

# Teen FOOD & FITNESS

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2010



## FAST TAKES

### Fast food

Fast food doesn't have to be unhealthy food. Your teen can now find many healthier choices when he's grabbing a quick meal. Suggest that he choose grilled, not fried foods (grilled chicken, for example). Other good options: apple wedges or carrot sticks instead of fries, and fat-free milk or water rather than soda.

### Skip the elevator



When trying to fit in more physical activity, little things add up. Your youngster can burn extra calories by taking the stairs at the mall or library (it's faster, too, especially during busy times). *Idea:* Challenge her to count the stairs she climbs every day. Keep track of your stair climbing, too, and compare notes each evening.

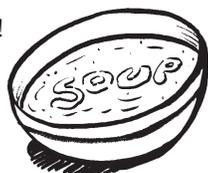
### Did You Know?

Some popular energy drinks have even more caffeine than coffee. Caffeine can be addictive. Plus, it can cause anxiety, sleep problems, or heart palpitations. Explain to your teen that a healthy snack (peanut butter on whole-wheat crackers or a lean turkey sandwich) is the best way to reenergize.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did Max order alphabet soup in the restaurant?

**A:** He wanted to read while he ate!



Coletta Hines-Newell, SFNS, FMP - (847) 758-4904

Jordan Ray, RD, LDN - (847) 758-4905

## Right-size portions

If your child is overweight, the reason might not be *what* he's eating—but *how much* he's eating. Portion sizes have increased over the years, making it easy to overeat. Help your teen bring his servings under control with these ideas.

### See the amounts

Teach him to recognize what a serving size looks like. For example, even a small bag of crackers may contain two servings. Have your child read the nutrition label and then count or measure out the portion. Or he might use his hand as a guide—a serving size will usually fit in the palm of his hand.

### Take smaller portions

Encourage your teen to use smaller plates, bowls, and glasses when he fixes meals or snacks. That way, he can fill his dish or glass but will be eating and drinking less. Also, instead of taking an entire bag of chips or a container of ice cream to the couch, ask him to put his



food on a plate or in a bowl. Then he won't be as likely to eat as much.

### Order wisely

Portion sizes at most restaurants are larger than they should be. When you eat out, suggest that everyone share entrees or order an appetizer as a main dish. If you do order separate entrees, try to bring home half the meal to eat the next day. *Tip:* Ask the waiter to wrap half in the beginning so you're not tempted to eat the whole thing. ♥

## Sports for a lifetime

Kids who find a sport they enjoy will be more likely to stay active as adults. Here's how you can help:

- Encourage your teen to take up activities that she can do for a lifetime. Biking, golf, and bowling, for example, are popular at any age.
- Match the sport to your child's personality. If she enjoys being part of a group, she might prefer team sports such as softball or volleyball. If not, she may like activities she can do on her own (jogging, swimming) or with a friend (racquetball, tennis).
- Let her experiment. Discuss different sports she could try, and offer support if she goes out for a school team or joins a league. ♥



# Healthy and green

Does your child know there is a connection between eating healthy and helping the environment? Use these ideas to show her how she can eat more nutritiously and help the planet at the same time.

## Eat fresh

Encourage your teen or tween to eat fresh foods rather than processed. Not only are they healthier, they'll often have



less packaging. For example, she can have a baked potato instead of boxed mashed potatoes. *Note:* How can your teen tell if food is processed? If it comes in a package and has a long list of ingredients—including words she doesn't recognize or can't pronounce—it's likely to be processed.

## Drink tap water

Explain to your youngster that she'll be doing something good for her body, plus save energy and reduce waste, when she drinks tap water rather than bottled water. It's easy to have water from a drinking fountain at school or from the faucet at home or at friends' houses. When she goes to games and activities, she can take tap water in a reusable aluminum water bottle. ♡

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Concern about eating disorders

Recently, I've been worried that my daughter Jessie is overly concerned about her weight. She constantly checks herself in the mirror and talks about how fat she is—even though she's not. I spoke to our pediatrician, and she told me about signs that could point to an eating disorder.

First, she asked if Jessie had been avoiding meals, pushing food around on her plate to make it seem like she's eating, or wearing loose



clothing to disguise a weight loss. Then, she said to look for more serious symptoms like throwing up after meals or taking laxatives.

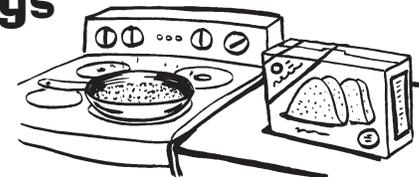
I don't see any of those signs now, but I am keeping a careful eye on Jessie. And I am trying to boost her self-esteem by complimenting her good work and kind actions. I hope that if she feels better about herself, she won't focus so much on her appearance. ♡



## In the Kitchen Taco fillings

Tacos are as easy as 1-2-3! Make them healthy with these recipes:

1. Shred the meat from a purchased rotisserie chicken. Heat 2 cups salsa in a saucepan over medium heat. Add chicken and heat until warm. Fill taco shells with mixture, and top with avocado slices and low-fat sour cream.
2. Brown 1 lb. lean ground beef over medium heat; drain. Mix in 1 can black beans (drained and rinsed) and 1 can corn (drained). Cook until heated through. Spoon into tacos,



and add shredded lettuce and low-fat cheddar cheese.

3. Sauté 1 chopped onion in olive oil until tender. Add thinly sliced leftover pork, and stir until heated through. Stir in 1 chopped tomato and the juice of 1 lime. Simmer for 2 minutes. Place the mixture into warm tortillas, and fold into tacos. ♡

## ACTIVITY CORNER Be a yogi

Could your children use a way to relax and relieve stress? Suggest yoga. It's easy to do, requires no equipment—and it's good exercise. Help them get started with these poses.

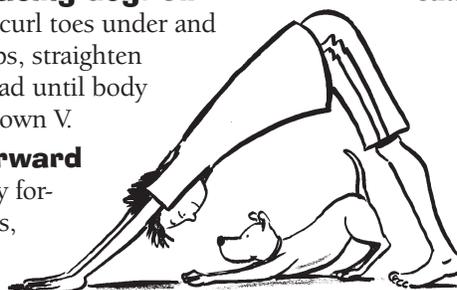
● **Downward facing dog.** On hands and knees, curl toes under and push up. Raise hips, straighten legs, and lower head until body forms an upside-down V.

● **Standing forward bend.** Bend body forward from the hips, reaching fingertips to toes.

Try to press palms to the ground, and let head hang.

● **Garland pose.** With feet about 8 inches apart, bend knees and squat. Bring palms together in a prayer position, with elbows inside knees. Keep spine straight and shoulders relaxed.

*Note:* To learn more yoga, your kids can check out videos from the library, enroll in a community center class, or take yoga as a PE elective if their school offers it. ♡



### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com

Teen Food & Fitness™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

ISSN 1935-8865