

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

March 2009

FAST TAKES

Snack on calcium



Encourage your child to snack on dairy products—he'll get calcium to build strong bones and teeth. You can suggest calcium-fortified cereal, cottage cheese with fresh fruit, or whole-grain crackers topped with low-fat cheddar. Fat-free milk will add a calcium boost to any snack.

Sweet dreams

Here's a simple, relaxing way to help maintain a healthy weight: get enough sleep. Teens need 8½ to 9½ hours each night. Lack of sleep has been linked to obesity, attention problems, and even depression. Help your child create a daily schedule that allows enough time for a full night's sleep.



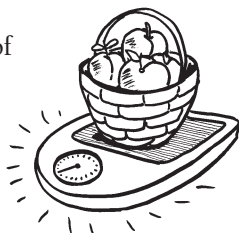
Quick links

Encourage your teen to create a personal nutrition and fitness planner. At www.mealsmatter.org/EatingForHealth/Tools/index.aspx, he can assess his food and fitness habits and set goals for healthy eating and exercise. There's even a Food Personality Quiz with nutritious recipes to fit his lifestyle.

Just for fun

Q: How much does a pound of peaches weigh?

A: A pound.



Festus R-6 School District
Mrs. Peggy Carle, Director of Food Services

Exercise for everyone

Jessie loves gymnastics and is on her high school cheerleading team. Her friend Alyssa thinks sports are boring and would rather hang out at the mall.

Not every child is an athlete—but they all need regular exercise. Here are ways to motivate your teen to stay active.

Rethink sports. Basketball and soccer are popular, but they're not your teenager's only options. She can work up a sweat playing table tennis or learning to dive. Contact your parks and recreation department to see what programs are offered. Interesting options may include martial arts, ballet, or hand ball.

Make exercise fun. Suggest that your child work out with friends. Whether she's doing water aerobics or kickboxing, exercising with others can keep her interested. Look for drop-in sessions that she can try at a gym or community center. Take advantage of where you live. If you're near a coast



or a lake, for example, your teen might try surfing or kayaking.

Build confidence. Is your teen struggling to hit the ball during a PE softball unit? Head to a local field and practice together. Is she uncomfortable exercising in front of others? Suggest that she borrow an exercise video from the library and follow along at home. As she gets stronger and more flexible, she'll feel better about herself. ♥

Proper protein

Protein is an important part of any teen's daily diet. Here's how to make every serving count:

- Encourage your child to eat a variety of protein. Good sources are eggs, fish, poultry, meat, nuts, beans, and cheese.
- Buy meats with the lowest percentage of fat you can find. For instance, choose 99% fat-free chicken breasts, lean steak cuts (sirloin, tenderloin), and extra-lean ground beef. You might also consider "meatless" meats like soy-based "sausage" and "chicken nuggets."
- Limit protein powders, drinks, and bars. These often lack fiber and other nutrients found in regular foods, plus some of them contain a lot of sodium and cholesterol. ♥



Breakfast first

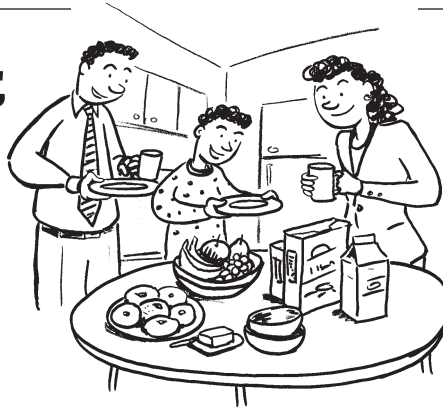
Who has time for breakfast? With a little planning and creativity, everyone does! Try these ideas for helping your family power up for the day.

All you can eat

Set up a no-fuss “buffet” on the kitchen table. Put out items like whole-grain cereal, mini-bagels, low-fat cream cheese, apples, melon chunks, 100% orange juice, and fat-free milk. Your teen can eat or take what he wants and head out the door.

Lunch for breakfast

Pack a brown-bag breakfast the night before. A peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole-wheat bread and an apple



make a balanced morning meal. Your teen can eat it on the way to school or once he gets there. *Idea:* Have your child eat breakfast in the school cafeteria for a healthy meal with friends.

Weekend brunch

Enjoy a sit-down family breakfast on the weekend. Vary what you make—perhaps whole-wheat waffles one week and poached eggs on English muffins the next. Brainstorm menu ideas, and consider rotating the “chef of the week.”

Note: To start the day off right and speed up your teen’s metabolism, remind him to eat within an hour of waking up. ♣

Q & A Diabetes prevention

Q: My husband has Type 2 diabetes. How can I keep my daughter from getting it, too?

A: You can cut your daughter’s risk by helping her maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Encourage her to get an hour of physical activity a day and to eat regular, nutritious meals. Limiting soda, sugary snacks, and foods high in fat and cholesterol will help her maintain a healthy weight. If she’s overweight, talk to her doctor about a safe plan for bringing her weight under control.

Also, be aware of warning signs of diabetes. They include frequent urination, constant thirst, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, and numbness or tingling in arms or legs. If you see any of these symptoms in your daughter, contact her doctor right away. ♣



In the Kitchen

Baked potato magic

Dress up a baked potato for a tasty and nutritious snack or side dish.

Start by microwaving or baking the potato. Rinse and poke several holes in it. Microwave for about 6 minutes or bake at 400° for about an hour until the potato is soft. Then, try these ideas.

Twice baked

Cut a potato in half. Scoop out the inside, mash with a little fat-free milk, and put the mixture back into the shell. Sprinkle with low-fat cheddar, and microwave or broil until the cheese melts. Top with diced green onions.

Turkey topping

Brown ¾ lb. lean ground turkey in a skillet and drain the fat. Add 1 diced tomato and a small can of drained mushrooms. Heat and spoon onto potato halves.

Spicy spuds

Warm canned pinto beans in a saucepan. Split cooked potato and top with beans, salsa, grated low-fat pepper jack cheese, and fat-free sour cream. ♣



ACTIVITY CORNER

Family hikes

Hiking is a great way for families to work out and enjoy time together. Try these steps to build a new family tradition.

1. Find trails. You can ask friends or neighbors where they hike, or get trail maps at your community center or library. Look for a trail with a scenic overlook, a stream, or a cave—having a destination will keep kids interested.

2. Pack supplies. Fill a backpack with water bottles

and healthy snacks (apples, bananas, granola bars, trail mix). Take along binoculars and flower and bird guidebooks for exploring.

3. Make it fun. Along the way, sing songs and tell family stories. Or have a scavenger hunt—take turns calling out something for everyone to find. *Examples:* a smooth rock, a red leaf.

Tip: For comfort and safety, wear hiking boots or sneakers with good support. ♣



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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Teen Food & Fitness™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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