

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2009



FAST TAKES

Real bodies

If your child reads

fashion magazines, she may develop unrealistic ideas about what healthy bodies look like. Remind her that the models are often much too thin. Encourage your youngster to look and feel her best by eating a nutritious diet and being active at least 60 minutes a day.

Meals for you

Your teen can find out how well he's eating at www.mypyramid.gov. Have him enter what he eats each day, and the site will give him daily goals and show how his meals measure up. He'll see what he needs (for example, one more cup of vegetables), and personalized reports will give him tips ("munch on carrot sticks at lunch").



Did You Know?

Suggest that your teen exercise safely when it's very hot and humid. If possible, she should work out in the morning or evening when it's coolest.



If she has a job or activities that keep her outdoors, suggest that she wear light clothing, take breaks in the shade, and drink one or two cups of water every half hour.

Just for fun

Q: Why did the man stare at the can of orange juice?

A: It said, "Concentrate."



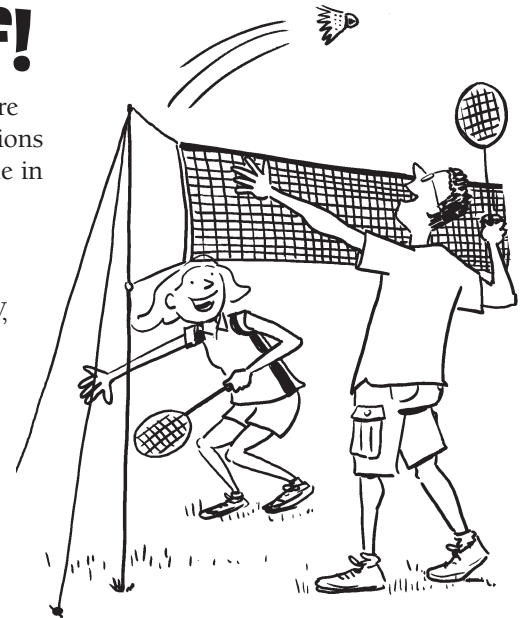
Power off!

Summer break usually means more free time for kids. Use these suggestions to keep that from meaning more time in front of the television or computer.

Watch less. Ask your tween or teen to keep a screen-time log for one week. Each time she watches TV, surfs the Web, or plays video games, she should write it down. If she exceeds your recommended limit (1–2 hours a day), brainstorm a list of ways to cut back:

- Don't leave the television on all day or night. Pick specific shows to watch, and turn the set off when they're over.
- Donate one household TV to a charity.
- Limit DVDs, laptops, and handheld games in the car.
- Don't watch TV or play with cell phones during meals.

Move more. Your teen will be less likely to spend hours instant messaging or watching shows if she has fun alternatives. See that she has scheduled activities this summer (job, camp, volunteer work). Together, make a list of evening



and weekend activities that don't involve screens. Have your child check off the ones she does:

- Play miniature golf.
- Take a beach ball to the pool for a game of water volleyball.
- Invite neighbors to play badminton or flag football.
- Take family walks after dinner.

Tip: Post your lists on the refrigerator. After a few weeks, have your youngster keep another screen-time log to check for improvement. ♥

Try these instead

Some foods that sound good for you may actually be less than nutritious. Here are examples—and alternatives:

- Many fruit-flavored yogurts are high in sugar and low in fiber. It's better to top plain, fat-free yogurt with blueberries, sliced strawberries, or canned peaches, pineapple, or pears (in light syrup).
- Store-bought banana or sweet potato chips sound healthy, but they can contain a lot of sugar and fat and lack vitamins. Eat a real banana or sweet potato instead.
- Instant hot cereals often contain sugar or preservatives. Make your own by microwaving $\frac{1}{3}$ cup rolled oats with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup fat-free milk for 2–3 minutes. Add raisins or dried cherries, and sprinkle with a little cinnamon or brown sugar. ♥



Nutrition + math

It's an appetizing combination: learning about nutrition while keeping math skills sharp. Here are two ideas.

Cooking calculations

Get your teen's help in the kitchen when you're cooking. Ask him to double or halve a recipe. For example, if a recipe calls for 1½ cups flour and you're making half a batch, he would divide 1½ by 2 (¾ cup flour). He can also calculate what percentage of his recommended daily amount of different nutrients is contained in various foods. If he needs 17 grams of fiber and his favorite cereal has 5 grams, that's 29 percent ($5 \div 17 = .29$).



fiber, protein, vitamins, and minerals. He can find this information in cookbooks or online (try www.calorieking.com/foods/topsearches.php).♥

Nutrition comparisons

Put your teen in charge of creating a healthy dinner menu for the family. Encourage him to put together a meal that contains different kinds of foods (meat or meat alternative, vegetable, fruit, grain, dairy, dessert). The catch?

He should come up with a meal that's low in calories, fat, and cholesterol but high in

ACTIVITY CORNER

Active summer jobs

Summer is full of great ways for kids to stay in shape while getting job experience. Share these tips with your child:

1. Be a camp counselor. You might help with relay races, referee sports games, or lead nature hikes.

2. Volunteer as an assistant coach with a children's baseball league, or teach basketball skills to youngsters at a community center.



3. Check your local newspaper or contact your neighborhood association for volunteer opportunities. You could join a cleanup committee or help with landscaping.

4. Become a lifeguard at a community pool. Sitting on the chair isn't much exercise, but giving swim lessons or cleaning up the pool area is!♥

In the Kitchen

Cooking outdoors

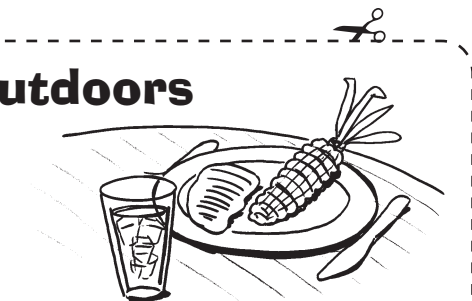
Just about anything tastes better cooked on the grill. Skip the hamburgers and hot dogs, and enjoy these healthier options.

Asian chicken

Mix together ½ cup teriyaki sauce, ¼ cup vinegar, ¼ cup water, and ¼ cup orange marmalade. Pour over 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight. Discard the marinade, and grill until cooked through. Serve with brown rice.

Corn on the cob

Peel back corn husks, and remove the silk. Brush cobs with a little olive



oil, close the husks, and wrap in aluminum foil. Grill for about 10 minutes.

Fruity dessert

Wrap ½-inch-thick fresh apple and peach slices in aluminum foil. Grill until tender, about 5–8 minutes on each side. Top with chopped pecans. *Variation:* Put the grilled fruit in a bowl, and add a scoop of nonfat frozen yogurt or fruit sorbet.♥

Q & A

Sodium smarts

Q: My daughter salts everything—even before she tastes her food.

How can I get her to cut back?

A: Sodium adds up fast—one teaspoon of table salt contains about 2,300 mg, or a whole day's worth of sodium! Processed foods are a big culprit. One serving of canned soup or one frozen entrée can contain 900 mg. Another problem is fast food. For example, a quarter-pound cheeseburger may have more than 1,300 mg of sodium.

To help your child eat less salt, choose fresh or frozen vegetables over canned ones

when you go shopping. Look for the words “low salt” or “reduced sodium” on food packages. Then, read the label to see how much there really is—even packages marked “low salt” can still have a lot of sodium.

In restaurants, see if your food can be cooked without added salt. At Chinese or Japanese restaurants, ask for low-sodium soy sauce. And avoid buffet-style restaurants since the foods there are often very salty.

Finally, keep the salt shaker off the table. If it's not there, your daughter will be less likely to salt her food.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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

ISSN 1935-8865