

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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W.A. Cunningham Intermediate School 234

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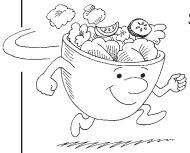
## FAST TAKES

### Track screen habits

How much time does your child spend in front of a screen? Have her keep track for a week. Ask her to record minutes spent watching television, playing video games, or surfing the Internet. If she averages more than an hour a day, consider setting goals for cutting back. Less screen time could mean more active time.

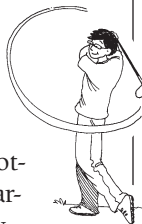
### Spring salads

There's a good reason animals eagerly munch on the first green shoots of spring—they're loaded with nutrients. Romaine lettuce, spinach, arugula, and other greens are high in many vitamins, including vitamin K, which improves bone density. So encourage your teen to eat lots of salads.



### Did You Know?

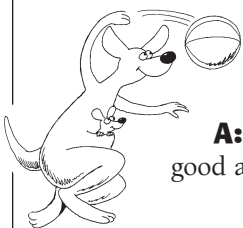
Being physically fit can make asthma symptoms less severe. Activities like golf, yoga, baseball, football, and gymnastics are particularly good because they involve short bursts of activity rather than constant effort. Talk to a doctor about the best level of exertion for your youngster.



### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the coach want the kangaroo on the basketball team?

**A:** Because he was good at jumpshots.



## Eat like a champ

Your child wants to win. You want to be sure she has the energy she needs for practices and games. Here are answers to the sports nutrition questions you both have.

### When's the best time to eat?

Ideally, your athlete should have a balanced meal two to four hours before playing or practicing. If that timing isn't possible (swim practice is 6 a.m., soccer is right after school), suggest lighter fare. *Examples:* low-fat yogurt, oatmeal, or a bagel with fat-free cream cheese.

### What about after practice or games?

Encourage your teen to have a small energy-boosting snack as soon as possible after exercising. Energy bars, bananas, and oranges are all good choices. Then, she can have a full meal a few hours later.

### Are carbs best for a pre-game meal?

Foods containing complex carbohydrates, such as bread, pasta, fruits, and vegetables are a great form of energy. Be



sure to include protein and calcium, too. A good pre-game lunch could be a tuna sandwich (made with celery and low-fat mayonnaise) on a whole-grain bun, an apple, and a glass of fat-free milk.

### How much should my child drink?

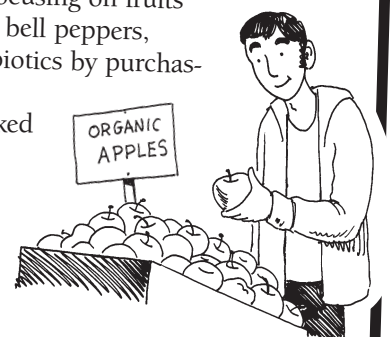
Drinking water before and after playing will keep your teen performing—and feeling—her best. Urge her to drink one to two cups of water before games and practices, and to sip frequently throughout the day. *Note:* Sports drinks are not necessary unless your teen is exercising strenuously for more than an hour or in very hot weather. ♥

## Going organic

You've probably noticed more organic foods on your grocer's shelves.

Organic foods are pesticide free, and many people feel better about buying them. Since they cost more, you might consider focusing on fruits and vegetables with peels you eat (apples, grapes, bell peppers, zucchini). And you can avoid hormones and antibiotics by purchasing organic milk.

When buying fresh organic foods (produce, baked goods), select only what your family will consume in a few days. The foods will spoil more quickly because they aren't treated with waxes or preservatives. Also, let your children know that organic fruits and vegetables taste the same even if their shape, color, or size is different. ♥



# Check the label

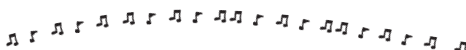
Teach your youngster to read and understand food labels, and you'll help him develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime. Try these suggestions.

**Practice makes perfect.** Go food shopping together, and give your child practice in reading labels. Ask him to find the lowest-sodium can of chicken noodle soup or the highest-fiber cereal. He'll get used to reading labels and will be more likely to make smart choices.



**The 20/5 rule.** Show your teen a quick trick for checking food labels. He should look for foods that have 5% or less of the daily value of fat, sugar, sodium, and cholesterol and 20% or more of other nutrients, minerals, and vitamins. A fast scan can tell him if an item is worth eating.

**How much?** Point out the serving size listed on the label—it's often different from the amount of food in the package. For example, a bag of pretzels may weigh 16 oz., while the nutritional information is based on an 8-oz. serving. Your child will see that eating the whole bag means twice the calories and nutrients listed. ♣



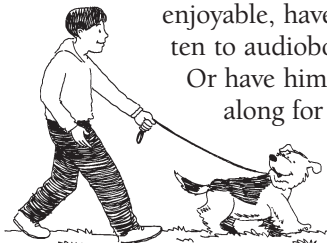
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Take a walk

When it comes to exercise, walking is the perfect choice. It requires no special skill or equipment, and it can fit into even the busiest schedule. These strategies can get your child moving:

- Start a walking club. Pair up with a friend who has a youngster the same age. The four of you can walk together a few times a week.

- To make walking more enjoyable, have your teen listen to audiobooks or music. Or have him take the dog along for company.



- Get errands done by walking

together to the pharmacy, bank, or convenience store. If you need to return something to a neighbor, ask your youngster to walk it there.

- Vary the routine by mapping out different routes in your neighborhood. *Note:* Look for safe streets with sidewalks and little traffic. ♣



## Q & A

### Eating disorders

**Q:** I'm concerned that my daughter may be developing an eating disorder. What should I watch for?

**A:** Eating disorders are a serious problem that affect many teens and even preteens. Some warning signs are:

- ❖ gaining or losing a lot of weight
- ❖ being obsessed with calories and food
- ❖ using diet pills or laxatives
- ❖ exercising compulsively
- ❖ being moody or anxious, especially around mealtime
- ❖ wearing clothes that are baggy or too big
- ❖ refusing to attend social events, particularly those involving food



Talk to your child's teachers and guidance counselor to see if they notice any problems. For example, they might see that your teen avoids the cafeteria at lunchtime. If you suspect that she has an eating disorder, tell her you want to help. Ask her doctor for the name of a specialist, and seek treatment immediately. ♣

## In the Kitchen

### Panini punch

Need a quick, nutritious lunch idea for your teen? Try a panini!

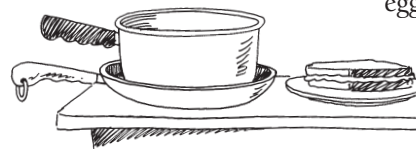
All you need is a skillet and a weight—a heavy pan pressing down on the sandwich works just as well as a panini maker. Assemble ingredients like these, and grill three to four minutes on each side.

**Chicken.** Drizzle barbecue sauce on multi-grain bread. Add slices of baked chicken, low-fat Swiss cheese, and roasted red peppers.

**Deli meat.** Spread honey mustard on rye bread. Layer with turkey or lean roast beef and provolone cheese.

**Tomato mozzarella.** On a French baguette, lay thick slices of skim mozzarella cheese and fresh tomato. Cover with a spoonful of pesto sauce.

**Vegetables.** Brush whole-wheat Italian bread with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Top with cooked, sliced eggplant, red onion, and yellow squash; spinach; and low-fat Monterey Jack cheese. ♣



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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