

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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Central Islip Union Free School District
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FAST TAKES



Headache help

If your teen or tween suffers from headaches, avoiding certain foods may help. Suggest that she stay away from chocolate, processed meats, and food additives like MSG. Another idea is to keep track of what she eats and when she gets headaches to see if there is a pattern.

Did You Know?

Regular physical activity can improve your child's academic performance. Let him know

that 60 minutes of activity can increase his focus throughout the day. PE classes or after-school sports

are a great way to fit in exercise. He could also use the school track, basketball courts, or tennis courts when they're free.



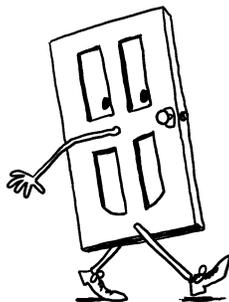
Snack on beans

This easy snack can be eaten with sliced bell peppers used as "scoops" or just a spoon. Mix together black beans from one 15-oz. can (drained, rinsed), juice from $\frac{1}{2}$ lime, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped cilantro, 1 tbsp. diced red onion, and 1 tsp. ground cumin. Season lightly with salt and pepper, and enjoy.

Just for fun

Q: What gives you the power and strength to walk through walls?

A: A door!



Energize family dinners

To get your kids involved in and excited about family meals, try something new. These clever ideas will bring everyone to the table hungry and ready for fun.

Rice bowls

Together, create a make-it-yourself dinner station. Use healthy brown rice as the base. Then, set out bowls of toppings like these: chopped and sauteed vegetables (bell peppers, onions, and carrots), cashews, sliced cooked chicken, canned corn (drained), and mango chunks. Let each person go through the rice-bowl assembly line and put together his own meal. *Tip:* Other nights, you could have a quesadilla buffet or a baked-potato bar.



classic like *The Wizard of Oz*, and serve yellow and green vegetables for the yellow brick road and Emerald City.

Leftovers chef

Nothing makes leftovers more fun than a family cooking competition. Take those containers out of the fridge, divide into teams, and whip up the most creative dinners you can. If you have leftover meatloaf and roasted vegetables, for instance, one team might put together tacos, while another makes Shepherd's pie. Eat the results, and vote for the winner. ♥

Dinner and a movie

Everyone loves a movie night. Decide on a film the whole family can enjoy, and plan a theme meal around it. For example, watch a movie set in Italy, and make spaghetti and meatballs. Or pull out a

Take the first step

Every physical-activity journey has to start somewhere. If your teen is new to fitness, suggest these tips to help her get started.

Begin slow. Maybe she'll run one block or walk 10 minutes each day for a week. Week by week, she can gradually increase her time or distance.

Set goals. She might aim for walking 30 minutes on the treadmill or being able to complete an aerobics DVD. To help her meet her target, she could build in incentives like downloading new music or buying a new workout shirt. ♥



Create a recipe stash

Finding recipes might not be hard, but finding them *again* can be tricky! Use these ideas to build a recipe file that works for your family.

● **Online.** Create Pinterest boards for recipes you find online. You could make separate boards by category (appetizers, entrees) and “pin” recipes to try. Or find interesting recipes at sites like *allrecipes.com* or on food blogs (search for “*best food blogs*”). Then, bookmark recipes you like, and organize them into online folders.



● **Printouts.** Put together your own recipe file with web printouts and magazine recipes. For easy organizing, choose a binder or an accordion file, and add tabs by meal type (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack) or by ingredients (chicken, pasta). Draw a star on successful recipes, and note how you changed ingredients or quantities.

● **Cookbooks.** When you see recipes you like in cookbooks, mark the pages with sticky notes. You might assign a color by recipe type (yellow for vegetables, purple for desserts). Add notes in the margins if you find tasty substitutions. ●



PARENT TO PARENT Body image concerns

My daughter Tina has put on weight, and lately she hasn't wanted to participate in her usual activities. I had an idea it was because of how she feels about her body. But I was concerned about bringing up such a delicate topic.

I gently mentioned that I know it can be upsetting to put on weight, and I started talking about ways our family could eat better and exercise more. I thought it would help her to see we're all in this together.



I also wanted to show her that there's more to her than how she looks. So I asked her to list accomplishments she's proud of—and I added a few that make me proud, too. I'm hoping Tina will lose weight so she will be healthier and feel better about herself. But no matter what, I want her to know I'm there for her. ●

ACTIVITY CORNER

Buddy up for exercise

Everything—including working out—is more fun with a friend when you're a tween or teen. Offer these suggestions.

Choose a partner

Have your child find someone he can easily meet up with. This person might live nearby or take the same bus home from school, for example.

Make a plan

Encourage the two of them to settle on activities that fit their interests, schedules, and budgets. They could look for options at community centers or gyms (rock climbing, tae kwon do) or things to do on their own (street hockey, badminton). Then, they should decide when and where they'll get together.

Be accountable

Apps like *MapMyFitness* and *Fitocracy* let them see their own—and each other's—progress. Logging in daily can keep them on track. ●



In the Kitchen

One-pot wonders

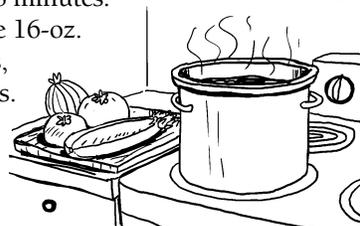
Dinner and cleanup have never been simpler with these easy meals that can be made all in one pot.

Tomato lentil stew

Dice 2 stalks celery, 1 carrot, and 1 onion. Heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a medium pot, and saute the vegetables on medium-high for 8 minutes. Add 4 cups water, one 16-oz. can crushed tomatoes, and 1½ cups dry lentils. Bring to a boil, and simmer 30 minutes until lentils are cooked.

Spinach artichoke pasta

In a large pot, add all ingredients: 1 sliced onion, 8-oz. chopped sun-dried tomatoes, 2 minced garlic cloves, 14-oz. canned artichoke (drained, chopped), 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth, 2 tbsp. olive oil, 1 lb. pasta (any kind), 1 tsp. oregano, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil. Turn down the heat, and cover until liquid is absorbed. Stir in 2 cups fresh spinach until it's wilted, and serve. ●



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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