

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

February 2010

Pickens County School System
School and Community Nutrition Program

FAST TAKES



Time for lunch

Talk to your child about the importance of eating lunch every day.

Make sure he has money in his cafeteria account or that he takes a lunch. Let him know that if he skips lunch or eats too many sweets, he may feel tired and have trouble concentrating in the afternoon.



Running on the spot

Here's an exercise your teen can do almost anywhere. Have her run in place, keeping her back straight and raising her knees as high as she can. She might start with one or two minutes and gradually increase her time. *Tip:* Remind her to wear comfortable sneakers.

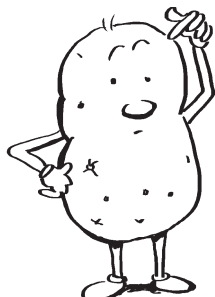
Did You Know?

Foods labeled "all natural" aren't necessarily nutritious. For example, all-natural soda is still high in calories and sugar, and all-natural granola or cookies can be high in fat. Help your child check labels on all foods—including all-natural ones—for vitamins and minerals as well as their sugar, salt, and fat content.

Just for fun

Q: What looks just like half of a potato?

A: The other half.



Quick and healthy

You worked late, your teen had a club meeting, everyone's hungry—and money is tight. Use these tips to help your family eat right on nights when you don't have time to cook.

Smart carryout

Collect menus from takeout places, and keep them in a binder so they're handy. Include lower-cost pizza and sub shops, as well as inexpensive restaurants that make food to go. Mark the healthiest items with a highlighter so your family will be more apt to choose them (look for words like *baked*, *grilled*, and *roasted*). Also, you can cut down on portions—and save money—by ordering one entrée for two people or three entrées for four people.

Grocery store finds

On your way home, make a quick stop at the grocery store for food ready to put on the table. You might get a hot rotisserie chicken, a container of low-fat soup, a whole-wheat baguette, and fresh vegetables and fruit from the salad bar. *Tip:* Hold your order to fewer than 10 or



15 items so you can breeze quickly through the express line.

A stocked pantry

With a few basic items in your pantry and refrigerator, you'll be able to make a fast dinner even when there's "nothing in the house." For instance, you can scramble eggs with shredded cheese. Or combine drained cans of diced tomatoes and different beans (kidney, garbanzo, navy), and microwave for a meatless chili. Other items to stock: canned tuna or salmon, light mayonnaise, frozen vegetables, whole-wheat pasta, and jars of marinara sauce. ●

Food safety

Is it okay to eat soup that you left out overnight? How long can you keep milk in the fridge? Share these tips with your child for eating safely:

- Avoid letting foods sit at room temperature longer than two hours—especially those containing dairy products, eggs, and meat. That includes dishes served cold (tuna salad, deviled eggs) and hot (soups, casseroles).
- Check expiration dates. Eat food on or before its "use by" date. Foods marked with a "sell by" date can last from five days after the date for milk (if refrigerated promptly) to several weeks for eggs. (See details at www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Food_Product_Dating.pdf.)
- Be sure to date leftovers and eat them within four days. *Tip:* Teach your teen "When in doubt, throw it out." If something doesn't look or smell right, it may be spoiled, regardless of the date. ●



Why exercise matters

Regular exercise is good for your child's body *and* mind. Share these benefits.

Keep in shape. Being active builds strong muscles and keeps the heart and lungs healthy—which increases endurance. This is especially important for kids who play sports.

Stay healthy. Exercise helps tweens and teens fight off colds and other minor bugs. Being active also promotes sound sleep.



Feel good. Physical activity releases hormones called endorphins. When your child is dealing with everyday stress or going through a tough time, sticking to a workout routine can help him feel better.

Improve thinking. Exercise sends more blood to the brain, which can help your teen concentrate and do better in school. Suggest that he take a brisk walk or go skateboarding for a half hour before he studies.

Be with friends. Exercise is more fun in groups. Playing touch football after school or roller hockey on weekends is a great way for your child to be active *and* enjoy time with friends. Hiking and canoeing with a buddy gives your teen time to talk about everyday life or future plans. ●

ACTIVITY CORNER

Heart workouts

You and your teen can get the most from your workouts by paying attention to your heart rate. Here's how:

1. Learn to take your pulse so you can check it every five minutes while doing aerobics or between laps at the pool. Place three fingers on the inside of your wrist or on your neck near the windpipe. Press lightly, count the beats for 10 seconds, and multiply that number by 6 to find the beats per minute.

2. Calculate how fast your heart should beat while you exercise. Subtract your age from 220. Then, multiply the answer by 0.6 to get the minimum number of beats per minute. To find the maximum, multiply by 0.8. For example, an average 14-year-old's heart rate should be around $220 - 14 = 206 \times 0.6 = 123.6$; $206 \times 0.8 = 164.8$ If it's lower, she can step up her workout. If it's higher, she may need to take a break to cool down. ●



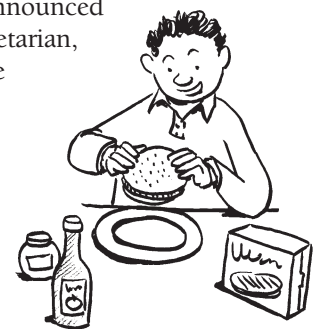
PARENT TO PARENT

Vegetarian—the healthy way

When my son Logan recently announced that he was going to become a vegetarian, I was worried that he might not get a balanced diet. We agreed to ask his doctor about it at his next checkup.

The doctor explained to us that it was important for Logan to get enough iron, or he could become anemic. That would make him feel tired and short of breath. He also told my son to be sure to get plenty of protein. We left with a list of iron- and protein-rich foods, like lentils, cheese, beans, and fortified meat substitutes such as veggie burgers and “mock” bacon.

Logan's new diet has inspired our whole family to be sure to eat from all the food groups. We're also trying new foods—we love tofu stir-fry and veggie pizza. ●



In the Kitchen

Party snacks

The next time your child has a group of friends over, help her prepare these nutritious, no-cook treats.

Sandwich station

Line up whole-wheat tortillas or bread, deli meats, spicy mustard, shredded low-fat cheddar cheese, diced tomatoes, black beans, and shredded lettuce. Guests can assemble their own wraps or sandwiches using their favorite fillings.

Spinach dip

Stir together a 10-oz. package of frozen spinach

(chopped), a 14-oz. can of artichoke hearts (drained and chopped), 8 oz. fat-free cream cheese, 8 oz. fat-free yogurt, and ¼ cup grated skim Parmesan cheese. Microwave until warm, and serve with baked tortilla chips and raw vegetables (cauliflower, carrots).

Fruit slushies

In a blender, mix a dozen ice cubes with a cup of frozen strawberries. Pour into a bowl and set aside. Then, blend a dozen ice cubes with a banana. Layer the strawberry and banana slush in clear cups, and serve with spoons. ●



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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