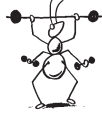


Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

November 2010



FAST TAKES

Warming up

Before your child begins working out or playing a sport, encourage her to warm up for 5 to 10 minutes. For instance, if she's going for a run, she might walk slowly, do some gentle leg and back stretches, and then walk briskly. Warming up will loosen her muscles and reduce her risk of injury.



A healthier spread

The next time your teen makes a sandwich, suggest that he skip the mayo and use fresh avocado instead. Have him mash up a quarter of a ripe avocado and spread it on the bread. Avocado adds flavor and "good" fat (monounsaturated)—the kind that's recommended for a healthy heart.

Did You Know?

Many schools ask students to sample foods to help cafeteria managers select future menu items. Encourage your child to volunteer as a taste-tester. It's a great way to expose her to new foods and flavors. And if she has a hand in choosing healthy offerings, she'll be more apt to eat them at lunchtime.

Just for fun



Q: What's black, white, green, and bumpy?

A: A pickle in a tuxedo.

Fairfield Public Schools
Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager, Food & Nutrition Services

More veggies, please

Mom: Chelsea, you need to eat more vegetables!

Chelsea: But Mom, I had french fries and onion rings today!

Does your child think that eating these fried foods counts as her daily vegetables? You can try to change that by serving healthy vegetables in ways she might like. Here are a few ideas.

Leave them raw. Tweens and teens tend to like vegetables that are crunchy, not mushy. Instead of serving cooked veggies with dinner, try putting out a plate of raw bell pepper slices, green beans, or sugar snap peas.

Scoop up salsa. Add color and spice to dishes with nutrient-rich salsa. Perhaps your child would enjoy corn and black bean salsa on turkey burgers or mixed with brown rice. Or top meat loaf or pork chops with roasted garlic and vegetable salsa.

Make a chopped salad. Your teen has probably noticed these popular salads on restaurant or fast-food menus. Make one at home by chopping romaine lettuce, cucumbers, celery, zucchini, tomatoes, or other vegetables into tiny pieces. Toss with a little olive oil and



vinegar. *Idea:* Turn the salad into a main course by adding cooked chicken, beef, shrimp, or tofu.

Serve soup. A big batch of vegetable soup makes a comforting meal on a chilly evening—and your teen can have the leftovers for an after-school snack. In a large pot, combine 2 cans low-sodium vegetable broth, 2 cups water, 1 can diced tomatoes, and vegetables such as sliced carrots, potatoes cut into chunks, canned corn, or frozen okra. Simmer for an hour or until the vegetables are tender.

Note: Children 9–18 years old should have 2–3 cups of vegetables a day. ●

Vending machine choices

When your teen is hungry and the only option is a vending machine, healthy choices can be challenging. Share these suggestions:

- Choose granola or cereal bars. They're higher in fiber and lower in sugar than candy bars.
- Opt for pretzels, whole-grain crackers, or baked chips. Avoid salty chips, which are high in sodium and saturated fat.
- Look for protein-rich options such as peanuts, and stay away from sugary treats like cookies or brownies.

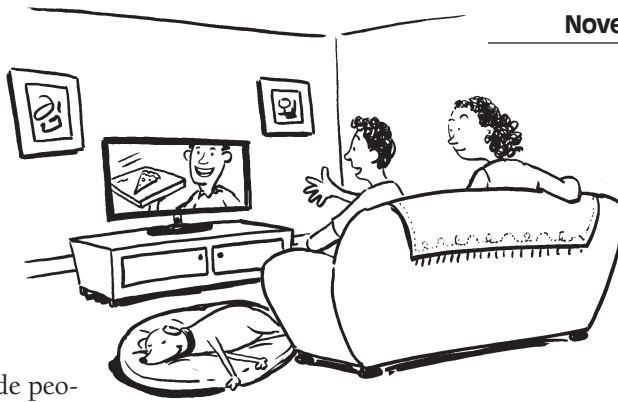
Tip: To wash down a snack, buy water rather than empty-calorie soda. Or save the money, and find a water fountain nearby! ●



Food ads: Fact or fiction?

Your child sees food advertising everywhere—in magazines and on TV, billboards, and Web sites. Help him see through the hype that can encourage unhealthy eating habits.

- Talk about ways advertisers use images to persuade people to buy their products. Look at ads together, and discuss the message a company is trying to send and whether it's true. For example, a photo of teens sharing pizza rolls at a party implies, "Eat our product, and you'll have fun!"
- Teach your teen to be on the lookout for misleading language. A chocolate-flavored cereal might be advertised as



"part of a nutritious breakfast"—when the nutritious part is the milk that's added to the cereal bowl. And fruit roll-ups might be called "all natural" although they contain no fresh fruit.

- Companies often use famous people to promote their products. If your child's favorite singer is in a commercial for a particular variety of yogurt, ask him if he thinks the yogurt is any healthier than a carton of plain yogurt (which probably has less sugar). Suggest that the two of you compare ingredients before you buy. ●

Q&A

Exercise can be fun

Q: My son says he hates to exercise. How can I get him to be more active?

A: Here's an easy tip—don't use the word "exercise." Instead, encourage your son to do a variety of fun activities that will get him moving.

For example, if he likes photography, ask him to go on photo hikes with you. He can take pictures while you walk through a park, a neighborhood trail, or downtown streets. A teen who enjoys children could babysit or work at an after-school program—running and playing with the little ones will give him a workout.

Or plan an active get-together with a friend's family. You might go ice-skating at an indoor rink, have a tennis round-robin, or visit a climbing wall. ●



ACTIVITY CORNER

10-minute workouts

Does your teen have 10 minutes?

That's enough time for a quick workout that will build strength and stamina. Here are three exercises that can add up to a 10-minute routine.

Side shuffle. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, elbows bent at your sides, and forearms parallel to the floor. Slide your left foot toward your right, and then step to the right with your right foot. Slide across the room, and then slide back. Repeat three times.

Squat jumps. Squat with your hands beside your feet. Kick your legs into a push-up position, and hop back into a squat. Finally, jump up and stretch your arms out in front. Repeat 10 times.

Walking lunges. Take a large step forward with one leg and bend both knees (your front knee should be at a 90 degree angle, and your back knee should almost touch the floor). Stand up and put your feet together. Walk forward for 10 lunges. Then, do 10 lunges back, leading with your other leg. ●



In the Kitchen Fish dishes

Fish is an important source of protein and healthy omega-3 oils. Here are easy tips for adding more fish to your family's diet.

Add crunch

Dip mild fish fillets (flounder, tilapia) into beaten egg whites. Then, dip the fish into whole-wheat bread crumbs, and sprinkle with pepper. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.

Add a topping

Grill cod, and then spoon on a thin layer of store-bought pesto sauce.



Or mix nonfat Greek yogurt with chopped cucumbers and dill, and spoon the topping over cooked salmon.

Add a rub

Mix ¼ tsp. ground cumin, ¼ tsp. chili powder, ¼ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. paprika. Using your fingertips, gently press the mixture into a meaty fish like swordfish or halibut. Grill until cooked through, or bake at 350° for about 20 minutes. ●



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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