

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

November 2007

## FAST TAKES



### Ready to eat

Make it easy for your kids to eat right by having healthy food around. Keep a bowl with peeled oranges, plums, and nectarines on the counter. Have baby carrots and low-fat ranch dressing in the fridge. Stock the pantry with baked crackers and whole-wheat pretzels. Remember, if your children find potato chips instead, that's what they'll eat!



### Pedal power

With today's focus on health and the environment, cycling is the perfect way for your teen to get around. Bikes provide a great workout of the heart and muscles—and they don't use gas! Make sure your child wears a helmet, rides in safe areas, and stops for water breaks.

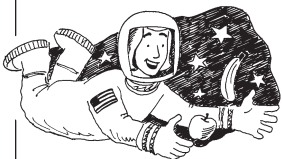


### Did You Know?

Eating foods with zinc can help your youngster stay healthy this winter. What's zinc? It's a nutrient that boosts the immune system. Try to make sure your teen gets 9 mg (girls) or 11 mg (boys) of zinc a day. Good sources are meat, poultry, seafood, soy, nuts, beans, whole grains, milk, and fortified cereals.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?

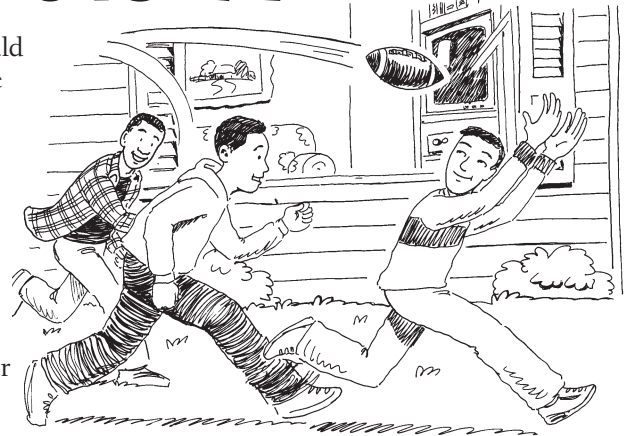


**A:** Great food, but no atmosphere.

## Turn off the TV

Do you wish your teen would get off the couch and be active instead? You're not alone.

The average American child watches TV four hours a day. Not only are kids sitting still during those hours, they also tend to snack on junk food. Try these strategies for cutting down the couch time and stepping up the activity in your household.



### Set limits

Consider banning television at certain times (after school, an hour after dinner). Or set a weekly limit, and let your child decide how to divvy it up. Keep the TV off during meals and homework time.

for games or reading rather than to watch a certain show.

*Note:* Try to set a good example by watching less television and being more active yourself! ♥

### Move the set

Make it harder to watch TV by keeping it in a harder-to-watch place. Taking the set out of your teen's room is a great first step. Moving it out of the kitchen is a good idea, too. You might even cut down on the number of televisions in the house.

### Fit activity in

Encourage your teen to take activity breaks while watching. Doing sit-ups or jumping jacks during commercials will get him moving. Suggest a half hour of play (tossing a ball, shooting hoops) for each show watched.

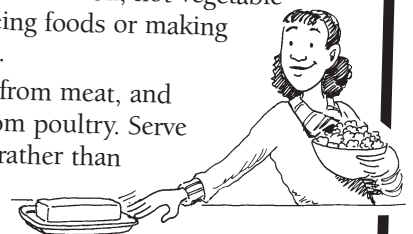
### Find a balance

Help your child work out a schedule in which his active time equals his TV time. Then, help him increase the active time. Avoid scheduling family time around television shows. Gather

## Recipe magic

You can make healthier meals—without extra work—with a few easy switches:

- Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream in sauces and soups.
- Skip the salt, and season dishes with herbs and spices.
- In lasagna, use drained fat-free cottage cheese or skim ricotta.
- Dip strawberries into fat-free vanilla yogurt rather than whipped cream.
- Choose microwave popcorn that has no fat or salt. Hold the butter, and sprinkle on grated parmesan cheese instead.
- Pick olive or canola oil, not vegetable oil, when sautéing foods or making salad dressings.
- Trim the fat from meat, and remove skin from poultry. Serve baked chicken rather than fried. ♥



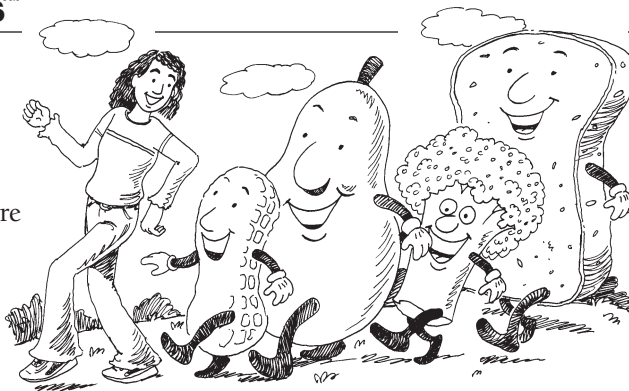
# No meat for me

More and more young people are choosing to go meatless. If your teen is one of them, don't panic! She can easily eat a healthy diet—with a little planning.

The key is variety. To get your child the nutrients she needs, encourage her to eat different fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, dairy, nuts, seeds, and beans. Here are a few ideas.

## Breakfast

Make creamy scrambled eggs: Whisk eggs with fat-free milk, and stir with low-fat cream cheese over low heat until set. Or layer fruit with granola and banana topping (combine



1 ripe mashed banana with lemon juice and brown sugar to taste).

## Lunch

Buy hummus or make a quick batch (in a blender, mix 1 can drained chick peas, 3 tbsp. olive oil, juice of 1 lemon, and 1 garlic clove). Serve in a whole-grain pita with shredded carrots and lettuce.

Or make tuna salad with diced apples, hard-boiled egg, and light mayonnaise.

## Dinner

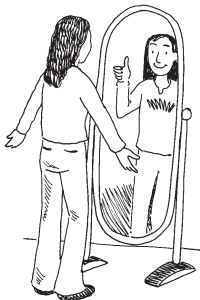
Steam vegetables (green beans, broccoli, onions, and spinach), and serve over brown rice with a sprinkling of nuts or sunflower seeds. Or boil multi-grain pasta, and toss with diced tomatoes, cubed brie cheese, and fresh or dried basil. ♣

## PARENT TO PARENT

### A better body image

Our daughter Alexa kept complaining, "I'm too fat!" even though she wasn't. I didn't know what to do, so I asked the school nurse for advice.

She suggested that we avoid making food a big issue and just focus on being healthy.



"Don't talk about dieting. Try to keep nutritious foods in the house, serve healthy meals, and get everyone to exercise," she told me.

The nurse also advised us to praise Alexa not just for her looks but for her actions, such as her volunteering and hard work in school. And when we go clothes shopping, she said I should help Alexa pick out things that complement *her*—not the too-skinny models in magazines.

Thankfully, our efforts seem to have worked. Now when Alexa looks in the mirror, she's happier with what she sees. ♣

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Family fitness

The family that plays together stays together—and becomes healthier and more fit at the same time. Here are some fun ideas for getting your whole family moving:

★ While tidying up, put on lively music to get everyone moving faster. Let your kids choose among several active chores, such as shoveling snow, vacuuming, and cleaning out the garage.

★ Let family members take turns leading an activity of their choice (cheerleading, karate). Kids will love being in charge, and the variety will keep exercising fun.

★ Take an active day trip. For example, look online or call your state tourism bureau to find nearby hiking trails. Then, pack provisions (water, trail mix, healthy sandwiches), and head out for a day of family hiking. ♣



## In the Kitchen

### Wrap it up

What provides all the appeal of a sandwich, but in a more interesting package? Wraps!

Hot or cold, wraps are great for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snacks—and they're portable, too. Start with a whole-wheat, corn, spinach, or tomato tortilla, and add fillings like these.

**Breakfast Treat:** Flavored fat-free yogurt, raisins, whole-grain cereal, chopped nuts, and a drizzle of honey.

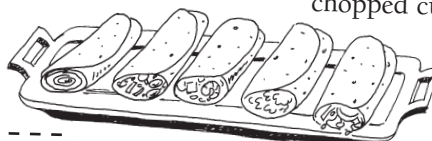
**Classic American:** Lean turkey, low-fat Swiss cheese, lettuce, and honey mustard.

**Made in Mexico:** Cooked ground beef, canned beans, grated low-fat cheddar cheese,

salsa, and sliced avocado or store-bought guacamole.

**Thai-to-Go:** Cooked brown rice, sliced celery and red bell pepper, tofu, shrimp or chicken, and purchased peanut sauce.

**Veggies Galore:** Fresh spinach, chopped cucumber and tomato, sliced mushrooms, and fat-free Italian or ranch dressing. ♣



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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