

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

January 2015



FAST TAKES

Active screen time

Tweens and teens can keep their brains and bodies fit by adding exercise time to screen time. For every half-hour of television, video game, or computer time, your child could break and clock 5 minutes of physical activity (jumping jacks, stair-climbing). Cell phone alarms will help him keep track.

Fizzy soda replacement

Help your teen satisfy her craving for carbonated beverages with this tea drink. Have her brew her favorite tea (herbal works great: ginger, mint, or peach). She should use twice as many tea bags as for hot tea and let cool. Then, she can fill a glass with half tea and half plain seltzer water.

Did You Know?

Eighty percent of Americans don't get enough vitamin D. The sun is the easiest and most effective way to get the amount we need, but there are also ways to get it through food. Your child could raise his levels by having more fatty fish (salmon, tuna), egg yolks, mushrooms, and vitamin D-enriched foods (including milk and cereal).



Just for fun

Q: Where does Tarzan work out?

A: At the jungle gym!



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

Healthy snacking

Getting teens and tweens to snack healthy doesn't have to be complicated. It's all about keeping the right foods on hand so your child can assemble easy snacks herself.

Dips

Try a healthy hummus with edamame. This will boost fiber and protein—and add veggies to her diet. In a food processor or blender, combine 1 cup cooked (shelled) edamame, 1 can chickpeas (drained, rinsed), 1 tbsp. olive oil, 1 tbsp. lemon juice, and a dash of salt. Or she could mix 1 cup plain Greek yogurt with 2 tbsp. barbecue sauce for a tangy and spicy dip that will boost calcium and protein. *Tip:* Use a variety of raw vegetables as dippers.

Sandwiches

Suggest that your tween make a savory hot snack with this idea: Spread a slice of whole-grain bread or half a whole-wheat bagel with mustard, and add slices of lean turkey and cheese. Pop in the toaster oven for 8 minutes on medium-high. For a sweet snack, she might spread low-fat

ricotta cheese on a rice cake and top with chopped strawberries.

Bites

Let your teen make her own no-bake granola bites. Have her mix 1 cup rolled oats, 1 cup raisins, 2 tbsp. peanut (or almond) butter, 1 tsp. cinnamon, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla in a food processor (pulse until combined well). She can roll the mixture into bite-size balls and refrigerate. If she buys cereal or granola bars, encourage her to look for ones lower in fat and sugar. Many of those out there are more like candy bars! 🍌



Rolling with sushi

Sushi is a tasty and fun way to mix up your meals. Your family can keep it healthier with these tips.

● **Make your own.** Wrap your sushi in vegetable strips made by peeling cucumber or zucchini length-wise. Make sure the strips are at least an inch wide—each slice will make one roll. Then, place shredded carrot, avocado slices, and cooked sliced shrimp in the center, and roll.

● **Order carefully.** When eating out, ask for sushi with brown rice. Avoid rolls with cream cheese (often called Philadelphia roll) or tempura, which is breaded and fried. Also try to stay away from mayonnaise-based toppings (like Godzilla roll) or those with “special sauce.” 🍌



Dear (food) diary

Keeping a record of food habits will let your teenager see where he's going right or wrong—and how he might improve. Share these ideas for starting a food diary.

Organization. Encourage your child to arrange his food log so it's easy to flip back and see patterns. For example, he can divide each day's page into breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and beverages. Across the bottom he could put boxes for checking off the fruits, vegetables, and glasses of water he has each day.

Details. The more specifics, the better. Suggest that he note not only the food, but also the quantities, using measures like cups and tablespoons. It's also helpful to keep track of fat



content ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat-free yogurt, 2 tbsp. regular fat ranch dressing), and whole grains vs. processed ones.

Mindset. Since mood plays a role in what and how much we eat, it's good to monitor that, too. Using one-

word descriptions will make comparisons easier. For instance, your teen might look back and realize he's usually "frustrated" or "stressed" when he eats 10 cookies or a pint of ice cream. Then, he can think about better ways to cope, such as exercising or hanging out with a friend. ●



Q & A

Fit family

Q: As our kids get older, they're balking at spending time with us. I'd like our family to be more active this winter—and to be together. Any suggestions?



A: Kids often like snow sports. So if you live in or visit a snowy area, you might try cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. For low-cost options, look for used equipment at a donation center, or borrow from friends.

If you're not up to braving the cold, why not host your own family fitness class in your living room? Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube all have exercise videos available. Take a poll and see what your family wants to try. Maybe yoga this week and Latin dance next week! ●

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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ACTIVITY CORNER

Make your own workout calendars

A DIY fitness calendar can spice up workouts. Encourage your tween to get active every day by making one of these fun calendars:

- Colors are motivating! Let her get seven paint strips in her favorite hues from a hardware store. She should glue the strips vertically across a sheet of paper and label each column for a day of the week. Then, she could number the individual paint chips for the days of the month (say, 1–30), and write an exercise on each.



- On seven index cards, have your child write the day of the week on one side and an exercise on the other. She might clasp the cards together with a binder clip and pin to a bulletin board for easy visibility.

Note: Suggest that she keep things interesting by researching new fitness moves on Pinterest or asking her PE teacher, coach, or teammates for ideas. ●

In the Kitchen

All-day whole grains

Fit more whole grains into everyday meals with these simple recipes.

Banana nut breakfast

Cook $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry millet or brown rice in 1 cup skim milk in a small saucepan (15–20 minutes, until fluffy). Stir in 1 tbsp. crunchy peanut butter, and top with banana slices. Serve warm.

Italian-style grain bowl

Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked quinoa with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. oregano and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. basil. Chop 1 small onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ zucchini, and $\frac{1}{2}$ red bell pepper, and saute in a skillet with 1 tbsp. olive oil for 5 minutes over

medium-high heat. Spoon the vegetables over the quinoa, and add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heated pasta sauce.

Vegetable barley soup

Saute $\frac{1}{2}$ chopped onion and 1 clove minced garlic in a pot over medium heat. Add 2 chopped carrots and 1 chopped celery stalk, and cook 3 minutes more. Stir in 1 can (16-oz.) crushed tomatoes, 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pearl barley. Cook on medium high until barley is soft, about 40 minutes. ●

