

# 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

### Apple spread

You can whip up a batch of this healthy treat in just a few minutes, and your children will love it on whole-grain toast, bagels, or waffles. Stir together  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup reduced-fat peanut butter,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup applesauce,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fat-free ricotta cheese, and 2 tsp. raisins.



## Choose PE

Even if physical education is not required at your teen's school, encourage him to take it as an elective each year. PE gives kids a chance to be active and also offers a break from academic demands. By high school, children often have a choice of general PE or classes in basketball, conditioning, or other favorites.

## Did You Know?

Baked potatoes not only taste great, they're also a terrific source of potassium—an important nutrient for keeping blood pressure in check. One potato packs 750 mg of potassium. Other good sources include bananas, fat-free milk, shellfish, broccoli, orange juice, black-eyed peas, lima beans, yogurt, and halibut. Teens should try for 4,700 mg of potassium a day.



## Just for fun

**Q:** What is brown and hairy and wears sunglasses?

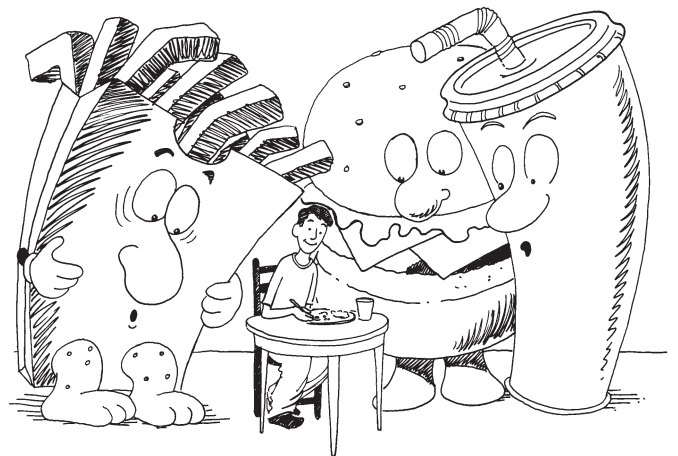
**A:** A coconut on vacation.



# Say no to super-size!

Jason piles his cereal bowl sky-high. His muffin is the size of his whole hand. And a "small" ice cream cone is two big dips.

Portions are out of control! Your child may not realize that most restaurant servings are three to four times the size he needs—or that oversized portions now look normal at home. Use these tips to encourage healthy eating.



## Size it up

Show your teen what a portion really looks like. For instance, a serving of meat, chicken, or fish is the size of his palm. Potato or pasta servings look like a fist. A serving of vegetables or salad is the size of two fists.

Or use sports examples. One serving of peanut butter looks like a Ping-Pong ball, while a portion of ice cream is more like a tennis ball. A bagel should be about the size of a hockey puck.

## Watch the plate

You can also make a few simple changes at mealtime. Use salad plates rather than dinner plates. Portions will be smaller if there's less room for them.

Serve each person's food on a plate, rather than putting out serving bowls, so you can control the amounts. Also, try dividing plates into quarters: one-quarter protein (meat, beans, tofu), one-quarter starch (rice, pasta), and two-quarters

vegetables and fruits. This system can keep portions in check—and ensure a balanced meal.

*Note:* Let your child know he doesn't have to clean his plate. Encourage him to stop eating when he's full and to wrap up the rest for later. ♥

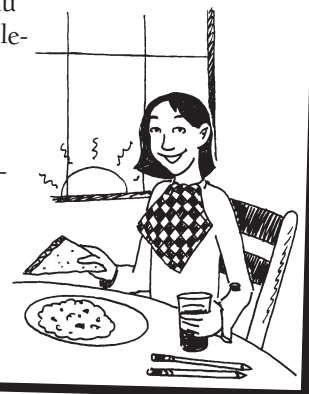
## Test-day eating

Eating well is important every day, and it's especially important on test days. Suggest these ideas to help your youngster do her best on both standardized tests and regular exams.

**In the morning.** Rule number one: Eat breakfast! Try to mix food groups, especially whole grains, lean proteins, and fruits and vegetables.

*Idea:* Scramble eggs or tofu with vegetables. Add whole-wheat toast and fat-free chocolate milk.

**During the day.** Take along healthy snacks (low-fat power bar, fruit, string cheese) for a nutrition boost between classes. Eat a full school lunch (entrée, vegetables, fat-free milk). ♥



# Handling food allergies

Is your child allergic to peanuts, wheat, or milk? Although she has to be careful, her allergies don't have to cramp her social life. These strategies can make her life easier—and ease your mind, too.

**At school.** Suggest that she talk to the cafeteria manager. She can explain her allergies and find out which foods to avoid when buying school meals.

**Out with friends.** Have your teen check menus online or phone restaurants ahead of time to



on. Her friends will get used to her bringing her own food and won't think anything of it. ♥

discuss options. For example, a pizza shop might have a wheat-free crust, or a pancake house may be able to use an egg substitute. Many restaurants will accommodate special requests with advance notice.

**Party time.** When your child is going to a party, she can pack treats so

she'll have something safe to snack



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Green thumb

Taking care of a vegetable garden is a great way for your teen to be active outdoors and eat better at the same time.

Start by asking your child what he'd like to plant, and then let him take charge.

*Hint:* Radishes, lettuce, and peas sprout quickly and are easy to grow. Digging, weeding, and hauling fertilizer and mulch will keep him moving.

At harvest time, help your child prepare a dish for the family using his crop. Kids are much more likely to eat vegetables they've grown with their own thumbs!

*Note:* No yard? No problem. Pots of tomatoes and herbs do well on apartment balconies, and many towns have community gardens where families can get a plot. Call your parks and recreation department to find out about options. ♥

## In the Kitchen

### Spaghetti dinner

Liven up your spaghetti-and-meatball routine with these kid-friendly variations.

**It's nutty!** In a food processor, grind equal parts walnuts, almonds, and rolled oats. Blend in an egg, and season with salt and pepper. Form small balls and sauté until brown. Toss with cooked spaghetti, tomato sauce, and Parmesan cheese.

**Spaghetti pie.** Beat two eggs with ½ cup grated Parmesan and 1 cup fat-free cottage cheese. Combine with cooked spaghetti, 1 lb. cooked lean ground beef, 1 small can diced tomatoes, and 1 small can pasta sauce. Bake in a round casserole dish at 350° for 20 minutes. Top with ½ cup grated mozzarella, and heat until the cheese melts. Cut into wedges.

**Noodle novelty.** Replace noodles with strands of spaghetti squash. Pierce a spaghetti squash several times with a fork, and bake at 350° until soft, about 30 minutes. Cut the squash in half, discard the seeds, and separate the strands with a fork. Top with your favorite sauce. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

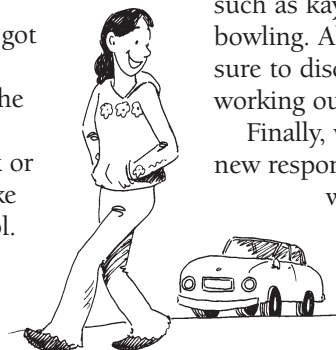
### Limit driving

When our daughter Jasmine got her license, all she wanted to do was drive. We wanted to make sure she still got plenty of exercise, too.

First, we discussed when she could use the car. We insisted that Jasmine continue to walk or bike to nearby destinations like her friends' houses and school. But we did allow her to drive to soccer practice and other places farther away.

We also made a point of letting her drive when we went to do active things, such as kayaking at a state park or bowling. Along the way, we were sure to discuss the importance of working out.

Finally, we gave Jasmine a new responsibility: cleaning and washing the car once a month. That way, we built a little more exercise into her use of the car. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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