

Drinking water helps in nearly every aspect of wellness but drinking the recommended amount of water per day can be tough. Fill a large bottle or pitcher and make it a goal to drink it all by the end of the day.

### CHOOSE FOOD OVER SUPPLEMENTS

Most of the good things our bodies need come from food, not store-bought supplements. Practice serving and eating a wide variety of fruits and veggies, whole grains and healthy fats and you may not need supplements at all.

### OPT FOR COLOR

When in doubt, add some color to the plate—natural color, that is. Bright

greens from crunchy vegetables or vibrant reds from tangy fruit will not only make your meal beautiful, but they’ll also give you a healthy boost.

### MOVE YOUR BODY

Nutrition doesn’t end at what we eat. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages us to make exercise an integral part of our lives. Try a new activity to keep things fresh and exciting.

### SHOP THE PERIMETER

Shopping a supermarket’s outside aisles ensures that you’re getting healthy foods like produce, meat and dairy rather than processed foods. When you move to the inner aisles, most, if not all, of the products contain unnecessary additives and sugar.

This month gives us an opportunity to reflect inward and make tangible changes to our diets and activity, as well as those of the children we care for.

— Adapted from *Nationaltoday.com*



## Cultural Cuisines > Korea <



### Origins & Roles of Food

Korean food is influenced by a mixture of ancient traditions, the natural environment, social trends, religion and outside influences such as the chile which is not native but has become a staple in many dishes.

### Food Custom

Many Koreans hold the ancient belief that food is the best medicine. This philosophy still persists and it is believed that health and sickness are directly related to the food we eat. Foods in a variety of colors (red, green, white, yellow and black) are served to represent the five elements that make up the universe.

### Staple Foods

Korean radish, cabbage, cucumber, potato, sweet potato, spinach, bean sprouts, seaweed, zucchini, mushrooms, tofu, soybeans, lotus root, apples, melons, berries, varieties of Asian pears, rice, fish/seafood along with spices like red/black pepper, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, onion, chili paste and mustard are staple foods. Popular dishes include: Bulgogi, Korean barbequed beef; Bibimbap, a rice bowl with sautéed veggies, tofu or meat and topped with a fried egg; fried chicken with sweet and spicy sauces; Kimchi, a fermented dish, usually made with napa cabbage.

### Dining Etiquette

Soup is always part of any meal; Banchan are lots of little side dishes spread across the table for communal eating.

## INSIDE:

- FRAC Celebrates CACFP Week
- Farm Fresh Foods
- Understanding Asthma
- Recipes

# Food Research Action Center (FRAC) Celebrates CACFP Week!

**MARCH 12–18 is NATIONAL CACFP WEEK!** To celebrate, FRAC is helping to raise awareness of how the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) works to combat hunger and bring healthy foods to the table for children in child care homes, centers and in afterschool and summer feeding programs across the country.

You, too, can get actively involved by spreading the word on the importance of CACFP, both in terms of the number of children it serves and its positive impact on young children in child care.

## WHAT CACFP DOES

CACFP uses \$3 billion annually in federal reimbursements to provide nutritious meals and snacks, as well as learning experiences, to 4 million children in child care and afterschool programs.

The healthy food provided by CACFP makes a substantial contribution towards meeting the nutritional needs of children in child care, particularly low-income children.

By paying for nutritious meals and snacks for eligible children enrolled at participating child care centers, family child care homes and afterschool programs, CACFP plays an important role in improving the quality of child care programs and in making them more affordable for low-income parents.

CACFP assures that children in child care receive good nutrition through ongoing training, technical assistance and support.

## WHY CACFP IS IMPORTANT

Millions of children across the country live in households that struggle with food insecurity. CACFP plays an important role in ensuring children receive the nutrition they need for a healthy start in life.

Childhood overweight and obesity, an issue that disproportionately affects low-income children, continues to be one of the nation’s most pressing public health problems.

Nationwide, preschoolers are consuming diets too high in calories, saturated fat and sweets, and too low in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.



Intervening in early childhood and providing high quality child care programming is critically important as lifelong health behaviors are developed during childhood.

## HOW WE CAN REACH MORE CHILDREN WITH CACFP

Unfortunately, healthy CACFP meals and snacks are out of reach for millions of young children in child care. Across the nation, half of the family child care homes operate without CACFP support for healthy meals, and although participation among child care centers has increased, not all eligible children have access to the program. In one study, researchers found that 60 percent of randomly sampled, non-participating centers were located in areas where the median household income was below the federal poverty level.

A well-conceived reauthorization bill, focused on the right program improvements for CACFP, can help to reduce hunger, reduce childhood overweight and obesity, improve child nutrition and wellness, and enhance child development and school readiness. Congress can strengthen and expand CACFP, including by allowing an additional healthy meal or snack for children in care and streamlining program operations by reducing for-profit child care center eligibility determinations from monthly to biannually.

USDA has excellent nutrition education materials in English and Spanish available free to all CACFP providers. Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/child-care-organization>

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Understanding Asthma

**ASTHMA, A CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE**, causes airways that carry air in and out of the lungs to become inflamed and narrowed. This can cause wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest.

Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood. The exact cause of asthma is unknown but genetics and environment likely play a role. Asthma can cause children to miss school and be hospitalized, but treatments can help manage asthma.

Asthma happens when a child is exposed to an asthma trigger, which sets off or worsens symptoms. Asthma triggers may be different for each child and can change over time.

**Allergic asthma** is caused by allergens, substances that cause an allergic reaction, such as dust mites, mold, pets, pollen from grass, trees and weeds, and waste from pests such as cockroaches and mice.

**Nonallergic asthma** is caused by triggers that are not allergens, such as breathing in cold air, certain medications, household chemicals, infections such as colds and flu, outdoor air pollution and tobacco smoke.

**Exercise-induced asthma** occurs during physical exercise, especially when the air is dry.

Factors that raise the risk of asthma:

- **Being exposed to secondhand smoke** in utero or when young.
- **Genetics and family history**; if one parent has it, especially the mother.
- **Race or ethnicity**; Black, African American and Puerto Ricans are at highest risk.
- **Having other diseases or conditions** such as obesity and allergies.
- **Having frequent viral respiratory infections** when young.

The symptoms of asthma in children include; chest tightness, coughing, especially at night or early morning, breathing problems, such as shortness of breath, rapid breathing or gasping for air, feeling tired or irritable, dark



circles under the eyes, wheezing, which causes a whistling sound when exhaling and for infants trouble eating or sucking. These symptoms can range from mild to severe and may happen often or only occasionally.

When children have an asthma attack or flare-up, their symptoms get worse. The attack may be gradual or sudden and can be life-threatening. Warning signs for getting immediate medical attention include severe

coughing, serious breathing problems and turning very pale or blue in the face, lips and/or fingernails.

Asthma can be difficult to diagnose in young children and has similar symptoms as a respiratory infection.

A child's health care provider may use many tools to diagnose asthma; physical exam, medical history, chest x-ray, lung function tests, including spirometry, to test how well the lungs work, allergy skin or blood tests, if there is a history of allergies.

If a child has asthma, their health care provider will create a treatment plan to manage symptoms and prevent asthma attacks, such as:

- **Strategies to avoid triggers.** For example, if tobacco smoke is a trigger, do not allow anyone to smoke in your home or car.
- **Short-term relief medicines**, also called quick-relief medicines. They help prevent or relieve symptoms during an asthma attack. They include an inhaler to have with a child at all times. It may also include other types of medicines which work quickly to help open the child's airways.
- **Control medicines.** They work by reducing airway inflammation and preventing narrowing of the airways. Not all children will take control medicines. The need depends on how severe the asthma is and how often the child has symptoms.

If a child has a severe attack and the short-term relief medicines do not work, get medical help right away.

— Adapted from  
<https://medlineplus.gov/asthmainchildren.html>

## Garlic Sesame Spinach

Garlic, grated .....	1 clove	Rice vinegar .....	1 tsp
Scallions, thinly sliced .....	2	Sugar .....	½ tsp
Toasted sesame seeds .....	2 tsp	Spinach .....	1 pound
Toasted sesame oil .....	2 tsp	Extra virgin olive oil .....	1 Tbsp
Soy sauce .....	2 tsp		

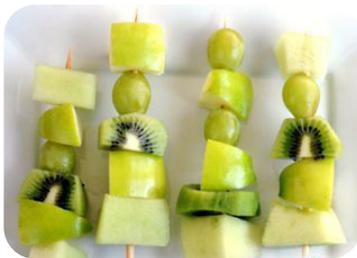
1. In a medium bowl stir together garlic, scallions, sesame seeds, sesame oil, soy sauce, vinegar and sugar.
2. Roughly chop spinach into large pieces. Add olive oil to a large skillet over medium heat. Add spinach and cook until bright green and wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Use tongs to transfer spinach to the bowl with sauce and toss to coat.
3. Let cool for 5 minutes, then taste and adjust seasonings as desired.

Yield: 6 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable.

— *Delish.com*

## St Patrick's Day Snack Ideas:



### IRISH ROUND TOWERS

Cut a variety of green fruits such as kiwi, apple, pear and honeydew melon into chunks and place on a serving tray with green grapes. Give children a long wood skewer with blunt ends and encourage them to skewer the chunks of fruit to make a tall, round tower.



### GREEN DEVILED EGGS

Make green deviled eggs by simply adding green food coloring to the egg yolk mixture in your favorite deviled egg recipe. Alternatively, you can dye the egg whites after hard boiling them and removing the yolks by simply soaking them in a glass of water to which 3-4 drops of green food dye and a teaspoon of white vinegar has been added. Pat egg whites dry before filling with yolk mixture.



### SHAMROCK PIZZAS

Make small pizzas using English muffins and pesto for the sauce. Slice green bell peppers, turned on their side, into rounds. Remove seeds and each slice will resemble a clover leaf. Top each pizza with one slice.



Fuel & Fitness

## FARM FRESH FOODS

Teaching nutrition to kids starts with exposure to real, farm fresh foods found in nature.

**Cut out pictures** of a wide variety of foods, both fresh, whole foods and processed foods. Have 2 baskets, one labeled “farm fresh foods” and one labeled “factory foods.”



Ask children to sort the food pictures into the correct baskets. Discuss how our bodies are nourished and how we feel when we eat more farm fresh foods compared to processed foods.

— *Adapted from: Primal Peak*



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Food **Q.** Why do leprechauns love to garden?  
Funny **A.** They have green thumbs!