

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2008

W.A. Cunningham Intermediate School 234

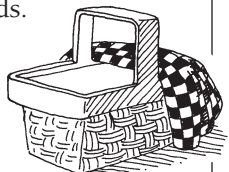
Ms. Susan Schaeffer

FAST TAKES

Family picnics

Jobs, sports, camps, vacations: it's hard to get the family together for meals in the summer. One idea is to schedule a weekly picnic. Encourage your children to suggest—and help prepare—their favorite healthy foods.

Take turns choosing picnic spots, and if it rains, just move inside!



Did You Know?

Playing outdoors helps kids get enough vitamin D. Sunlight triggers the skin to produce this “sunshine vitamin,” which maintains calcium and phosphorus levels to build strong bones. Teens can also get vitamin D by eating foods such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, eggs, and fortified milk or cereal.

Water safety

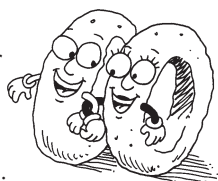
With warm weather arriving, now is the time to prepare your child for safe fun in the water. You can enroll him in swimming, boat safety, or even scuba-diving lessons. Check options at the community pool, YMCA, parks department, or Coast Guard.



Just for fun

Q: What do vegetables wear when they get married?

A: Onion rings.



Get outside!

Summer is the perfect season for kids to be active and get lots of exercise. Use these suggestions to make sure your child's time off from school is time well spent.

Active programs

Does your teen enjoy rock climbing or wrestling? Has he always wanted to learn archery or play lacrosse? Many organizations offer summer camps, sports leagues, and clinics where your youngster can improve skills or learn new ones. Contact local schools, colleges, recreation centers, and sports groups for information. *Tip:* Encourage him to find a friend with similar interests so they can sign up together.

Jobs on the move

Jobs are another way to keep your child fit. Encourage him to start an active business (mowing lawns, washing cars) with a buddy. Sports-minded teens can teach skills to younger kids at sports programs—for example, basic ball passing for soccer or basketball. Have your child check bulletin boards at the community center for job listings.

Fit families

Plan an active family vacation. Camping and hiking are great ways to spend time with



your teen. If you're visiting relatives, take along or borrow bikes. At the beach, play volleyball and walk along the shoreline. Or use vacation time to learn a new activity together, like kayaking or golf. *Note:* If you or your teen can't take time off work, try weekend or day trips instead. ♥

Fruit frenzy

What's delicious, contains essential vitamins and nutrients, is high in fiber, and is cholesterol free? Fruit! Here are some ways to put more fruit into your family's diet:

- The fresher fruit is, the better it tastes. Visit a farmer's market for locally grown fruits, or find a nearby farm where you can pick your own. Check newspaper listings or look online (try www.pickyourown.org) for locations.

- Lend pizzazz to a fruit salad with an unusual choice like figs or guava. Add sweetness to a salad by slicing mangoes or peaches on top of greens. Place a bowl of cut-up summer fruits (plums, nectarines, peaches) on the table with dinner. ♥



Eating out

Chinese or Mexican? Italian or Thai? With today's variety of ethnic restaurants, you could eat a different cuisine every day. Share these tips to help your child make healthier selections while eating out.

Chinese. Steamed rice has far fewer calories and less fat than fried rice. Likewise, grilled or stir-fried vegetables and meat are healthier than battered and deep-fried wontons or sweet and sour chicken. *Tip:* Many Chinese restaurants now offer fiber-rich brown rice—ask for it.



Italian. Select a tomato-based dish (marinara, red clam sauce) rather than one with a cream sauce (alfredo, carbonara). Instead of cheese-laden dishes like manicotti or chicken parmesan, order grilled fish, meat, or chicken. Another healthy option is soup with vegetables and beans, such as minestrone or pasta e fagioli.

Mexican. Choose burritos and soft tacos with chicken and extra lettuce and tomatoes instead of rice. For salsa dipping, try a plain tortilla in place of salty, fried tortilla chips. Order regular beans instead of refried, and ask for low-fat sour cream. Split your meal, and take half home in a to-go box. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Go online and get fit

Does it seem like your child is constantly on the computer or attached to an electronic gadget? Take advantage of her technology-filled world by having her use online fitness programs:

■ The President's Challenge

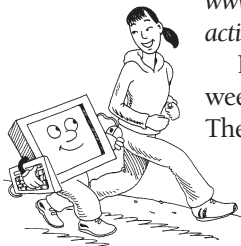
www.presidentschallenge.org/home_teens.aspx

Teens will find a personal activity log to track progress online, along with awards for reaching goals.

■ Bam! Body and Mind

www.bam.gov/sub_physical_activity/cal_index.asp

Kids make their own weekly activity calendars. The long list of possibilities, with everything from boogie boarding to martial arts, can inspire your child to try new ways to exercise.



■ My Fitness Plan

www.youngwomenshealth.org/my_fitness_plan.html

Children can create individual fitness plan that include everyday activities, workouts, health benefits, and goals. ♡

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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PARENT TO PARENT

Lactose intolerance

When we found out our son Blake was lactose intolerant, we were actually relieved. He had been complaining of an upset stomach and bloating for several weeks. Now we had a diagnosis, and it wasn't serious—lactose intolerance is simply a lack of a digestive enzyme.

Luckily, many items are now available without lactose. We found lactose-free milk and cheese, as well as soy milk and soy cheese, at our regular grocery store. For a treat, we even found lactose-free ice cream sandwiches.

If Blake can't avoid dairy (at a restaurant or a friend's home), he takes lactase enzyme supplement pills. He has found that being lactose intolerant is not a big deal. In fact, it has helped him become more aware of his diet and health, and that doesn't hurt at all! ♡



In the Kitchen

Packing healthy lunches

Keep your child going strong at work or play with these simple and healthy lunch ideas.

Greek pita sandwich. Fill a whole-wheat pita with low-fat feta cheese, sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, torn romaine lettuce, and pitted black olives. Pack nonfat plain yogurt to spoon on at lunchtime.

Salad with the works.

In a plastic container, combine shredded red leaf lettuce, chickpeas, canned corn, and artichoke hearts. *Tip:* Take fat-free dressing in a small spice jar so the salad doesn't get soggy.

Snacks and sides. Combine low-fat granola, raisins, diced dried apricots, and roasted almonds for an energy-boosting trail mix. *Other ideas:* baked chips, reduced-fat muffins, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Note: Check to see if your youngster's lunch will be refrigerated. If not, avoid foods that can spoil, such as meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. ♡

