

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

FAST TAKES



Hungry...or bored?

Boredom can lead to mindless snacking. Before your tween reaches for a snack, encourage him to check in with his body. Is his stomach growling? How would he rate his hunger on a scale of 1–10? If he decides he's just bored, he might go for a run or do a craft instead.

Drive less

Once your teen gets her driver's license, she may want to drive everywhere. Remind her that walking or biking for shorter trips is a good way to exercise. *Tip:* When she does drive, suggest that she park farther away so she can do some walking.



Did You Know?

Nearly one in three teens reports consuming energy drinks, even though experts say this isn't a good idea. Some contain as much caffeine as five cups of coffee and a full day's worth of added sugar! For a healthy energy boost, encourage your child to keep his water bottle and a banana on hand.

Just for fun

Q: What has a big mouth yet never speaks?

A: A jar.



Fast food: Better choices

Your teenager could easily eat all the calories she needs in a day during just one fast-food meal. Or she can make much better choices, feel and be healthier, and still enjoy her favorite drive-thru. Share these strategies for navigating fast-food menus and coming out ahead.



Gather information

Encourage your child to look up nutrition information ahead of time. Facts can be found online, in apps for individual restaurants, in brochures, or on menu boards. She may experience sticker shock when she sees the calorie and nutrition counts for items she regularly orders—and be inspired to find better options.

burger-fries-soda package and use the nutrition information to design healthier meals for herself.

Save it

Once she comes up with her own choices, she should record them on her phone or in a pocket notebook. That way, when she pulls into a fast-food place on a busy day, she'll know what she wants, and she won't be tempted to revert to her old calorie-laden selections. *Tip:* She could add reminder notes, such as "Hold the sauce" or "Eat only half the bun." ♣

Make your own combo

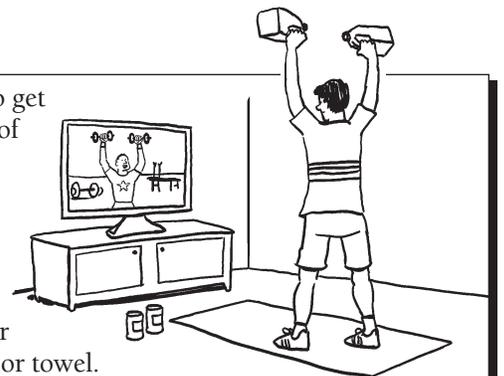
Kids like combo meals because they require fewer decisions and look like a good value for the money. But they're not a good value for your teen's health. Suggest that she forget the

Set up a home gym

Your tween can create a home gym to get into a workout routine and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Pick a spot. He should choose a space with room for activities like push-ups and squats. It might be a corner of the basement or the middle of the family room. A carpeted floor will work fine, or he can add a yoga mat, carpet remnant, or towel.

Equip it. Suggest that your child use soup cans (unopened) or water-filled milk jugs for weights. Have him check neighborhood bulletin or online boards and thrift stores for free or used equipment like dumbbells and resistance bands. He could also stream free exercise classes on a phone, computer, or TV. ♣



Nutrition myths busted

There are lots of nutrition myths out there. We debunk three popular ones below.

Myth #1: Carbs should be avoided

Low- or no-carbohydrate diets don't work faster and aren't better for you than other diets. People on low-carb diets might lose weight, but that's likely because they're cutting out processed snacks that are high in carbs. In fact, healthy carbs such as fruit and whole grains are part of a balanced diet.



Myth #2: Fats are bad

All fats are not created equal. Saturated fats are indeed not good for your heart, but unsaturated or monounsaturated fats are heart-healthy. Healthy fats are found in plant-based foods like olive oil, avocados, and nuts. Saturated fats are found mostly in meat and dairy products and in processed foods like margarine.

Myth #3: Chocolate causes acne

While many people think chocolate causes acne, research has never proven that link. In reality, cacao (the main ingredient in chocolate) is high in antioxidants and can be good for your skin. But choose dark chocolate—the higher the percentage of cacao, the more antioxidants it contains. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Take it from the pros

Pass on these tips from athletes to encourage your tween or teen to reach her fitness goals.

Warm up, cool down. “Any workout should be sandwiched between a warm-up and a cool-down. Together, they help prevent injuries and get your body ready for what it's about to do next. Try walking slowly for 5–10 minutes before and after your workout.”



Hydrate right. “The best way to prevent dehydration is to drink plenty of water all day long. Keep a water bottle on hand during exercise as well.”

Work on technique. “Pick a few moves for your sport or a few exercises to work on, and pay close attention to your technique. Watch videos online, and seek advice from your coach, a PE teacher, or a more experienced friend.” ♡

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

Teen Food & Fitness™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

ISSN 1935-8865



Q & A Positive body image

Q: My son Liam compares himself to taller boys at school and “buff” guys on TV and then complains that he's smaller.

How can I help him?

A: First, reassure your son that how he feels is normal. Then, remind him that his body is unique and will change over time. Also, point out that just because a celebrity looks muscular doesn't mean he's healthy.

Encourage your child to focus on his strengths (he's a whiz with technology, for example). You might also brainstorm ways to get more exercise. Maybe you could start going on family hikes. Or he could take up an activity like karate or racquetball. Let him know the goal isn't to get “buff,” but to be strong and healthy.

Finally, avoid talking negatively or excessively about your size—or other people's—around him. This will help him learn not to focus on appearance. ♡



In the Kitchen Pizza, please!

Satisfy your child's craving for pizza with these healthier twists.

Pita calzone

Slice a whole-grain pita along its edge so the toppings can go inside. Stuff with 2 tbsp. salsa, sliced mushrooms, black olive halves, and 1 tbsp. crumbled feta cheese. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes.

Mushroom “crust”

Scoop out the inside of four large portabella mushroom caps. Fill with pizza sauce, shredded mozzarella cheese, diced onions,

chopped spinach, and a sprinkle of dried basil. Place on a roasting pan coated with nonstick spray. Bake at 400° until the cheese melts, about 15 minutes.

Hawaiian top

Spread a thin whole-grain pizza crust (frozen, thawed) with ½ cup marinara sauce. Top with ½ cup chopped ham, ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese, and ½ cup chopped pineapple (fresh or canned and drained). Bake at 400° for 15–20 minutes. ♡

