

# 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

### Grapefruit break

When your child reaches for fruit, suggest that she have a vitamin C-rich grapefruit. To get more fiber, she can peel it and eat it in sections like an orange. A delicious alternative is to cut a grapefruit in half, sprinkle on a little brown sugar, and broil until bubbly.

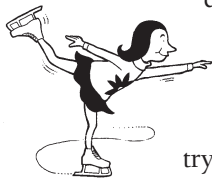


### Did You Know?

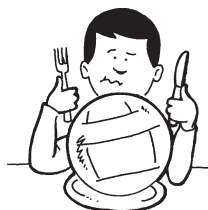
Aerobic activity is good for the body and mind. Vigorous exercise, such as running or hip-hop dancing, causes the body to produce endorphins—hormones that bring a feeling of well-being and relaxation. It's just another great reason for your teen or tween to work out.

### Ice-skating

Gliding around an ice rink is a fun way to exercise—and socialize—during winter. Look for an indoor arena or outdoor community rink. Then try skating as a family, or encourage your teen to go with friends. She'll improve balance, build strength, and burn calories.



### Just for fun



**Q:** What can you serve but never eat?

**A:** A volleyball.

## The whole story

Why add whole grains to your child's diet? Because whole grains like oats, rice, and wheat are much healthier than processed versions—and they taste good, too. Try these ideas.

### Start the day

Hot cereal is a cozy kickoff for a chilly day. Microwave oatmeal, cream of wheat, or muesli, and top with sliced apples or bananas. Spread a whole-wheat English muffin with light cream cheese, or make a cheese melt by toasting whole-grain bread with a slice of low-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack.

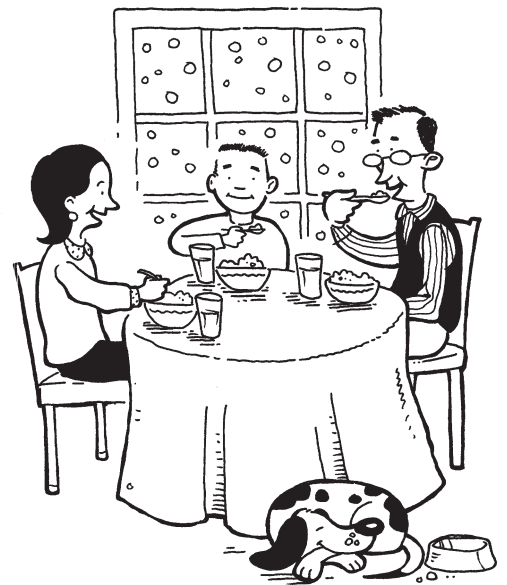
### Stock your pantry

When shopping, look for whole-wheat flour or other whole grains as the first ingredient on cereals, breads, snacks, and rice products. Words like "enriched" or "bleached" are clues the product isn't whole grain. Try to choose snacks like popcorn (it's always whole grain), and whole-wheat pretzels and tortilla chips.

### Try new foods

Quinoa, bulgur, barley...there's a whole world of grains out there. Try quinoa wherever you would use rice—your family will enjoy its slightly nutty flavor. Cook barley with mushrooms for a tasty side dish. You'll find all these grains in your supermarket, with easy directions on the packages.

**Menu idea:** With your teen, make this easy curried couscous salad to keep in the refrigerator. Cook 2 cups couscous, and add ¼ cup olive oil mixed with ¼ cup plain yogurt and 1 tsp. curry powder. Stir in 2 cups of your favorite beans, vegetables, fruit, or nuts (garbanzo beans, grated carrots, golden raisins, pine nuts). ♥



## Exercise role model

As kids get older, some tend to exercise only when they play sports. Encourage your child to make physical activity a year-round habit by setting an example yourself:

- Whether you go dancing on weekends, play racquetball after work, or exercise at a gym, chat about your routine. Tell your teen why you chose kickboxing, for instance, or how you decide when to exercise. ("I work out in the morning so I'll feel energetic all day.") Explaining your choices can help her decide to exercise.

- Try to be consistent. Fit physical activity into weekends, holidays, and vacations. Find time for a walk around the block or a game of basketball with visiting relatives, for instance.

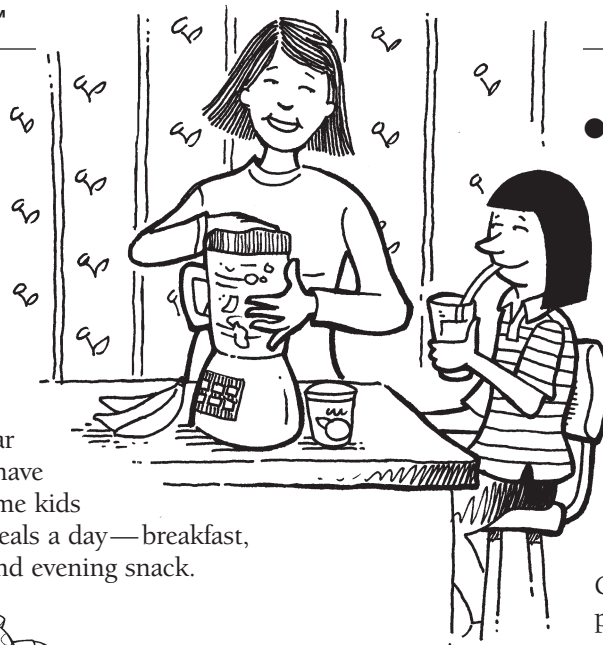
You'll show your child that being active is a priority. ♥



# Late-night snacks

As your child gets older and stays up later, she may snack later, too. Here are some tips to help her choose the right late-night treats and stick to healthy portions:

- Encourage her to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If she eats regular meals, she won't be as tempted to have a huge snack late at night. *Idea:* Some kids actually do better with five small meals a day—breakfast, lunch, after-school snack, dinner, and evening snack.



- You might have a healthy family snack an hour or two after dinner. For example, you could make smoothies (blend any flavor of low-fat yogurt with any kind of fruit), or dip graham crackers in fat-free vanilla or banana pudding.

- If your teen has her own bedtime snack, help her stick to simple, healthy foods. Have her avoid sugar and caffeine, which can keep her awake. Also, salty foods may make her thirsty in the night, and spicy ones can cause heartburn. Good choices include grapes, low-fat peanut butter on celery, or a turkey sandwich. ●

## ACTIVITY CORNER



### Family cookbook

Here's a fun project that will teach your child about recipes and nutrition—and result in a holiday gift for family and friends. Have her make a family cookbook!

First, she can invite relatives to mail or e-mail their favorite recipes to her. Then, help her organize them by type of dish (appetizer, entrée, dessert).



Suggest that your teen put the recipes into a computer document. She can add the title and the contributor's name at the top. At the end, she might give low-fat or vegetarian variations (substitute fat-free milk or tofu, for instance).

Have her print copies and place them in three-ring binders to give as gifts (be sure to include everyone who contributed). Finally, pick a recipe to prepare together. ●

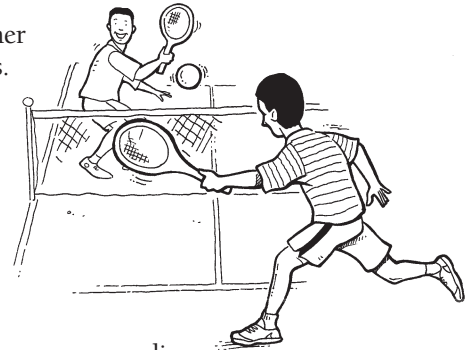
## PARENT TO PARENT

### Playing together

Last fall, I saw a flyer for a father-son tennis league at the local recreation center. It seemed like a great idea, so my son Robbie and I decided to sign up.

One evening a week, we join a group of other fathers and sons to learn skills and play games. The instructors keep us moving constantly—it's definitely a workout! Robbie and I also practice together on weekends, and we've become friends with another father and son who sometimes play doubles with us.

Trying tennis together was a great idea. Playing with Robbie has kept me motivated, and I think it's done the same for him. Best of all, it has given us an activity to share, which means spending more time together. ●



## In the Kitchen

### Hearty soups

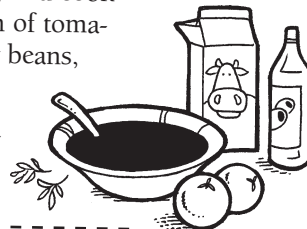
Soup doesn't have to take all day to make! Try these three quick ideas.

**Minestrone.** Heat 6 cups canned or boxed low-sodium broth (vegetable, beef). Add 1 cup uncooked macaroni and 2 cups chopped vegetables (onions, peas, potatoes), and cook until tender. Stir in a can of tomatoes and a can of kidney beans, and simmer until hot.

**Miso.** Add miso (a low-fat soup base found in the Asian section

of a grocery store) to hot water according to package directions. Toss in thin rice noodles (also in the Asian section), cubed tofu, and spinach. Stir until the miso dissolves. Cook until the noodles and spinach are soft.

**Tomato.** Combine a can of low-sodium tomato soup with 1 cup fat-free milk. Add 1 chopped tomato, a pinch of basil and oregano, and a few drops of olive oil. Heat and serve. ●



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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