

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



Convenience-store snacks

When your teen stops for a snack at a convenience store,



he has a choice. Donuts? Potato chips? A banana? Encourage him to grab something healthy by discussing the options ahead of time. For example, he could pick up fresh fruit or a whole-grain granola bar. Or he might find string cheese, yogurt, or vegetables with dip in the refrigerator case. *Tip:* Suggest that he select the smallest snack size available.

Did You Know?

Kids exercise less once they enter their teen years. In fact, only about a third of teens 15 and older get the recommended hour a day. Setting an example is one good way to motivate your teen to exercise. If she sees you going to the gym or walking regularly, she will be more likely to follow suit.

Quick fish meal

For a nutritious meal you can put together fast, try this. Lightly coat a baking dish with cooking spray. Arrange 4 fish fillets (tilapia, red snapper, sea bass), and drizzle with 2 tsp. olive oil. Sprinkle on $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. paprika, top with lemon slices, and bake 25 minutes at 375°. Serve with steamed broccoli and brown rice.

Just for fun

Q: Who is strong enough to move a castle?

A: A chess player!



Healthy summer eating

What goes with longer days, warmer temperatures, and school vacations? Healthy eating! That's right—your children may actually find it easier to be healthy eaters in the summer. Here's why.

Pick your produce. Plums, blackberries, cherries, corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, and lots of other tasty fruits and vegetables are readily available during summer months. They not only taste better when they're in season, they're usually less expensive, too. *Tip:* Ask your tweens or teens to search online for seasonal produce in your area. Then, they can help plan menus around items at their peak.

Grill your food. Grilling trims calories from meat—as it grills, fat drips off. To add flavor, brush meat, chicken, or fish with a simple mixture of olive oil and low-sodium soy sauce (equal amounts of each). The grill is also a terrific way to cook vegetables and fruits. It brings out the natural sweetness of produce like



zucchini, onions, pineapples, or peaches, making them even more appealing to your children.

Lighten up your meals. When it's hot, your tweens or teens won't be craving heavy stews or pastas. You might try open-faced sandwiches (use one slice of whole-grain bread) for dinner. Look in cookbooks or online for main-dish salads or meatless entrées. Or make alternatives to mashed potatoes and white rice, such as corn tossed with diced tomatoes, red onions, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. ♡

Picnic nutrition

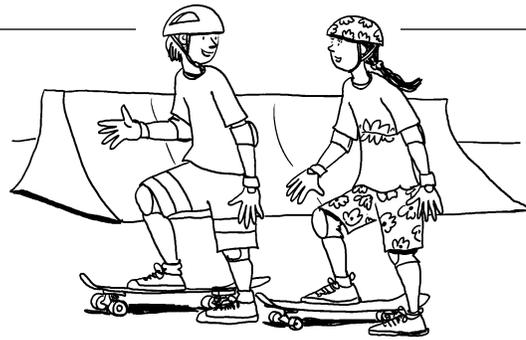
When your family is invited to a picnic or barbecue, keep things healthier with these ideas:

- Skip saucy dishes. Potato and macaroni salads are picnic staples—but they're usually filled with high-fat mayonnaise. Instead, steer your child toward the tossed salad or platter of raw vegetables.
- Bring your own. Picnics are often potluck, so make sure the item you bring is something nutritious that your family likes. You might take hummus and whole-wheat pita bread, salsa with baked tortilla chips, roast chicken, fruit salad, or potato or macaroni salad made with low-fat vinaigrette.
- Tone down dessert. It's okay to take a small portion of pie or brownies. But encourage your tween to save most of his dessert plate for watermelon, strawberries, or other fruit. ♡



Trying new sports

Summer is a great time for your kids to explore new activities. Share these suggestions.



Something similar

If they like running up and down the field in soccer, they might enjoy ultimate Frisbee, lacrosse, or track and field. If they're swimmers, they could take up diving or water polo. Trying a different sport is a good break from their routine and lets them keep up their training for their main sports.

New surface

How does a different surface change the game? Let your ice hockey player find out by signing up for a roller hockey or street hockey team. Or look for sand courts at playgrounds or nearby beaches where your teens could play volleyball. Playing soccer on the sand can be fun, too!

Leagues, classes

Your community center or parks and recreation department may offer summer leagues that last a few weeks instead of a whole season. This can let your youngsters get a taste of a sport that's new to them, like kickball or rugby. Or they might take classes in skateboarding, climbing, or golf.

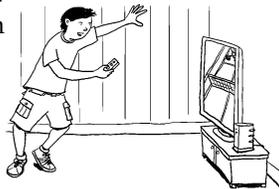
Note: If your children need equipment for a new sport, try second-hand sports stores and yard sales. ♣

Q & A Active video games

Q: I'm worried my teen isn't getting enough exercise because he plays so many video games. Are there ways to help him be more active?

A: There are several approaches you might try. First, have him take exercise breaks while playing. Maybe for every 15 minutes of video games, he does 5 minutes of squats or running in place.

Another idea is to switch him to active video games, called "exergames," where he's up and moving. But these games aren't a replacement for actual exercise—it's important that he also put the video games away and do real physical activity.



Think about setting limits on the amount he can play each day (say, 1–2 hours) or having regular video game-free days. Then, make sure he does something active during his "time off." Encourage him to try different activities, and hopefully he will find something he likes as much as he likes video games. ♣



ACTIVITY CORNER

Container gardens

If they grow it, they will eat it! That's one reason to get your child into gardening. And an easy way to begin—especially if you live in an apartment or don't have a big yard—is with "container gardening," where you grow vegetables in pots rather than in the ground. Try these steps.



1. Together, visit a nursery to pick out seeds or starter plants specifically designed to grow well in containers (patio tomatoes, bush cucumbers, peas). Get pots that are at least 12" in diameter and have holes in the bottom for drainage.
2. Let your tween do the planting. She can fill the pots with an inch of gravel followed by potting soil and then dig small holes for each plant. Have her remove the plants from their original pots, place each one in a hole, and loosely pack the soil around it.
3. She could put the pots in a sunny spot on a deck, balcony, or porch. Then, she's in charge of watering—and picking the vegetables when they're ripe. ♣

In the Kitchen

DIY "pops"

These make-at-home pops are simple to whip up. Even better, they're a healthy way for your family to cool off on a hot day. For each recipe, divide the mixture equally into 4–6 small paper cups.

Cover each cup with aluminum foil, and poke a Popsicle stick through the foil so it stays upright. Place in the freezer until firm. Try these varieties—and challenge your kids to make up their own.



Chocolate pudding. Whisk 2 cups nonfat milk into 1 box of sugar-free chocolate pudding (3.9 oz.).

Blueberry yogurt. Blend together 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt, 1 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen), and 1 tbsp. honey.

Watermelon. In a blender, puree 3 cups seedless watermelon chunks with the juice from 1 lime.

Raspberry-lemon. Stir ½ cup raspberries into 2 cups sugar-free lemonade. ♣

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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