

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2009



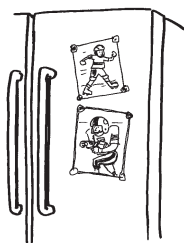
Gwinnett School Nutrition Program

Karen Crawford, MS, RD, CSP

FAST TAKES

Action shots

Inspire your child to stay fit by displaying photos of him doing something active. You can decorate the refrigerator or mantel with pictures of him playing football or rollerblading with friends. They'll remind him that an active lifestyle is something to be proud of.



Lemon aid

Lemon juice can add nutrients and flavor to food and drink. An excellent source of vitamin C, lemons are available year-round. Put lemon juice on chicken and fish before baking or grilling. Or suggest that your youngster squeeze a lemon into ice water to perk up the taste.

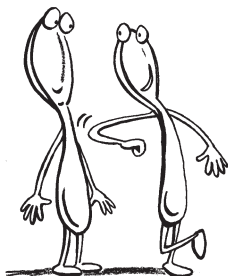
Did You Know?

Research shows that 80 percent of obese teenagers become obese adults. Explain to your child that eating habits form early and are harder to change as people grow older. The good news is that even small changes can make a difference. For example, you might encourage her to cut back on sodas or add 10 to 15 minutes of exercise to her daily routine.

Just for fun

Q: What did one spoon say to the other?

A: Let's stir things up.



Sensible eating

"I'm stuffed!"

Does your child say this after meals? Try these suggestions to help her cut down on overeating.

Dish out portions. Keep serving dishes off the table. Family-style meals make it easier to put too much on your plate and then reach for seconds. Instead, put portions onto each plate, and leave any extra on the kitchen counter. If your child has to get up for more, she may be less tempted to make the effort.

Slow down. Explain to your teen that it takes her stomach about 20 minutes to tell her brain that she's full. Encourage her to eat slowly by putting down her fork between bites and chewing thoroughly. She'll eat less and digest her food more easily.

Eat regularly. Skipping meals—whether to diet or save time—often leads to overeating. When your teen lets herself



get too hungry, she may make up for it by eating more than she needs. Remind her to eat throughout the day, including healthy snacks (fruit, whole-grain cereal) to tide her over between meals.

Make meals count. Encourage your child to fill up on foods rich in fiber or protein (brown rice, black beans), and she won't be as likely to crave candy bars and chips. Foods that have lots of nutrients will keep her full longer than those with empty calories. ♥

Just-right servings

One way to prevent overeating is to watch portion size. And there's plenty to watch for, because servings have grown dramatically since you were a kid! Share these examples with your teen:

■ A typical 3-inch bagel 20 years ago had about 140 calories. Now, grocery stores and bakeries offer jumbo bagels with more than twice that amount. Cut bagels in half or serve mini-bagels.

■ A blueberry muffin 20 years ago weighed 1.5 ounces and contained about 210 calories. Today's muffin is often more than three times larger and has 500 calories. Suggest that your teen order a low-fat muffin and wrap half of it to eat later.

Tip: Your child can test his portion knowledge with the quiz at <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion>. ♥

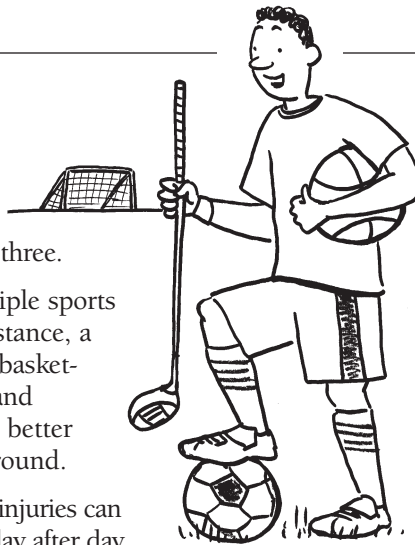


Mix it up

Variety counts when it comes to sports. Cross-training, or doing more than one type of physical activity, has many benefits. Here are three.

1. Develop different strengths. Multiple sports will keep your teen fit in different ways. For instance, a combination of yoga, racquetball, rowing, and basketball will build flexibility, endurance, strength, and coordination. A well-rounded athlete will be in better shape than one who does only one sport year-round.

2. Reduce the risk of injury. Overuse injuries can happen when your child does the same motion day after day.



Swinging a tennis racquet might cause tennis elbow, and running track can lead to shin splints. To help prevent problems, a tennis player might swim to work out his arms, and a runner could ride a bike to strengthen leg muscles.

3. Keep interest up. Kids can benefit by taking a break from their main sport every now and then. A soccer player, for example, could stay active in the off-season by joining the volleyball team or taking karate lessons rather than attending a soccer clinic. He may find he's even more excited about soccer when the next season begins. ♣

PARENT TO PARENT



"Sometimes" foods

When my daughter Michelle decided to lose weight, she started thinking of every food as "good" or "bad." Salads and fruit were good, and ice cream and cookies were bad. She tried hard to eat only the healthy ones, and she'd feel ashamed when she ate something that was "bad."

I talked to the school nurse, and she suggested that Michelle change her categories to "everyday" and "sometimes."

The nurse said that a cookie or an ice cream cone is okay "sometimes"—otherwise Michelle will feel deprived, and it will be harder to stick to a diet.

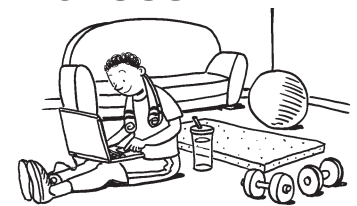
I shared this idea with my daughter, and it has really affected the way she feels about food. She has an occasional brownie without feeling guilty, and she feels better now that she's eating a healthier diet. ♣



ACTIVITY CORNER

Keep track of fitness

Technology offers new ways to track physical activity. These tools can help your child stay motivated and celebrate progress:



- Have him start an exercise journal at www.myfitnessjournal.com or keep track of his workouts at www.presidentschallenge.org. Recording his daily activity will help him reach the recommended one hour of physical activity each day.
- Suggest that he pair up with a friend or relative and send daily e-mails or text messages about what they're doing to stay in shape ("Just finished running three miles!"). They can keep each other motivated by writing encouraging replies ("Keep up the great work!").
- Create a family fitness blog at www.blogger.com or www.livejournal.com. Take turns writing posts ("Our favorite hiking trails," "Golf camp"). Look for other bloggers who write about exercise, and read their entries for new workout ideas. *Safety Note:* Monitor your teen's online activities to be sure he visits only safe Web sites. ♣

In the Kitchen

Pasta, please!

Spaghetti, bowties, macaroni... turn pasta into healthy dinners that will bring your teen to the table!

Chicken primavera

Bake 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, and cut into cubes. Boil and drain 1 lb. of spaghetti. Combine the spaghetti and chicken with 2 tbsp. olive oil, ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, and 2 cups microwaved vegetables (sliced carrots, broccoli pieces).

Caprese salad

Cook 1 lb. bowtie pasta. Drain and rinse with cold water. Add 1 pint grape tomatoes,

½ cup mozzarella cheese chunks, and ¼ cup chopped fresh basil. Toss with 2 tbsp. olive oil and 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar.

Noodle soup

Heat 4 cups low-sodium broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable) to boiling. Reduce heat, and add 1 cup uncooked macaroni, 1 cup frozen mixed vegetables, and 1 can white beans (drained). Cook about 10 minutes or until pasta and vegetables are slightly soft.

Tip: Try using whole-grain or multi-grain pasta. ♣



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 Aspen Publishers, Inc.
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