

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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Fairfield Public Schools

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## FAST TAKES



### Healthier options

Want to make healthier versions of your family's favorite foods? Try substituting more nutritious ingredients when possible. *Examples:* canola oil instead of vegetable oil; egg whites or egg substitutes in place of eggs; applesauce instead of butter or margarine in baking ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup applesauce = 1 cup butter).

### Step up activity



Team sports offer a chance to get exercise. However, between time listening to instructions at practices or sitting on the bench during games, your youngster may not be getting the hour of activity he needs daily. Suggest that he make up the difference by taking a run, shooting baskets, or sprinting up and down hills.

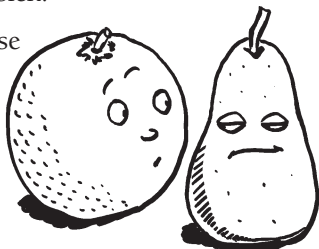
### Did You Know?

Although they're high in fat, nuts are good for the heart. Along with warding off the bad type of cholesterol, nuts contain fiber and vitamin E. But you can have too much of a good thing. Keep serving sizes to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces a day (about a handful), since the calories can add up fast.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the orange think the pear was sick?

**A:** Because it looked a little green.



## Mindful eating

These days, many teens are used to eating on the run. But by taking time to eat, your child may find that he's more apt to notice when he's full. Then, he'll be less likely to overeat. Share these tips.



### Talk flavor

Teach your teen to savor the spices and textures of foods by talking about what you're eating. You might ask him what he likes about the flavors or comment, "I love the rosemary in these roasted potatoes." *Try this:* Add flavors he can taste by using chopped fresh herbs like cilantro on fish or basil on spaghetti.

### Take time

Chewing your food slowly might sound simple. But it can seem like forever if you're used to downing a meal in minutes so you're not late to an activity. Explain to your youngster that he'll feel better after eating if he has taken time to enjoy his food. *Tip:* Suggest that he put his fork down between bites.

### Switch off

Make screen time off-limits during meals and snacks. Watching television, playing video games, and texting can all distract your child from what he's putting in his mouth. Plus, if his mind is on a TV show or his friend's text message, he's not thinking about whether he's full and should stop eating.

### Plan ahead

Look for ways to make mealtime last longer. Maybe your teen can wake up a little earlier for school, or you can schedule dinner for times when he won't feel rushed. Then, enjoy family conversations while you eat. You'll eat more slowly—and you'll get to know more about what's going on in each other's lives. ♥

## Three healthy steps

Help your child find foods with the most nutritional punch. Here are three ways:

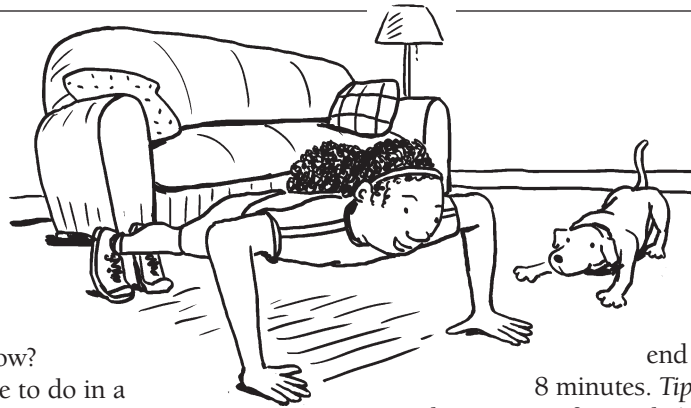
1. Choose nonfat or low-fat dairy products. Your teen will get all the calcium and protein of milk, cheese, and yogurt, without the fat.
2. Look for color. Explain that eating a rainbow of produce will help her get the nutrients and vitamins her body needs. And the natural pigments that give fruits and vegetables their hues may help prevent certain diseases (*example:* lycopene in red tomatoes).
3. Lean meats like turkey or chicken are good sources of protein. Your teen can avoid added calories and fat by getting them without skin or removing the skin if they're served that way. ♥



# Goals for fitness

Setting goals can keep your teen motivated to exercise. Share these suggestions to help her.

**Do more repetitions.** How many push-ups can your teen do now? How many would she like to be able to do in a month? Talk about setting realistic goals, such as adding a certain number of repetitions to her routine. *Example:* In week one, she might do 5 push-ups a day. In week two, 7 push-ups a day, and so on.



**Exercise longer.** Maybe your teen notices that she's winded after 10 minutes of running. Instead of setting a distance goal, what about setting a time goal? For example, each week she could add 2 minutes to her daily running time. By the end of the month, she'll have added 8 minutes. *Tip:* Have her make a playlist for the amount of time she's trying to exercise.

**Build skills.** Improving technique is another way your child can chart her fitness goals. If she plays softball, for instance, she might measure how far she's hitting the ball. Then, she could work on strengthening her arm muscles and hitting the ball farther. ♡

## PARENT TO PARENT Cooking club

My daughter Sarah was really interested in learning to cook. I don't know that much about cooking, so I checked around for places she could learn. I was happy to find out that our public library has a teen cooking club!

Sarah asked her best friend to go with her, and they started a few months ago. The club meets each Saturday, and a volunteer leads them in making a healthy recipe in the library's meeting room. When they're finished cooking—

and eating—they like to browse through the library's cookbooks.

Sarah and her friend have had so much fun with the class that they've started cooking together at home, too. I'm happy Sarah is learning how to cook—and learning about how to prepare healthy foods. And our family is happy to eat what she makes! ♡



## In the Kitchen Bean dips

Low in calories and high in fiber, beans are great for your child's body. They're also perfect for making tasty dips.

**Chickpeas (garbanzo beans).** Make a quick hummus by draining a 15-ounce can of chickpeas (saving 2 tbsp. of the liquid) and blending with 1 tbsp. lemon juice, ½ tsp. sesame oil, and ½ tsp. garlic in a blender or food processor. Add the reserved bean liquid until smooth. Serve with cut-up vegetables.

**Pinto beans.** Heat a can of nonfat refried beans in the microwave. Mix



in ¼ cup salsa. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

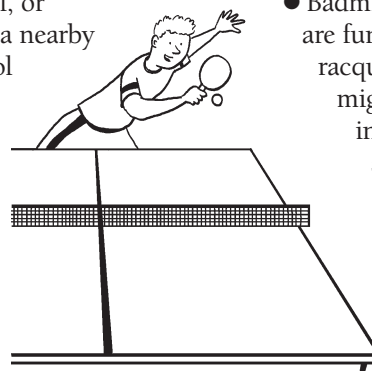
**Edamame.** Cook 12 ounces of frozen shelled edamame. In a blender or food processor, mix the beans with 1 tbsp. olive oil, ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, and ½ tsp. garlic powder. For a smoother dip, drizzle in more olive oil. Serve with baked pita chips. ♡

## ACTIVITY CORNER Racquet sports

From tennis to racquetball, your child can enjoy racquet sports into adulthood. To get him started, try these ideas:

- Look for tennis, racquetball, or squash classes at a YMCA or a nearby park. Or ask if his high school offers racquet sports as a PE course.

- Help your teen find equipment. Check out secondhand stores and garage sales. Consider asking friends and family if they have racquets they're not using.



- Encourage him to practice. He could play tennis with friends at public courts or practice alone by hitting against a backboard or a brick wall.

- Badminton and Ping-Pong are fun ways to work on racquet skills, too. You might set up badminton in your backyard. Or see if your community center has a Ping-Pong table where your teen can play with friends—or you! ♡

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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