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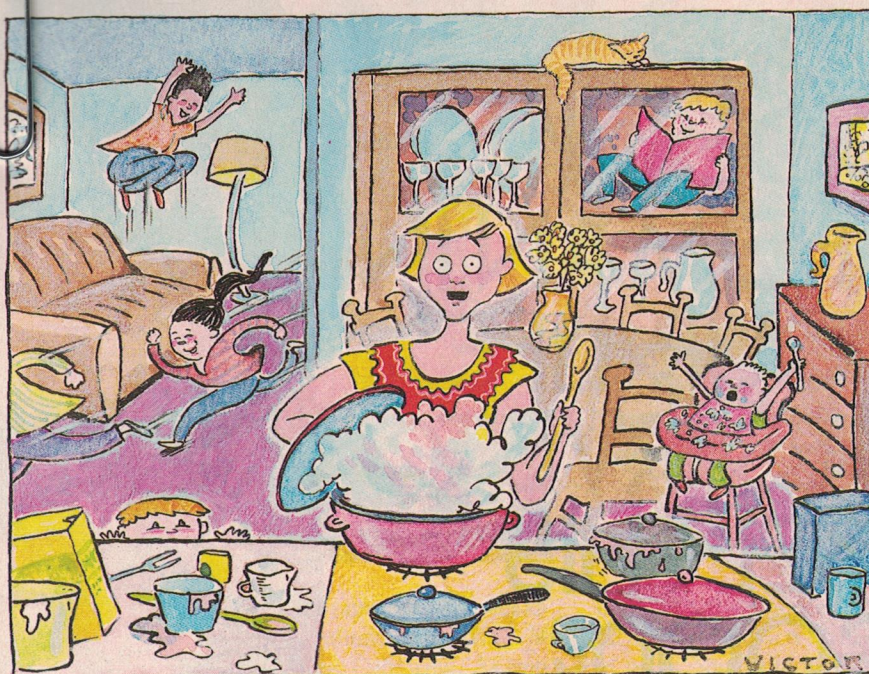
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Kid's Meals

Getting dinner and your kids to the table at the same time is a challenge. Mom's busy one night, and the kids have little league the next. Two new products claim to have found the answer: Kid's Kitchen and My Own Meal.

Both products are microwave meals that can be ready in minutes. They come in child-friendly packages with illustrated directions.

Some choices earn high marks for nutrition, but plenty don't. Hormel makes seven different meals in the Kid's Kitchen line. Top marks go to spaghetti rings in sauce, and spaghetti and meatballs. Both dinners are low in fat, with 0 and 26 percent of calories from fat, respectively. Their sodium contents are reasonable at 500 milligrams or less. My Own Meal offers five choices that range from 16

to 45 percent fat calories, and sodium contents from 440 to 600 milligrams. The best picks are Chicken Please, 16 percent fat and 550 milligrams sodium, and My Favorite Pasta, 31 percent fat and 480 milligrams sodium.

Kid's Kitchen costs between \$1.09 and \$1.19, while My Own Meals range from \$1.99 to \$2.69—expensive compared to canned pasta, such as Campbell's Franco-

American Spaghetti, which costs less than \$0.49 to \$0.99 for about the same size serving. This standby for busy moms is still a bargain, and the fat content of some Franco-American products is less than 30 percent of calories. But the sodium content soars between 800 and 1,000 milligrams per serving.

The National Academy of Sciences recommends safe and adequate daily sodium intakes based on age. From this data, our chart estimates the maximum amount of sodium for a healthful entrée. Unfortunately, many of these kids' meals don't meet the standards.

Research on fat is more clear cut. Most nutrition experts recommend a diet with less than 30 percent of the day's calories from fat. Although fat content is not a concern for children younger than two, this guideline holds for children two and older. But remember, that doesn't mean that an entrée with more than 30 percent fat calories is unacceptable. Choose a variety of foods that average out to about 30 percent of the total daily calories from fat. If you choose an entrée with more than 30 percent fat calories, just be sure to balance it with a food that contains little or no fat, such as a piece of fresh fruit.

These meals in a box are only available in selected markets. Hormel hopes to make Kid's Kitchen available nationwide sometime in 1990. My Own Meals is available nationally by mail order.

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Hold the Salt

Based on recommendations for daily sodium intake, this chart estimates the maximum amount of sodium in a healthful entrée.

Age	Daily sodium (mg)	Sodium/entrée (mg)
1-3	325-975	250
4-6	450-1350	350
7-10	600-1800	450
11+	900-2700	650
Adult	1100-3300	800