

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2010



FAST TAKES

Fast food

Fast food doesn't have to be unhealthy food. Your teen can now find many healthier choices when he's grabbing a quick meal. Suggest that he choose grilled, not fried foods (grilled chicken, for example). Other good options: apple wedges or carrot sticks instead of fries, and fat-free milk or water rather than soda.

Skip the elevator



When trying to fit in more physical activity, little things add up. Your youngster can burn extra calories by taking the stairs at the mall or library (it's faster, too, especially during busy times). *Idea:* Challenge her to count the stairs she climbs every day. Keep track of your stair climbing, too, and compare notes each evening.

Did You Know?

Some popular energy drinks have even more caffeine than coffee. Caffeine can be addictive. Plus, it can cause anxiety, sleep problems, or heart palpitations. Explain to your teen that a healthy snack (peanut butter on whole-wheat crackers or a lean turkey sandwich) is the best way to reenergize.

Just for fun

Q: Why did Max order alphabet soup in the restaurant?

A: He wanted to read while he ate!



Right-size portions

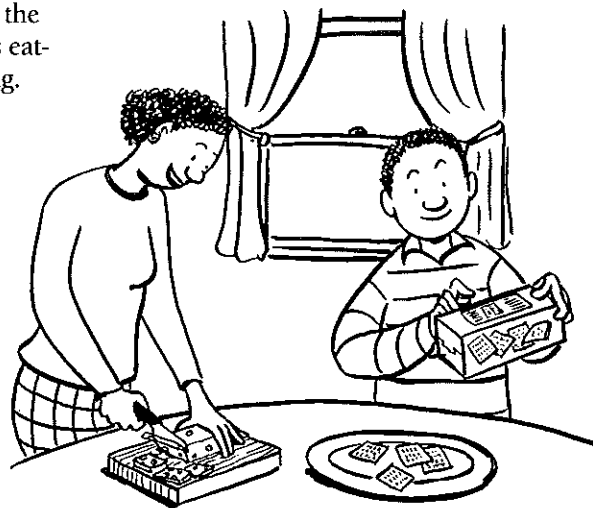
If your child is overweight, the reason might not be *what* he's eating—but *how much* he's eating. Portion sizes have increased over the years, making it easy to overeat. Help your teen bring his servings under control with these ideas.

See the amounts

Teach him to recognize what a serving size looks like. For example, even a small bag of crackers may contain two servings. Have your child read the nutrition label and then count or measure out the portion. Or he might use his hand as a guide—a serving size will usually fit in the palm of his hand.

Take smaller portions

Encourage your teen to use smaller plates, bowls, and glasses when he fixes meals or snacks. That way, he can fill his dish or glass but will be eating and drinking less. Also, instead of taking an entire bag of chips or a container of ice cream to the couch, ask him to put his



food on a plate or in a bowl. Then he won't be as likely to eat as much.

Order wisely

Portion sizes at most restaurants are larger than they should be. When you eat out, suggest that everyone share entrees or order an appetizer as a main dish. If you do order separate entrees, try to bring home half the meal to eat the next day. *Tip:* Ask the waiter to wrap half in the beginning so you're not tempted to eat the whole thing. ●

Sports for a lifetime

Kids who find a sport they enjoy will be more likely to stay active as adults. Here's how you can help:

- Encourage your teen to take up activities that she can do for a lifetime. Biking, golf, and bowling, for example, are popular at any age.
- Match the sport to your child's personality. If she enjoys being part of a group, she might prefer team sports such as softball or volleyball. If not, she may like activities she can do on her own (jogging, swimming) or with a friend (racquetball, tennis).
- Let her experiment. Discuss different sports she could try, and offer support if she goes out for a school team or joins a league. ●

