

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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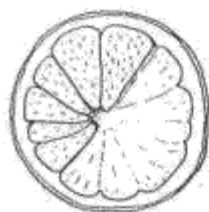
Smackover-Norphlet School District
Diann Bailey, Cafeteria Director



FAST TAKES

Grapefruit break

For a vitamin C-rich treat, suggest that your teen enjoy a grapefruit. He might peel it and eat it in sections like an orange so he gets the fiber in the pith (the white flesh) between the segments. A delicious alternative is to cut a grapefruit in half, sprinkle on a little brown sugar, and broil until bubbly.



Fitness role models

Your child will discover new ways to work out by looking to people she admires. For example, maybe her gym teacher plays roller derby or her track coach lifts weights. Or she could read biographies of famous athletes to learn how they stay in shape off the field. She'll see that there are many opportunities for adding fun physical activity to her life.

Did You Know?

Binge eating is the most common eating disorder, and like anorexia and bulimia, it may appear as early as age 11. Symptoms include frequently eating alone or in secret, continuing to eat despite being uncomfortably full, or consuming large amounts of food in short periods of time. If you notice any of these signs in your child, call your pediatrician.

Just for fun

Q: What is black, white, green, and bumpy?

A: A pickle wearing a tuxedo!



A recipe for strong bones

Calcium is the main mineral your tween or teen needs to build strong bones and teeth that last a lifetime. And her growing body requires a lot of it—1,300 mg daily. Here are ways to fit enough calcium into her day.

Dairy products

One cup of milk has 300 mg of calcium, and 1 cup of plain yogurt contains more than 400 mg. Encourage your teen to drink skim milk with her school lunch and eat nonfat yogurt for a midday snack. That's 700 mg—she's more than halfway to her daily total.

Green vegetables

It may surprise your child to learn that dark leafy greens like chard, turnip greens, and mustard greens contain calcium. Suggest that she scramble 2 eggs with 3 cups raw spinach (100 mg calcium) for breakfast, add 1½ cups chopped kale (50 mg calcium) to an after-school smoothie, and



eat 1 cup steamed broccoli (50 mg calcium) at dinner. There's another 200 mg, so she's up to 900 mg for the day.

Proteins

Different sources of protein will also add calcium to your tween's diet. She could toss ½ cup cooked tofu into a salad or rice for 400 mg calcium. Or she could make a salmon and bean burrito with 4 oz. canned salmon (200 mg calcium) and 2 cups white beans (another 200 mg). Either way, she has reached the goal of 1,300 mg! ●

Active volunteering

Your teenager can stay active and help his community at the same time. Suggest these ideas.

Plogging. Picking up litter + jogging = plogging! It's like interval training (switching between two or more activities that require different rates of speed or degrees of effort). Plus, squatting down to retrieve litter strengthens core and leg muscles.

Gardening. Your tween might volunteer at a community or school garden or an urban farm. He can help plant and harvest healthy vegetables for people to eat. Have him call the parks and recreation department or visit communitygarden.org to find locations. ●



Seeing through food ads

Does your tween find himself craving pizza or a burger after seeing it advertised? Help him learn about marketing techniques and make healthy choices with this advice.

● **Be ad aware.** Talk with your child about ads you see. Say a billboard shows attractive people drinking soda on a beach. Encourage him to think about who sponsored the ad (the soda company), what they want (to sell soda), and what their message is (you'll look good and have



fun if you buy our soda). Then, ask him if he really thinks he'll look better and be happier if he drinks that soda. Chances are he'll realize the answer is no.

● **Watch out for social media.** Companies are increasingly marketing junk food and fast food

to tweens and teens on social media. Have your child obey age guidelines on social media (13 is the minimum age for most sites). Also, suggest that he limit his exposure to ads for less-nutritious foods by "liking" and "following" health-conscious companies and blocking ones that peddle junk food. ●



ACTIVITY CORNER

Everyday strength training

Your teen can use her own body-weight to build muscles—no equipment needed! Share these easy-to-follow exercises for daily strength training.

1. Diamond push-ups. Get into a regular push-up position, but move your hands together in a diamond shape. Work up to 3 sets of 10 each. *Tip for beginners:* Do push-ups with your knees on the floor.

2. Tuck jumps. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Jump, bringing your knees to your chest. Land with your knees slightly bent in the starting position. Jump for 30 seconds.

3. Curtsy lunges. From a standing position, step your right foot behind your left leg, and lower to a lunge (bending your left knee and bringing your right knee almost to the floor). Do 10 "curtsies," then switch to the other leg for 10 more. ●



Q & A

How to choose frozen dinners

Q: My son loves frozen meals, and I have to admit that they certainly are convenient. How can I help him select the healthiest ones?

A: Some frozen meals are definitely better for your son than others. The main problem is sodium (salt)—so tell him to watch out, because low-fat or "lean" meals often contain extra sodium to add flavor.

Encourage him to read labels carefully. As a rule of thumb, he can look for meals with less than 600 mg of sodium and 4 g of saturated fat. (*Hint:* He'll need to check the serving size—one package could contain two servings, meaning that 600 mg of sodium becomes 1,200 mg if he eats the whole thing!)

Have him read the product description and ingredient list for keywords, too. What's he looking for? Whole grains, lean meats, and lots of vegetables. What should he avoid? Fried foods, breaded items, and cream sauces. ●



In the Kitchen

Healthy and fruity desserts

Fruit is naturally sweet and nutritious, which makes it an ideal dessert all by itself. But these recipes just might make fruit the star of your next meal.

Banana cookies

Mash 2 small ripe bananas in a bowl. Mix in 1 cup regular uncooked oats and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanut butter or sunflower seed butter. Roll into 6 balls, place on a baking sheet, and flatten with the bottom of a glass. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes or until golden brown.



Apple nachos

Cut an apple into thin slices. Top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plain Greek yogurt and 1 tsp. honey. Then, sprinkle on $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh or frozen (thawed) blueberries, 1 tbsp. dried cranberries, and 1 tbsp. sliced almonds.

Caramel grapes

Stick toothpicks in seedless grapes (2 cups). Melt 1 cup caramel candies and 2 tbsp. heavy cream in a small pot over low heat. Dip grapes in the caramel and place on a parchment-lined plate to set. ●

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
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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