

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

February 2008

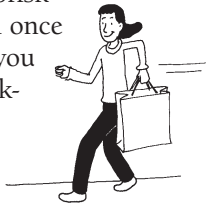
W.A. Cunningham Intermediate School 234

Ms. Susan Schaeffer

FAST TAKES

Shop 'n' fit

Many teens love shopping. Encourage your child to put some exercise into one of her favorite pastimes. She can walk to the shops or even take a few brisk laps inside the mall once she's there. When you go together, try walking for 10 minutes after each stop in a store.



Café light

Coffeehouses can be fun places, but the sugar and whole milk in many drinks can add unwanted calories and fat. Suggest that your child order wisely by choosing fat-free milk, saying no to whipped cream, avoiding pre-sweetened blends, and requesting sugar-free syrup.



Did You Know?

Eighty-six percent of school districts teach nutrition. Show support for these programs by talking to your youngster about what she's learning. You can ask specific questions: "How many servings of vegetables do they recommend?" "What did they say about whole wheat?" Then, try to put what she's learning into practice at home.

Just for fun

Q: What do you get from a pampered cow?

A: Spoiled milk!



Find your activity niche

All kids need exercise—but what's the right kind for your child? Have her take this quiz to find out what she'll like best.

1. My favorite way to play is:

- a) on an organized team
- b) with friends and family
- c) on my own

2. When I'm playing, I like to hear:

- a) the shouts of teammates and spectators
- b) friendly conversation
- c) my own thoughts

3. To me, keeping score is:

- a) the name of the game
- b) less important than having fun
- c) not on my radar screen

4. When it comes to physical contact, I like:

- a) plenty of it
- b) some of it
- c) my own space

If you answered:

A to most questions, you're a team player. You love to compete. Consider football, lacrosse, basketball, hockey, softball, volleyball, or soccer.

B to most questions, you enjoy friendly play. You'll like joining with friends and family for casual games of badminton, tennis, golf, or street hockey, or activities like hiking, skiing, or snowboarding.

C to most questions, you prefer doing your own thing. Try jogging, exercising to workout



tapes, swimming at a community pool, or joining a fitness center.

Note: Whatever your teen's preference, the important thing is for her to be active. Urge her to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day to keep her body—and mind—healthy. ♥

Heart-healthy foods

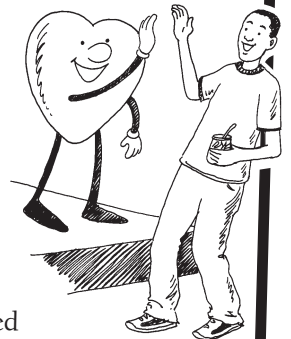
February is American Heart Month. Why not take this opportunity to help your child make heart-healthy food choices? Try these ideas.

Include "super-foods."

Add these five antioxidant-rich foods to family meals: blueberries, salmon, soy (tofu, soy milk, soybeans), oatmeal, and spinach.

Reduce fat. Serve lean meat and poultry, low-fat cheese, and fat-free milk and yogurt. Also, avoid creamy sauces and deep-fried foods like fried chicken or onion rings.

Stock fruits and vegetables. Keep a supply of bananas, berries, oranges, red grapes, watermelon, and apples. Offer broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage, as well as green, leafy vegetables such as spinach and lettuce. ♥



Losing weight safely

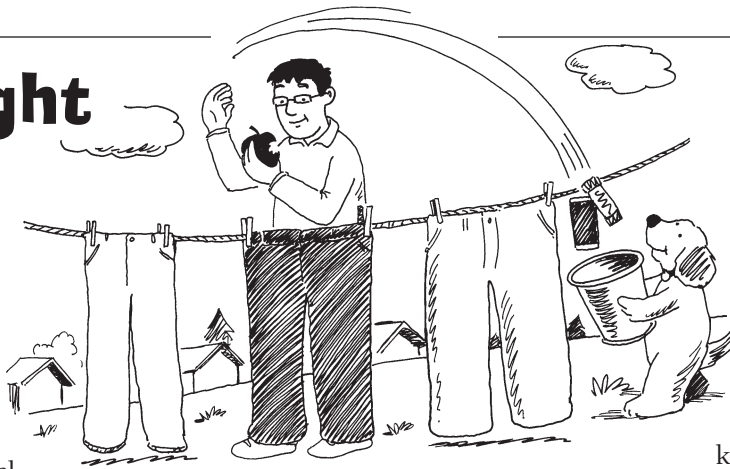
If your child wants to slim down, he will need your support. Here are some suggestions.

Set a goal

Start by consulting a doctor or registered dietitian to be sure your child needs to lose weight. Together, come up with a healthy goal and a plan for eating well and exercising regularly.

Think long-term

The key is to shed pounds gradually. Explain that most people who lose weight quickly on crash diets gain back what



they lose, and then some. A safe plan is to eat 300 to 500 fewer calories a day to lose one to two pounds a week—equivalent to cutting out two candy bars or sodas daily.

Work together

Let your teen know he's not alone. Serve everyone the same foods at dinner, and ask family members to keep "danger foods" (ice cream, chips) out of the house. Support from kids his own age can really boost success, too. Have your child consider dieting with a buddy or joining a weight-loss group for teens. ♥



In the Kitchen

After-school snacks

"Supper's not until when?" Hungry teens need something to fill the gap between school and dinner. Make sure the snacks are healthy with these easy ideas.

Q & A Low-fat foods

Q: We're always being told to buy low-fat foods. Are they really better for you?

A: In general, yes. The trick is to make sure that the food really is lower in fat and is also nutritious. For example, fat-free milk is definitely a healthier alternative to whole milk. However, low-fat versions of desserts like cookies and cake are often high in sugar.

Get your family in the habit of reading labels to check out low-fat claims.

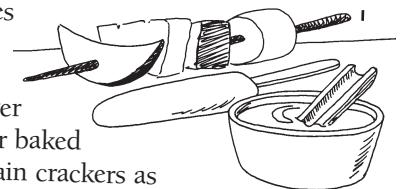
To be called "low-fat," a food should have no more than 3 grams of fat per serving. "Reduced fat" means a food contains at least 25%

less fat than the original version. If a food contains less fat, it's probably a better choice. ♥



Yogurt pops. For a quick and cool treat, mix equal parts of unsweetened applesauce and fat-free vanilla yogurt, and freeze in ice cube trays. Serve on a stick (insert popsicle sticks before freezing) or with a spoon.

Veggies and dip. Make a low-fat dip by blending 1 cup fat-free cottage cheese with 2 tbsp. each of lemon juice and low-fat mayonnaise. Season with dill and parsley. Use vegetables (carrot sticks, cauliflower pieces) or baked whole-grain crackers as scoopers. ♥



Fruit kabobs. Stack pineapple, melon, and banana chunks on skewers. Add protein by alternating the fruit with cubes of low-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese.

ACTIVITY CORNER

Active community service

Combine community service and physical activity, and your child will have a real win-win. She'll help others and get physically fit at the same time. You can suggest these possibilities:

- ▲ taking wheelchair-bound seniors for walks
- ▲ volunteering with Special Olympics youth teams
- ▲ participating in walk-a-thons to raise money for good causes
- ▲ leading games for Scout troops
- ▲ shoveling snow or walking dogs for older or sick neighbors

How can your middle grader or high schooler find out about active community service opportunities? Have her check in the school office or at your community center or house of worship. She can also call senior homes, day-care centers, and

neighbors who might need help.

Note: In some school districts, community service counts for course credit or is required for graduation—adding yet another benefit! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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

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