

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

March 2014



## FAST TAKES

### Baked tostadas

Your teen can whip up this healthy Mexican-style meal in minutes. Have her lightly coat a corn tortilla with baking spray, place it on a cookie sheet, and bake at 400° until crisp (about 3 minutes per side). Then, she can top the tortilla with nonfat refried beans, shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, and cooked shrimp or leftover shredded pork.

### Did You Know?

Many high school weight rooms have open hours for students. Suggest that your teen work out in the weight room right after school—that could be an easy way for him to fit in more fitness. Encourage him to ask a PE teacher or coach to help him develop a safe routine with the equipment there.

### Snack on olives

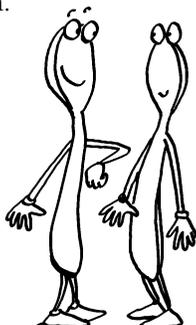
Olives are a fun way to get kids to eat more plants! Low in calories and high in vitamin E and iron, green olives also contain good-for-you fats. And they're easily available canned, jarred, or at grocery-store salad or olive bars. One serving is about six small olives, five medium, or four large ones. *Note:* Choose low-salt canned varieties, or go easy on servings as olives tend to be high in sodium.



### Just for fun

**Q:** What did one spoon say to the other?

**A:** Let's stir things up.



Central Islip Union Free School District  
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## Start the day off right

No doubt your child has heard, "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." It's true! Your teen or tween's morning meal sets the stage for healthy eating the rest of the day. Consider these typical breakfast challenges—and solutions.



**Problem:** No time to sit and eat

**Solution:** Together, write down five breakfast ideas your teen can grab "to go." For example, he might take a toasted whole-grain waffle along with a banana, piece of string cheese, and fat-free milk. Or have him make breakfast pitas ahead of time, and keep them in the fridge. He could cut a slit in a whole-grain pita, spread nonfat cream cheese inside, and dot with raisins.

**Problem:** Prefers sugary breakfast foods

**Solution:** To move your tween toward healthier foods, go gradually. You might mix whole-grain cereal half and half with a more sugary cereal. Or look for ways to lighten up his favorites. *Idea:* For a toaster tart, flatten two slices of whole-wheat bread (crusts removed) with a rolling pin. Spread low-sugar fruit spread between

the two, and crimp the edges to seal. Heat in a toaster oven.

**Problem:** Doesn't know what makes up a healthy breakfast

**Solution:** Encourage your child to think in fours—one protein, one fruit or vegetable, one whole grain, and one low-fat dairy. The school cafeteria usually offers an assortment where he can find at least one of each. He might choose scrambled eggs (protein), grapes (fruit), a slice of whole-wheat toast (whole grain), and fat-free milk (dairy). ♥

## Feel-good exercise

Exercising regularly doesn't just help your child physically, it also helps her mentally. Here are two ways.

● **Reduces stress.** Working out triggers the release of chemicals in the brain that help her relax. While any type of exercise can do this, you might suggest ones like yoga or tai chi that involve deep breathing.

● **Increases energy.** Using energy to exercise actually gives your teen more energy for the rest of the day. Encourage her to begin her morning with physical activity. For instance, she could bike to school if there's a safe route or do an early-morning aerobics or dance routine. After school, she might go for a run before starting homework. ♥



# Eating out

Restaurants are offering more and more nutritious foods. Yet when your teen has a menu full of choices, figuring out what to order can be overwhelming. Suggest that she ask herself—or her server—questions like these.

**How was the meal prepared?** Have her carefully read through menu descriptions for clues. She should try to avoid foods described as breaded, fried, creamy, or battered, as they will be higher in calories and fat.

**Are there substitutions?** Often restaurants will swap out sides. If the meal comes with French fries, she could ask for



steamed vegetables or a side salad instead.

**Does it have sauce?** Dressings and sauces tend to be high in fat and sodium. Suggest that she request sauces on the side so she can lightly dip her food in them.

**May I split a dish?** Restaurant portions may be larger than she needs. Your teen can see if anyone at the table wants to share a dish. Or she could ask the server to box up half before bringing it to the table. Then, she'll have lunch for the next day (and a healthier portion at each meal). ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT Careers in nutrition

I noticed that my daughter, Kayla, was developing more than a passing interest in nutrition. Now she likes to read food labels and figure out what is healthy for her body.

Since she's starting to think about her career, I suggested she consider nutrition. Her school counselor gave her information

on becoming a registered dietitian, which requires a college degree, an internship, and passing a national exam. He also said she should continue taking math and science courses throughout high school, including her school's nutrition education class.

Kayla was excited to learn that dietitians are employed in many businesses, from schools and hospitals to gyms and restaurants. I don't know if she'll end up going into nutrition, but I'm glad she's thinking about the possibility. ♥

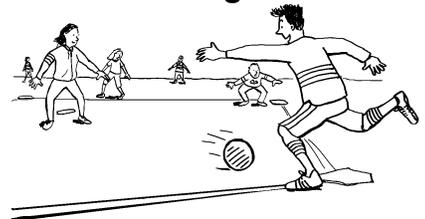


## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Start an active hobby

To up the activity level around your house, consider beginning a new family hobby. Get your teen involved with these ideas.

- 1. Search.** Have him stop by your community center to see what's available. He might find kickball leagues, tennis programs, or karate classes. Or he could check websites for your city and state parks. They may offer canoe lessons, guided hikes, or trail-running instruction, for instance.
- 2. Choose.** Together, narrow down the options. Think about what interests you the most, how much classes or equipment will cost, and how the activities would fit into your schedules. The key, of course, is to pick something everyone will want to do!
- 3. Begin.** Put the activity on your kitchen calendar. Show your enthusiasm—it will be contagious. Consider setting a fun goal to work toward. For example, you might aim at a certain karate level for each person or plan a vacation that involves a long hike. ♥



## In the Kitchen

### Cozy casseroles

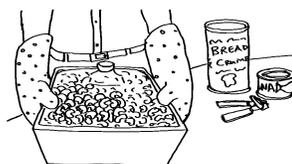
Try these lighter versions of two classic casseroles.

#### Penne bake

1. Stir together 4 cups cooked whole-wheat penne pasta with 1 15-oz. container low-fat ricotta cheese, 1 27-oz. jar tomato pasta sauce, and 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (defrosted).
2. Pour into a 9" x 13" casserole dish.
3. Top with 1 cup low-fat, shredded mozzarella cheese and 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese.
4. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes.

#### Tuna noodle

1. Cook 6-oz. whole-grain noodles according to package directions.
2. Mix the cooked noodles with 1 can reduced-fat cream of mushroom soup, ½ cup fat-free milk, 2 tbsp. light mayonnaise, ½ tsp. dry mustard, 1 6-oz. jar sliced mushrooms (drained), and 1 5-oz. can tuna packed in water.
3. Place in a lightly greased 8" square dish. Top noodle mixture with ¼ cup seasoned bread crumbs.
4. Bake for 25 minutes at 400°. ♥



### 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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