

Teen FOOD & FITNESS

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2011

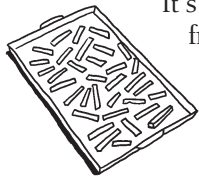
Fairfield Public Schools
Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager, Food & Nutrition Services

FAST TAKES



Baked french fries

It's easy to make french fries right at home. Try this healthy version—no frying required!



Wash 4 potatoes and cut into strips (leaving the skin on). Place in a plastic bag along with ½ tbsp. olive oil. Seal tightly, and shake. Spread out on a cookie sheet, and salt lightly. Bake at 425° for 40–45 minutes until crisp.

Flex for health

Staying flexible strengthens muscles and helps avoid injuries. And stretches can work several muscle groups at the same time. Here's one for your teen to try. Have her start from a standing position, bend over, and reach toward her toes with her fingers (keeping her back flat and her arms straight). She should hold the stretch for five seconds before returning upright.

Did You Know?

Many canned fruits are packed in sugary syrup. Help your child avoid these added calories by teaching him to read labels carefully. He should avoid cans marked "heavy syrup" or even "light syrup." Instead, advise him to look for cans that say "packed in fruit juice," "packed in its own juice," or "no sugar added."

Just for fun

Q: Where should a jogger wash his sneakers?

A: In running water!



Summer activities

As school winds down, your child is probably looking forward to having more free time over the summer months. Try to make sure she spends some of that free time on physical activity with ideas like these.



Sign up at a rec center. Your local YMCA or community center may offer a summer youth membership. Together, check out the facilities and programs (pool, open gym, exercise classes). *Tip:* Suggest that your teen sign up with a friend—she'll be more likely to go.

Start a fitness group. Encourage her to create her own health club. She could meet with several friends once or twice a week at a nearby park to play basketball, tetherball, or tennis. Or they might run together on the high school track. *Tip:* She can organize pickup games and text friends to join in.

Go to summer camp. Depending on your child's age, she could either attend or work at a sports or nature camp. Either

way, she'll get plenty of exercise. *Idea:* Call nearby community colleges and universities to see if they offer summer sports camps for teens.

Join a sports league. Look into neighborhood or community sports leagues. Your youngster might find programs ranging from volleyball and softball to lacrosse and gymnastics—some are just for fun, and others are more competitive.

Learn to swim. Swimming is great exercise. If your child doesn't know how to swim yet, now is the time to learn. Look into lessons at a community, city, or county pool. If she already swims, she could join—or coach—a swim team. Or she could take a Red Cross course to be certified as a lifeguard. ♥

Changes that count

Does your teen know that two changes can make a world of difference in his diet? Share these suggestions.

Limit fast food

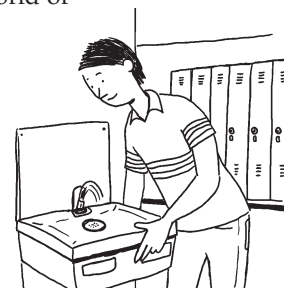
Why? Most items are high in calories and fat. For example, a regular hamburger might have 500 calories, and a super-size cheeseburger can top 1,000.

How? Suggest that he gradually cut down. If he eats fast food several times a week now, he could aim for once a week. He'll be saving money *and* calories.

Cut down on soda

Why? Children who drink soda daily are at a higher risk for obesity. Plus, soda has no nutritional value.

How? Have him replace one soda a day with flavored seltzer water, regular water, or fat-free milk. When he gets used to that, he can drop another soda a day. ♥



Healthy choices

With plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits available, healthy eating can be easier in the summer than any other time of year. Keep these tips in mind.

Get picky at picnics. Outdoor barbecues and parties are often served buffet-style. Suggest that your teen fill his plate with healthier foods and take small samples of less nutritious items. Make sure he realizes that just because a dish is called a “salad,” it may not be the best choice.



For example, mayonnaise-based dishes like macaroni or potato salad can be packed with fat and calories.

Look for protein. For many summertime activities like canoeing, hiking, or surfing, your teen will need plenty of energy the whole day. Encourage him to

eat protein-rich foods (whole grains, nuts, cheese) that will stick with him—giving him the fuel he needs for several hours.

Rethink frozen treats. Skip the ice cream, and suggest that your teen eat frozen fruit instead. You can pop grapes or cut-up peaches or nectarines into freezer bags for a healthy—and refreshing—treat. *Tip:* Your child might even like snacking on frozen peas or corn. ♡

Q & A Challenges of celiac disease

Q: My daughter has celiac disease, and until recently she was careful with her diet. Now she doesn't want to be “different,” and she's trying to eat what her friends eat. What can I do?

A: As your daughter gets older, it's not surprising that she doesn't want to stand out. It can be difficult for a teen to avoid pizza, pasta, bread, and other foods with gluten—the substance that people with celiac disease can't tolerate.

But you can explain that her friends will understand. You might ask, “How would you feel if Katie couldn't eat what you were eating?” She'll probably say it wouldn't matter at all!

Next, you can point out that it's really not worth feeling sick just so she can “fit in.” In addition, she could do damage to her health by eating these foods. Finally, it might help her to read about other teens with celiac disease and how they deal with it. Suggest that she look online at www.csaceliacs.org. ♡



ACTIVITY CORNER

On the go

Whether you're planning day trips, road trips, or other travel this summer, your family can keep up a fitness routine. Here's how.

• **Brisk walks.** Waiting for a bus, train, or plane? Instead of sitting down, walk at a fast pace around the station or airport. When you reach your destination (relative's house, motel, campground), ask about a safe walking trail. *Idea:* Borrow or rent bikes to explore the area.

• **Luggage lifts.** Hold an empty suitcase in each hand, and stand with your feet about hip-width apart. Gently raise your arms to your shoulder, forming a T with your body, and then bring them back to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.

• **Wall push-ups.** Stand 2–4 feet from a wall and lean against it, keeping your arms straight. Then, bend at the elbows, and bring your chest close to the wall. Repeat 10 times. ♡



In the Kitchen Cool salads

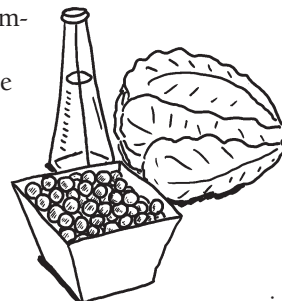
Fruit can give salads extra flavor—and a nutritional boost, too. Try these combinations.

Greens and grapes. Toss 8 oz. mixed greens with 2 cups seedless grapes (cut in half). Add 4 oz. crumbled blue cheese and, if desired, ½ cup pecan halves. Drizzle a little olive oil and vinegar on top.

Spinach and strawberries. In a large bowl, mix 1 bag baby spinach leaves with 1 cup sliced strawberries. Serve with low-fat balsamic vinaigrette.

Romaine and cherries. Add ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese and ½ cup dried tart cherries to torn romaine lettuce pieces. Top with a non-fat honey-mustard salad dressing.

Lettuce and blueberries. Tear 1 head Boston lettuce into bite-sized pieces. Mix with ½ cup fresh blueberries, ½ cup chopped walnuts, and fat-free raspberry vinaigrette. ♡



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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