

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

April 2013



FAST TAKES

Healthy finish

To prevent overeating, let your teen know it's okay *not* to finish his meal. Instead, he can eat slowly so he recognizes when he feels full. Suggest that he put down his fork between bites—that will give him time to think about whether he's still hungry before he takes the next bite.



Cross the stream

This fun drill will help your tween build up the leg muscles she needs for sports. Using chalk on a sidewalk or driveway, have her draw a winding "stream" (varying from 2 to 4 feet wide) and mark crossing points. Then, she can quickly move sideways along the stream, crossing at each point by jumping with both feet.

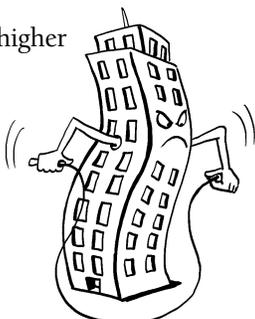
Did You Know?

The average teen consumes 3,800 mg of sodium a day, which is more than twice the recommended amount. Encourage your child to cut down on fast food (a major source of sodium) and to read food labels. *Tip:* Look for a sodium number that is lower than the calories per serving—if an item has 300 calories, sodium content should be less than 300 mg.

Just for fun

Q: Who jumps higher than a 10-story building?

A: Anyone. A building can't jump!



Central Islip Union Free School District
Lawrence S. Phillips, Director of PE, Health & Athletics

Excited about exercise

Keeping up an exercise habit can help your teen or tween be fit and healthy his whole life. Whether he already works out or is just starting, these tips may inspire him to stay motivated.

Pick the best time

Is your teen a morning person or a night owl? Finding his best time for exercise can help him stick with it. Suggest that he look at his schedule and experiment with different time slots. He might find that early-morning exercise gets him energized for the day or that working out after school or dinner lets him unwind.

Get a buddy

Working out with friends can be a real motivator, since tweens and teens naturally prefer being with other kids. Have your child think of a friend who would make a good exercise buddy (someone he enjoys hanging out with and who likes sports or exercise). They could set up a running plan together, meet at the community center gym regularly, or join a sports league.



Mix it up

Doing a variety of exercises can keep workouts from getting dull. For example, your teen might alternate bike riding with swimming or yoga. Another idea is to have him add a twist to his favorite sport. If he likes basketball, he could do 10 sit-ups or push-ups each time he sinks 10 baskets.

Note: Your youngster should aim for 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise daily. The time can be broken up throughout the day—it doesn't need to be all at once. ●

Trigger foods

Does your teen have certain foods that cause her to eat too much? These are known as "trigger foods." Try these strategies to handle the problem:

- Suggest that she list foods that she can't resist once she starts eating them or that cause her to lose control and eat too much of other foods. These are often salty snacks like chips and French fries or sweets like chocolate and ice cream.
- Help her come up with substitutes. For instance, if she likes the crunch of a chip or pretzel, she might go for the crunch of an apple or a carrot. If she enjoys the creamy texture of ice cream, she could eat nonfat yogurt instead. *Tip:* To support her efforts, keep her alternatives on hand—and don't buy the trigger foods. ●

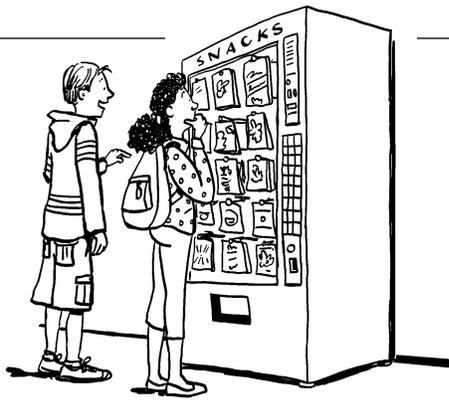


Test your snacking IQ

Snacks that are easy to grab and eat on the go can be appealing. But they can also be full of empty calories. Use this true-false quiz to remind your teens to choose snacks that will give them energy and nutrients.

1. Packaged “fruit” treats aren’t much different from eating candy.

True. There’s little fruit and plenty of sugar in these bite-sized snacks. Eating fresh fruit is a much better bet. Real fruit contains healthy fiber, minerals, and vitamins.



2. At the vending machine, baked potato chips are healthier than a bag of peanuts.

False. Peanuts contain protein, which will satisfy hunger. The chips, even though they are baked, still don’t have much nutritional value.

3. Feeling thirsty after an afternoon outside? Then a sports drink is the way to go.

False. Sports drinks are usually full of calories, sugar, and salt. Water is the better choice, unless you’ve been exercising vigorously for 45 minutes or longer.

4. If you haven’t eaten for three or four hours, it’s a good idea to have a snack.

True. Eating nutritious snacks throughout the day keeps your energy levels up. Plus, when you get overly hungry, you tend to overeat at meals. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT



Sometimes a vegetarian

My daughter, Maya, has been thinking about becoming a vegetarian. When we talked about it, she said her real goal is to eat more fruits and vegetables. She figured that if she cut out meat, she’d automatically eat more of “the healthy stuff.”

I told her I was glad she wants to eat more fruits and vegetables, but maybe she should start by trying vegetarian meals a day or two a week. We looked up vegetarian recipes online to help her get started.



After doing meatless meals twice a week for a month, Maya hasn’t decided yet whether she wants to become a vegetarian. But the experience has helped our family reconsider our own eating habits and add more vegetables to our meals. We’ve even come up with a name for Maya’s new food habit—she’s a “sometimes” vegetarian. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

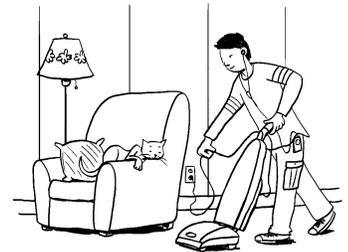
Chores to stay active

Time may be at a premium for your teen. But he can still help out around the house—and stay active in the process. Here are chores that will fit various blocks of time.

15 minutes. Vacuum several rooms; unload the dishwasher; empty all the trash cans in the house; dust bookshelves and air vents; polish dining room furniture

30 minutes. Scrub a shower, bathtub, and sink; wipe down kitchen counters and clean the appliances; walk the dog; rake leaves from under trees and around shrubs; mop the hallway and kitchen floors

45 minutes. Trim outside bushes; spread mulch around trees; remove weeds; wash windows; reorganize a closet, cabinet, or bookshelf; clean the refrigerator shelves and drawers; wash the car

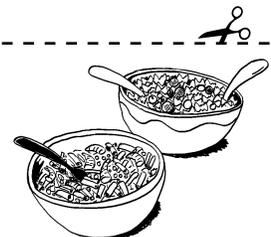


Idea: Chores will go by faster if your teen is listening to music. Suggest that he create playlists to match his chore time. ♥

In the Kitchen

Pasta, pronto!

Pasta is a great choice for a quick weeknight meal. Try these recipes that combine whole grains, protein, vegetables—and flavor.



Spinach & feta bowties

Cook 1 lb. bowtie (also called farfalle) pasta according to package directions. In a colander, combine 1 cup reduced-fat feta cheese (crumbled), 1½ cups cherry tomatoes (halved), and 3 cups spinach. Drain the pasta directly over the mixture so the hot water slightly cooks it. Toss the pasta and vegetables in a large bowl, and serve.

Vegetable shrimp penne

In a large skillet, heat 1½ tsp. olive oil, and add 1½ cups uncooked shrimp. Cook the shrimp over medium-high heat, stirring frequently until it turns pink (about 3 minutes). Add ¼ cup diced red bell peppers and ½ cup peas (fresh or frozen), and cook another minute. Serve over cooked whole-grain penne pasta. ♥

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 CCH Incorporated
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