

# FALL FAMILY

## Evening Activity Ideas

*by Sarah Muntel, RD*

The leaves are changing and it's getting darker outside. As summer rolls out and you are trading your flip flops for boots, it's time to rethink how you spend your evenings for some fitness and fun.

With all the adventures and opportunities that come with fall, you don't want to "fall" into the routine of watching T.V. and eating ice cream on the couch every day. So, grab your kids and find some ways to make fall fun!

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## What's Cooking in the Kitchen?

Cool nights can lead to heavy high-calorie meals. Let's face it – it's time to start planning a healthy fall. Utilizing the outside grill can allow you to enjoy the cooler weather, and cooking with the whole family is a great way to add in some extra quality family time. Check out the below recipes for fun snack and dinner ideas!

### First Step: Get Moving!

The cooler evenings make movement a little easier. Without the hot sun, kids are more likely to want to engage in outside activities. Take a few moments each evening for some fun movement! Try something new each week to keep things entertaining and balanced.

- **Evening Walk** – While walks with the family are already fun, try adding a challenge to spice things up a bit. Decide to collect leaves from different trees or challenge your kids to find an outside object with each letter of the alphabet. You can even try a penny hike! Flip a coin and if it lands on heads, you go left. If it lands on tails, you go right.
- **Fitness Challenge** – Fall is the perfect time to get outside and try a new physical activity. Try an evening of tennis, start a family jogging challenge or have a family basketball game. This is also a popular time of year for turkey trots and fun runs. You never know what your kids may enjoy and this is the perfect time to expose them to new things.
- **New Outdoor Games** – How about Corn hole, Frisbee golf or backyard croquet? An organized game can be new and exciting and will keep everyone wanting more!
- **Involve Others** – Involve your neighbors in fun fall activities! It is likely that they are looking for something similar. Backyard volleyball or kickball could be a fun neighborhood event. You can even host a bonfire and encourage the kids to run around or complete a fall-themed scavenger hunt for fall leaves, acorns and more.

Regardless of what activity you choose, it is important to keep kids active throughout the fall months. Limiting screen time is important so kids are encouraged to move more. Many kids struggle during the cooler months to stay active, so out-of-the-box activities can be a good plan. A few creative ideas can go a long way.



### Steak Dry Rub

*Recipe idea from AllRecipes.com*

#### Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. smoked paprika
- 2 Tbsp. onion powder
- 2 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 2 Tbsp. coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin



#### Directions:

Mix kosher salt, smoked paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, oregano, black pepper, brown sugar and cumin together in a sealable container. Seal container and shake to mix. Cover meat with the spice blend and rub deeply into the meat. Allow meat to sit for 15-20 minutes before grilling. Cook the steaks for 4-6 minutes on each side.

## Peanut Butter Energy Balls

Recipe idea from *EatingWell.com*

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup natural peanut butter or other nut butter
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips
- ¼ cup unsweetened coconut



### Directions:

Combine oats, peanut butter (*or other nut butter*), honey, chocolate chips and coconut in a medium bowl, then stir well. Using a 1-tablespoon measuring spoon, roll the mixture into balls. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to five days or in the freezer for up to three months.

## Pork with Sweet Potatoes

Recipe from *TasteofHome.com*

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 pork tenderloin (about 1 lb.)
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 2 medium sweet potatoes (about 1 lb.), peeled and cubed
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 1 can (14 ½ oz.) reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 medium apple, sliced



### Directions:

In a shallow bowl, mix flour, salt and pepper. Cut tenderloin into 12 slices, then pound each with a meat mallet to ¼-in. thickness. Dip pork in flour mixture to coat both sides, shaking off any excess flour. In a large skillet coated with cooking spray, heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown pork in batches and remove from pan. Add sweet potatoes, cranberries and broth to the same pan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, 4-6 minutes or until potatoes are almost tender. Stir in mustard. Return pork to pan, then add apple and green onions. Return to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, 4-6 minutes or until pork and sweet potatoes are tender.

## Have Fall Fun Inside!

Sometimes, the weather isn't perfect in the fall. What can you do when you're stuck inside and don't want to watch T.V.? Try these tips and tricks to ensure that your kids have fun and your family can take a break from digital devices.

### Use Your Creative Side:

There are so many ways to use your creativity. Painting, modeling with clay and doing coloring books are easy ways to pass the time. Mix things up and decide to have a family art show or make a theme each night to make these activities more fun. You can also try painting leaves, making fall leaf mason jar luminaries or crafting greeting cards for loved ones. Or, think about taking it up a notch. Try something you haven't done before like making bracelets or scrapbooking.

### Look for Other Activities:

T.V. and video games definitely aren't the only things to do inside. If you're looking for fun ways to pass the time, think about activities that will engage your family and spark their interests. Instead of doing the same indoor activities you do all the time, try these unique activities to spice things up:

- Make slime from pumpkin guts
- Try an online science experiment
- Write a play
- Play a board game
- Work on a challenging puzzle
- Create fall-themed decorations
- Plant an indoor herb garden
- Toast pumpkin seeds
- Create a list of things you are grateful for





# Get Creative with Pumpkin Gut Slime!

Idea from [CraftyMorning.com](http://CraftyMorning.com)

Making slime is an easy activity and it is fun for the whole family! This hands-on project is a great way to limit screen time and keep your kids occupied for hours.

## What You Will Need:

- 1 airtight container
- 5 oz. bottle of clear glue
- ½ cup water
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 Tbsp. contact solution
- Pumpkin seeds
- Pumpkin pie fragrance oil
- Orange food coloring
- Small bowl



## Directions:

1. In a bowl, pour the entire bottle of clear glue.
2. Add ½ cup water, then add baking soda and stir.
3. Drop a few drops of orange food coloring into the bowl and stir.
4. Pour in some pumpkin seeds, then add a few drops of pumpkin pie fragrance oil.
5. Add 1 Tbsp. of contact solution to the bowl. The mixture will instantly begin to form and get sticky, but don't panic.
6. Mix the solution in the bowl until it starts to form the slime. Knead the slime until it is no longer sticky. Store in an airtight container.



## Make This Fall One to Remember

It's your time to make memories with your kids this fall and enjoy quality family time. Remember, nothing needs to be perfect. Just focus on some out-of-the-box fun and try something new once in a while. Time goes fast, so make these moments with your kids last!

### *About the Author:*

*Sarah Muntel, RD, is a Registered Dietitian from Indianapolis, IN. She has worked in the field of bariatrics for the past 18 years, working with both bariatric and metabolic surgery patients as well as medical weight loss patients. Sarah is an active member of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) and frequently contributes to OAC's Weight Matters Magazine and Your Weight Matters Blog.*



# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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