

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

September 2010



## FAST TAKES

### Exercise adds up!

Teens and tweens need 60 minutes of exercise a day. Suggest that your child write his activities on a calendar. He can record what he does (yard work, walking to school, playing basketball), as well as how many minutes he does each activity.

### Eat sitting down



Like many teens, your child may grab a snack and stand up while she eats. Encourage her to take a seat instead. She'll be more conscious of what she's eating,

which will help her feel full sooner and be less apt to overeat.

### Did You Know?

When you cut through fruits and vegetables like melons and radishes, bacteria from the rind or skin can be transferred inside. Teach your child to rinse all fruits and vegetables under water before cutting and eating them. *Tip:* Remind her to wash her hands first.

### Just for fun

**Q:** How long does it take a gymnast to get to class?

**A:** A split second.



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

## Start the day right

Does your child say she's not hungry in the morning but complain about her stomach growling before lunchtime? Try to get her in the habit of having breakfast every morning. She'll be more alert in class and more likely to eat healthy portions throughout the day.



### Get into a routine

Try to eat breakfast as a family when possible. You can motivate your teen to come to the table by having foods she'll look forward to by having foods she'll look forward to. *Example:* yogurt with a variety of toppings (strawberries, grapes, blueberries, honey, cereal, nuts). You might also suggest that everyone wake up 10 minutes earlier. Your whole family will get into the habit of making time for breakfast.

### Mix and match

Put a new twist on traditional breakfast items. For instance, if your teen likes oatmeal, mix it with peanut butter and bananas. Or create a sandwich using frozen whole-wheat pancakes and turkey

sausage patties. She'll love the taste and get the nutrients she needs.

### Make it easy

Together, make a list of your family's favorite breakfast foods (cereal, eggs, fruit salad). Post it on the refrigerator so everyone can quickly decide what they want. To save time, take turns setting the table and putting out nonperishable foods the night before.

*Note:* Eating breakfast at school is a good alternative, too. Your child can find healthy options and enjoy extra time with friends in the cafeteria. ♥

## Sports in the community

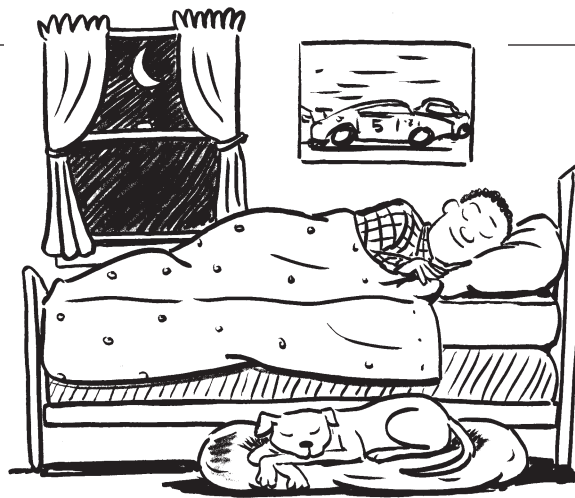
Your community is filled with opportunities for your teen or tween to keep active. Suggest these ideas for playing sports or helping other people:

- Find out about local sports leagues and activities. Your child can meet kids from other schools and try a sport such as roller hockey or an activity like karate. Also, community leagues tend to be less competitive than school sports, giving everyone a chance to participate.
- Check out ways to volunteer in community sports. Your teen could assist a team for children with special needs. Or he might volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters and play basketball or soccer with a younger child. ♥



# Healthy weight loss

One out of three young people are overweight or obese. When it comes to losing weight safely, your teen needs to eat healthy food and to exercise. But there are other key factors that can help. Here are two.



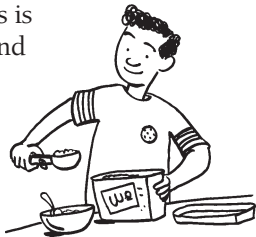
**Go slowly.** Encourage your youngster to think about weight loss as a lifestyle change, not a one-time goal. He can start with simple, doable steps like using a smaller plate to control the amount of food he eats. He could also substitute water for one sugary drink a day or have a fruit cup instead of fries when he eats out.

## Q & A Handling lactose intolerance

**Q:** We just found out that our son is lactose intolerant. He loves milk and ice cream—what alternatives can he try?

**A:** People with lactose intolerance cannot digest lactose, a sugar found in milk products. However, your son may be able to tolerate milk in small amounts or if he drinks it with food. He may also be able to eat aged cheeses (cheddar, swiss), cottage cheese, and yogurt.

The good news is that it's easy to find lactose-free foods like milk and ice cream in grocery stores. Stores also carry a variety of soy substitutes for milk, cheese, and frozen treats. Teach your teen to read ingredient lists at the grocery store. Generally, he should avoid foods that include whey, curds, milk by-products, dry milk solids, and nonfat dry milk powder.



Finally, when he goes to parties or out to eat, it may be harder to find nondairy foods. Ask his doctor if he can take an over-the-counter lactase supplement, which allows some people to eat pizza or ice cream without discomfort. ♥

### 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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**Sleep on it!** Teens and tweens need about nine hours of sleep a night. If they don't get enough sleep, they may be too tired to exercise. Also, they may snack more when they're up late. Help your child get the sleep he needs by creating a routine to fall asleep. He might read a book, write in a journal, or listen to music. ♥

## In the Kitchen Hold the bread

Tired of sandwiches? Try making lettuce wraps instead! They are easy to make, and lettuce is a fun substitute for bread.

### Deli meat

Spread a romaine lettuce leaf with mustard or low-fat mayonnaise. Top with two slices of lean turkey or ham, one slice of low-fat cheese, and a thin tomato slice. Roll the lettuce leaf to make a wrap.

### Vegetables

In a skillet, sauté finely chopped vegetables (examples: fresh broccoli,



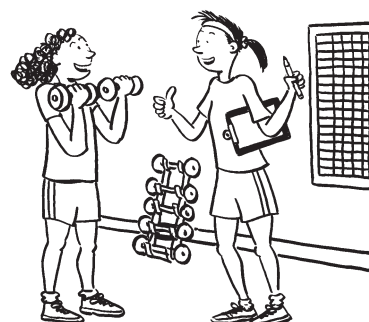
zucchini, asparagus, sweet red peppers, onions) in a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Wrap in a lettuce leaf with Thai peanut sauce. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Buddy system

Working out with a friend can motivate your youngster to exercise more often. Share these tips:

- Sign up for a class like Pilates, kickboxing, or belly dancing with a friend. Check your local parks and recreation department or a gym for class schedules. *Tip:* Practice in between classes with videos from the library.

- Create workout music CDs. Choose upbeat songs to keep each other motivated while exercising (jogging in place, doing knee bends).



- Lift weights together. Keep track of how much weight you use on each machine and how many repetitions you do. To learn how to lift weights safely, you might enroll in a free or low-cost class at the YMCA. ♥