

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

January 2013



## FAST TAKES

### Winter eating

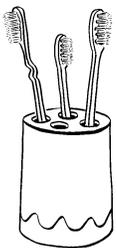
During the winter, your teen may feel hungrier. In fact, people tend to eat more over these months, although nutrition experts aren't sure why. To avoid overeating, suggest that your child choose high-protein snacks like grilled chicken or a spoonful of nuts tossed into plain Greek yogurt. These foods will help him feel satisfied for longer.

### Fitness in a minute

Challenge your teen to "minute fitness contests" each day. Have her write down seven simple exercises on slips of paper (toe touches, sit-ups, jumping jacks). Put the slips in a jar, and take turns pulling one out each day. Who can do more in a minute?

### Did You Know?

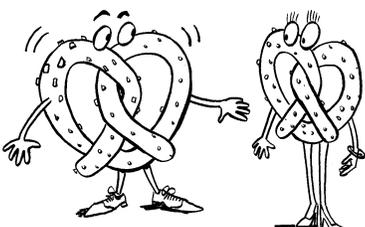
The toothbrush bristles that help fight cavities wear down over time. Also, bacteria and germs can build up on old toothbrushes. Encourage your teenager to use a new toothbrush every three months. *Tip:* Germs need moisture to survive. Store toothbrushes upright to make sure they dry out between brushings.



### Just for fun

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

**A:** "Let's twist!"



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

## Family weight loss

Losing pounds is easier when everyone is in it together! Consider these tips to get your whole family involved in eating better, exercising more, and slimming down.

### Sit to eat

Encourage everyone to sit down whenever they eat, instead of standing. This helps you pay attention to what you're eating and avoid snacking when you're not really hungry. *Idea:* If you're right-handed, try eating with your left hand (or vice versa). By switching hands, you'll eat more slowly and concentrate on what you're having.

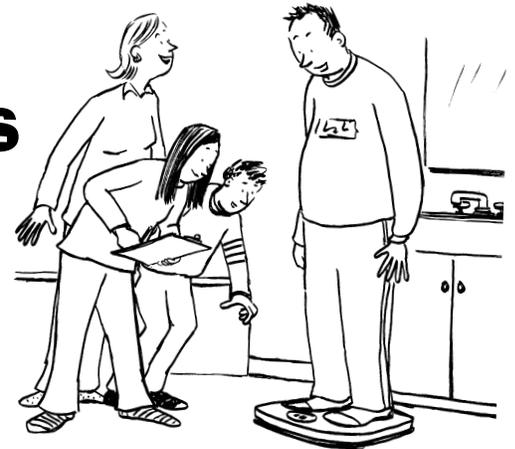
### Plan ahead

Together, write down a week's worth of meal ideas. Plotting out menus makes it easier to choose healthy foods. Plan out your exercise, too. Next to each dinner on the list, write a family activity for that day (take a walk, do a video workout).

## Why gluten-free?

You and your teen may know people who avoid gluten—in fact, gluten-free eating and gluten-free foods are much more common today. Here are answers to questions you both may be wondering about.

- **What is gluten?** It's a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye.
- **Why do people avoid gluten?** Some have been diagnosed with celiac disease, and gluten can seriously harm their digestive systems. Others might have gluten sensitivities, so eating food with gluten makes them feel sick.
- **Why are some people without problems going on gluten-free diets?** Nixing gluten has become popular among some celebrities as a way to lose weight or supposedly be healthier. But there is no proven health benefit to going gluten-free unless you need to.



### Set goals

Help each person set a weight-loss goal and weekly targets. For example, if your teen wants to shed 10 pounds, she might aim to lose a pound a week. Check your progress by weighing in once a week. *Tip:* Consider joining a community weight-loss group as a family.

### Rethink rewards

Try to find rewards that will motivate each family member—and be sure they don't involve food! For instance, your teen might get a new sweater when she reaches an interim goal and a pair of jeans when she hits her final goal. ♥



# Organized for health

Make it simpler for your tween or teen to find healthy food by organizing your kitchen with these ideas in mind.

**In the clear.** Place foods like cut-up carrots and cucumbers and other produce in see-through containers or plastic bags in your refrigerator. The easier these foods are to see and find, the more likely your child is to eat them.

**Front and center.** Store your healthiest foods where they're within easy reach. For instance,



in the pantry, place whole-wheat crackers and raisins at the front of shelves and at your youngster's eye level.

**Three categories.** Together, go through your cabinets and refrigerator to figure out which foods to eat "anytime," "sometimes" (a few times a week), and "occasionally" (every now and then). For example, vegetables are always good (filled with

nutrients), granola is fine sometimes (contains healthy whole grains, but high in sugar), and cookies are okay only once in a while (high in fat and calories). *Tip:* Label foods with green, yellow, and red stickers for a visual reminder. ♥



## Q & A Active school clubs

**Q:** My son isn't interested in playing on a sports team. Are there other school clubs that could help him stay active?

**A:** Yes! Quite a few school clubs offer teens a chance to get physical activity while pursuing their interests and making new friends.

For example, your son might join service clubs that do activities like cleaning up local parks or building houses for low-income families. Or perhaps a school gardening, an outdoor adventure, or a nature club would be a good fit. Even if your son doesn't want to be on a sports team, he might enjoy noncompetitive clubs for activities like yoga, running, or inline skating.

Suggest that he look at his school's website for a complete list and see what grabs his interest. ♥



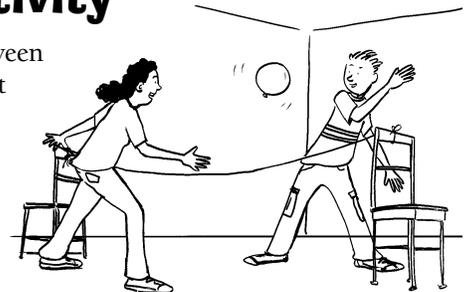
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Indoor activity

Too cold for your tween and her friends to be active outdoors? Don't worry. There are fun ways for them to get exercise indoors. Here are two ideas.

**1. Balloon volleyball.** String a piece of yarn across a basement or garage as a net, and use a balloon as the ball. Bat the balloon back and forth over the "net." Whoever lets the balloon touch the ground gives a point to the other player. Get 21 points to win. *Idea:* For a real challenge, take turns playing solo—run to each side of the net to hit the ball over without letting it drop.

**2. Obstacle course.** Let your tween and her friends set up a crazy path through your house and time each other going through it. For example, they might pile pillows to jump over or cut sides from a large box to crawl through. The best time wins. ♥



## In the Kitchen

### Better quick breads

Invite your child into the kitchen to bake these low-fat quick breads with you: they're simple to make, and the result is an impressive looking—and delicious—loaf of bread.

**Banana**

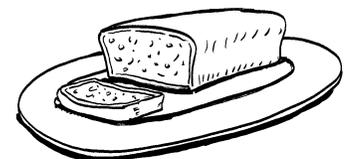
*Stir together:*

2 cups whole-wheat flour,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt,  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. baking soda

*In a separate bowl, combine:*

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup softened butter, 3 mashed bananas, 2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup nonfat yogurt

Fold the two mixtures together. Pour the batter into a greased 9" x 5" loaf pan. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.



**Zucchini-chocolate chip**

*Combine:*

2 cups whole-wheat flour,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt, 2 tsp. baking powder, 1 tsp. cinnamon,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup mini chocolate chips

*In another bowl, mix:*

2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup canola oil,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup nonfat milk, 2 cups shredded zucchini

Fold the mixtures together, and put in a greased 9" x 5" loaf pan. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. ♥

### 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