

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

December 2014



FAST TAKES

Get popping!

When not smothered in butter, popcorn can be a healthy—and still delicious—whole-grain snack. Top 3 cups of air-popped popcorn with 1 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese and 1 tsp. Italian seasoning. Or melt 1 tbsp. chocolate chips in the microwave, and drizzle on popcorn for a sweet snack.

A better night's sleep

Have your child keep phones and other electronic devices away from



her bed for a better night's sleep. Research shows that when our phones are close by, our

brains remain more active and less able to fully rest. She can put her phone by the front door or in the kitchen instead.

Did You Know?

Teen athletes are more at risk for abusing prescription pain medicine than are non-athletes. Help your teenager play it safe by talking about the proper use of pain medication. If he's injured, have him monitor dosage by charting when he takes his pills. And when he no longer needs the medicine, put it in a locked cabinet.

Just for fun

Q: What did one eye say to the other?

A: Between us, something smells.



Morningside High School - Dr. Reginald Sirls, Principal
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Hidden calories

Sometimes even foods that are good for us sneak in extra calories and fat. That doesn't mean your teen should avoid them—but he should watch how much he eats. Share this advice.

Don't go nuts

Almonds, cashews, walnuts... no matter the type, nuts will put protein and healthy fats in your child's diet. Yet they pack a punch in other ways, too. A quarter cup of walnuts (good for your heart and high in omega-3s) has 190 calories and 19 grams of fat. Keep a tablespoon measure in the package so he can control his portions (4 tbsp. = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup).

The awesome avocado

This delicious fruit adds a creamy taste to sandwiches, salads, and dips. It also gives your tween essential fats and B vitamins and is low in sugar. But half an avocado has 160 calories and 15 grams of fat. To watch portions, split an avocado among 2–4 people. (If there's extra, refrigerate with the pit to keep it from turning brown.)



Sweet on salad

Tossed salads are a mainstay of healthy diets, but toppings can add surprising amounts of calories and fat. Have your child look at nutrition information online or on menus. Some restaurant websites will even let him build a salad online to control the numbers, and then he'll know what to order when he gets there. At a salad bar or at home, encourage him to go heavy on fresh vegetables and light on extras like bacon bits, cheese, croutons, and dressing. 🍓

Gluten-free and healthy

While gluten-free doesn't have to mean flavor-free, it also doesn't necessarily mean healthy. Consider these tips for flavorful and healthier gluten-free eating:

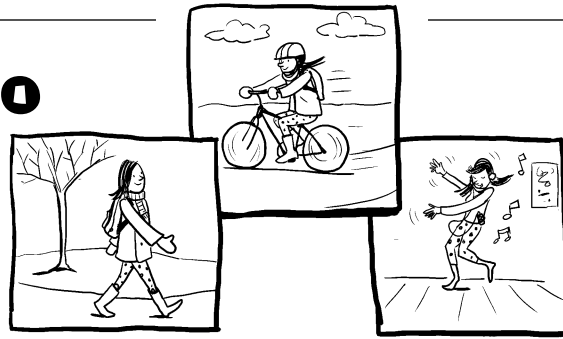
- If your teen has a gluten allergy or celiac disease, she might be tempted to search only for gluten-free labels. Instead, steer her toward foods that don't contain wheat anyway, such as fruits, vegetables, dairy, fish, and lean meat. They'll be naturally gluten-free *and* naturally delicious.
- It's exciting to find favorite foods in gluten-free versions. But have your child read the nutrition labels before deciding what to buy. A good guideline for snacks is fewer than 200 calories and at least 2 grams of fiber per serving. 🍓



Motivated to exercise

Even kids with healthy exercise habits need fresh ways to motivate themselves. Your child could use these suggestions to get excited about fitness.

Break it into pieces. Busy schedules often make the thought of regular workouts seem overwhelming—but that doesn't have to be the case. Point out that exercise time can be flexible. She might split workouts into two or three smaller activities throughout the day. For instance, she could walk to school



and back, bike to her after-school job, and dance to music after homework.

Stop comparing. Working out near a very fit person may make your teen feel like she doesn't measure up. Suggest that she remember who she's working out for—herself. The fact that she is at the gym exercising is what matters. She'll be able to focus

better on her own performance and leave the self-conscious feelings behind.

Put health first. It's natural to want to change a part of our body we don't like. Yet focusing on that can give your teenager negative views toward exercise. Encourage her to set goals like endurance (working out longer) or strength (lifting heavier weights) rather than "perfect" legs or a flat stomach. ●

PARENT TO PARENT Random acts of wellness

We'd heard of random acts of kindness, but recently our daughter Selena came home with an idea to do "random acts of wellness." She said a friend's cousin had done this, and she asked us to think of ways to "spread wellness."



Selena wanted to encourage people to run a charity race with her. She wrote "Running is a home run!" and "Keep going strong!" on strips of paper. Then, she tied them to bags of homemade trail mix and handed them out to friends with a race flyer.

I decided to take fruit to work for my colleagues to snack on instead of coffee cake. And our son cut up oranges to share at soccer practice.

Selena is really enjoying sharing healthy messages. In fact, I'm wondering if there might be a career in this for her! ●



ACTIVITY CORNER

Build a stronger core

A strong core supports everything we do.

Check out these exercises for safe and fast training your tween or teen can do at home.

Bridge. Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat and slightly apart, and arms at your side. Keeping your shoulders down, tighten your abdominals, and slowly raise your hips and glutes so your legs, stomach, and chest are elevated. Hold for 15 seconds, and lower back down.



Superhero. Lie facedown with your arms and legs stretched straight out. Tighten your abs, and slowly raise your arms and legs off the floor—like a flying superhero. Hold 10 seconds, and lower.

Leg press. Lie with your back down, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor. Raise your right knee and hip to a 90-degree angle. Then, use your right hand to push against your knee for 10 seconds. Repeat with your left side, and continue alternating legs. ●

In the Kitchen

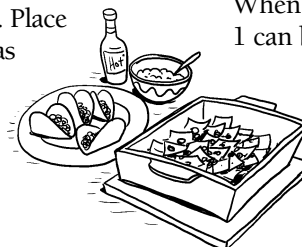
Tacos with a twist

Mix up taco night with new ideas that are sure to be hits with your family.

Chipotle shrimp

Toss 1 lb. cooked shrimp with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of your favorite salsa and a few shakes of chipotle hot sauce (or use mild chipotle salsa instead). Place in whole-wheat tortillas with shredded lettuce, sliced hearts of palms (canned, rinsed), and chopped tomato.

Tip: Add a squeeze of fresh lime.



Taco bake

Heat 1 tbsp. olive oil in a skillet, and saute 1 chopped onion and 2 minced garlic cloves until soft. Stir in 1 lb. ground turkey or lean ground beef and 2 tbsp. low-sodium taco seasoning. When the meat is cooked through, add 1 can black beans (drained) and 1 cup salsa. Line a baking dish with 24 baked tortilla chips. Pour in the meat, and top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded low-fat cheese. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes. ●

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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