



## Taming the Holiday “Gimmies”



Flashy holiday ads in the mail, on TV and in stores can prompt the holiday “gimmies!” in children.

“The gimmies can appear in children as young as 3 years. However, whether a child outgrows it depends on how it’s handled by the parents,” explained Doniese Wilcox, Certified Family Life Educator at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center.

### **Empathize and acknowledge your child’s enthusiasm over a toy.**

When visiting a store, say “Wow, wouldn’t that be fun to have? Let’s write it down so we can remember it

for a holiday/birthday gift.” Don’t cave if your child is pressuring you to buy the item.

### **Prepare your child before entering a store.**

Say, “Today, we need to pick up eggs and milk — no treats.” Occasionally, it’s OK to get a small treat. Delayed gratification allows for a child’s appreciation during those times when you can afford a treat, both financially and on the right occasion.

### **Teach children to shift the focus from themselves.**

Encourage children to sort through old toys and clothes to donate. Keep a change jar where family members toss loose change in during the season. Let your children count it before donating.

### **Give gifts that are meaningful and timeless.**

Each year, wrap a piece of beautiful china or a tool for your child. By age 18, he or she will have a complete set. Donate to your child’s college fund each year. Pay for a future summer camp or music lessons.

### **Spend quality time with family.**

“One reason parents indulge their children is because they feel guilty that busy schedules prevent them from spending quality time with their kids.” Coupon books filled with family activities, such as bike rides, going out for a meal or helping mommy or daddy finish a project, promote togetherness.



## Spicy Baked Sweet Potato Fries

Source: sparkpeople.com

Minutes to prepare: 10

Minutes to cook: 20

Number of servings: 4

### Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, washed and cut lengthwise into strips
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder

### Directions

1. Line cookie sheet with aluminum foil or parchment paper.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F.
3. In a small mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix to evenly coat potato strips.
4. Place potato strips on lined cookie sheet (allow space between individual strips for even cooking).
5. Bake for 20 minutes (or until potatoes become crispy), turning strips every 5 to 7 minutes (or as needed).

## Staying Fit at Holiday Time

Fitting exercise into the holiday season is possible. It simply takes more planning and creativity. “Keep exercise in the front of your mind,” said Tami Wattnem, Avera Personal Trainer. “The day before, think, how can I fit in fitness for my family and me? How can I keep everyone healthy and feeling better?”

Here are six strategies to fit fitness into your holiday routine.

- **Start a fitness tradition.** Look for a holiday 5K run or other fitness event in your town or your destination for the holidays. Gather your family members and friends to participate.
- **Look at holiday lights — on foot.** Pick a neighborhood that’s known for its holiday light display. Then wander through the neighborhood on foot instead of in a car.
- **Plan 30 minutes of family fun time.** Before you start the next holiday movie, plan a short indoor activity. Think outside the box: Create an obstacle course or relay races in your house (plan and play with caution). Even 30 minutes of activity can be effective. “Exercise can be short bursts several times throughout the day,” Wattnem said.
- **Take the long way.** When shopping for gifts at the mall or a major shopping center, plan your walking route differently. Instead of opting for the shortest route, plan the longest distance between each store, and park on the far side of the lot.
- **Bundle up and head outdoors.** Outdoor winter activities like sledding, snowball fights and ice skating are calorie-burners that don’t feel like exercise.
- **Walk around the airport terminal.** If you’re flying for the holidays, wear your tennis shoes or pack them in an easy-to-reach spot in your carry-on luggage. Store your luggage in an airport locker and get in some steps before your next flight.