

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2017

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## FAST TAKES

### Salad for breakfast?

Yes! Toss 1 cup spinach or kale with 1 tbsp. light salad dressing.



Add shredded carrots or diced cucumbers for crunch. Then, top with a hard-boiled or sunny-side-up egg to make it breakfast-ready. Eating salad in the morning may sound odd to your child, but it's a fun and easy way for him to go green early in the day.

### Hop, skip, and jump

Teens and tweens need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Encourage your child to do exercises that strengthen her bones while helping her get fit overall. She can jump rope or play a game of hopscotch to combine heart- and bone-boosting activities.

### Did You Know?

The average family of four throws away more than \$1,600 a year in wasted food. Plan meals and write your grocery list based on what you have on hand. Then, freeze leftovers or produce that you won't have a chance to use before it goes bad. Also, consider buying frozen vegetables, which last longer than fresh.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why aren't grapes ever lonely?

**A:** Because they come in bunches.



## My summer challenge

This summer, get your teen on the road to better fitness and nutrition by inspiring her to set a three-month challenge. Suggest ideas like these that she can start now and carry into the school year.

### June: Drink plenty of water

To beat the heat, your child needs to stay hydrated. Have her grab a water bottle along with sunscreen each time she heads outside. Let her download a free app to remind herself to drink water and to track her consumption. She can even "eat" her water by enjoying fruits and vegetables high in water content, such as cucumbers, strawberries, and zucchini. (Remember, it's important to stay hydrated year-round.)

### July: Run for it

Your tween or teen might set an exciting summer exercise goal. For instance, she could work her way up to running a 5K race. Starting with a brisk walk, each week she can run a little more and walk



less. Soon she'll be able to run the full 3.1 miles! She'll not only gain fitness, she'll be ready to join her school's cross-country or track team.

### August: Swap out sweets

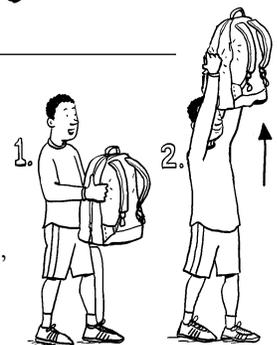
Make sweet substitutes to cut back on sugar. Your child might eat a few fiber-rich pitted dates instead of candy. Rather than a sugary ice pop or ice cream, suggest this refreshing treat: a watermelon "slushie" made by combining 2 cups frozen watermelon chunks with 1½ cups cold lime sparkling water in a blender until smooth. ♡

## "Heavy" lifting

Heading out of town? No need for your tween to leave his workouts behind. He can try these easy tips for turning luggage into weights. *Note:* To make the weight challenging, but comfortable, have him add or remove contents as needed.

**Lug your luggage.** Standing tall with shoulders squared, hold a suitcase in one hand, and walk with it at your side. You might go up and down a relative's hallway, pace back and forth in a motel room, or walk briskly around a campground. Shift the bag to the other hand, and repeat.

**Lift your luggage.** Hold a backpack or carryall in both hands at your chest, elbows tight to your body. Lift the bag straight up, return to start, and repeat. *Variation:* Push the luggage straight out, and return to start. ♡



# Health hype

There's lots of nutrition "noise" out there. Use these steps to help you and your teenager sort fact from fiction when it comes to food and nutrition advertising.

**1. Watch the lingo.** Your teen might see "healthy" or "natural" written on a package, but guess what? Often, those buzzwords are only there to help sell the product. Similarly, "gluten-free" snacks may be promoted as healthier but often have the same or more salt, fat, and sugar as other options.



**2. Check the label.** To get the real scoop, he should flip to the side or back of the box to read the nutrition facts and ingredients. This will tell the true story. Encourage him to choose packages with little or no added sugar and less than 5 percent of the daily value for sodium per serving.

**3. See through the stars.** Although many celebrities promote the foods they love, some famous people are paid to influence you to buy a specific food or drink. Teach your teenager to try new foods based on the health and nutrition benefits—not who's holding it. ●

## Q & A Ready to get fit

**Q:** My son wants to lose weight this summer. How can I help?

**A:** Simply letting your child know you are there to support him will go a long way. Talk about changes that will make a difference, such as being more physically active and cooking rather than grabbing fast food.

Suggest that your son jot down everything he eats. That will encourage him to think first.

("Do I really want to write down a pint of ice cream?") Time-stamping each entry helps, too—he may realize he just ate a half-hour ago!

Then, since junk food and soda can be so tempting, try not to buy them. Instead, stock up on healthy ready-to-eat foods like fruit, cut-up vegetables, yogurt, and almonds.

Finally, celebrate little wins with rewards other than food. When he meets a target, you might take him fishing or let him choose a new piece of workout gear. ●



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Hiking to new heights

Encourage your tween or teen to get outside and explore nearby hiking trails. Hiking can recharge her mind and body—and let her experience new places. Share these suggestions.

#### Find your spots

Your child might locate interesting trails by asking at the local library or checking parks and recreation websites. Hikes that lead to a waterfall, beautiful vista, or historic site can be especially rewarding. She could start with flat, easy trails and work her way up to harder ones.

#### Gear up

Make sure she wears comfortable and sturdy sneakers or hiking boots. It's important to dress for the weather and location—layers are often a good option. She'll also need to pack water and an energizing snack.

#### Take a friend

Have her stay safe by always hiking with a friend or family member. They should let you know where they're going and what time they expect to return. ●



## In the Kitchen

### No oven needed!

Keep the heat out of the kitchen with these cool recipes.

**Raspberry breakfast smoothie.** For one smoothie, blend  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup quick cooking oats (uncooked),  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk, 1 cup frozen raspberries, and a dash of cinnamon.

**Fruity chicken salad.** Toss 1 cup shredded, cooked chicken with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sliced red grapes,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup each chopped celery and sweet onion, and 1 tbsp. balsamic vinaigrette. Let your teen

scoop the chicken salad onto whole-grain crackers or rice cakes.

**Garlic ginger beef wraps.** Whisk together  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup nut butter or tahini, 1 tbsp. rice vinegar, 1 tbsp. honey,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. each garlic and ginger powder, and 2 tbsp. hot water. Spread half the sauce onto 4 whole-wheat wraps. Top each with 1 lettuce leaf, 3 oz. deli roast beef slices, and 2 tbsp. shredded cabbage. Drizzle with the remaining sauce, and roll up. ●



#### OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com

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ISSN 1935-8865