

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2018

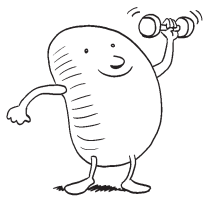
Gwinnett School Nutrition Program
Taylor Blake, MS, RDN, LD



FAST TAKES

Choose beans

From kidney beans to chickpeas to lentils, beans are a meatless way to get protein, magnesium, and fiber into your family's diet. Replace meat with beans in enchiladas, chili, burgers, or even "meatloaf." *Tips:* Soak dry beans in water overnight to decrease cooking time. If you buy canned beans, rinse them to remove excess sodium.



Walk to talk

Prompt your teenager to start a movement! If he has a friend who lives nearby, he might walk to his house to chat instead of texting. Have you and your teen fallen into the habit of texting each other even when you're in the same house? Set a family policy to get moving and talk face-to-face.

Did You Know?

Nearly one in three teens reports consuming energy drinks, even though experts say this isn't a good idea. Some contain as much caffeine as five cups of coffee and a full day's worth of added sugar! For a healthy energy boost, encourage your child to keep her water bottle and a banana on hand.

Just for fun

Q: What do you get from a pampered cow?

A: Spoiled milk.



Healthy shopping on a budget

Shopping for nutritious foods is an important life skill your teen can develop right now. Share these ideas to help him navigate the grocery store in a healthful and budget-conscious way.

Buy in bulk

Suggest that your teenager look for bulk-food staples like brown rice, oats, and chicken breasts. Point out the unit price sticker on shelves so he can make sure he's getting a better value. For instance, a 1-lb. box of rice might cost \$2 per pound while a 10-lb. bag is only 70 cents a pound.

Shop in season

Fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables usually taste better and cost less than out-of-season fresh produce trucked or flown in. Your tween could also choose frozen fruits and vegetables—they last longer than fresh, and they're just as nutritious.



Consider store brands

Higher-priced name-brand foods are often placed at eye level. But less expensive store-brand versions of dry pasta, chicken and vegetable broth, whole-wheat crackers, and cereal typically taste the same. Encourage your child to compare labels and go with the cheaper version if the nutrition stats are just as good.

Tip: Taking a shopping list—and sticking to it—can help your child buy only what he needs. Just as important, remind him not to shop while he's hungry. ♥

Committed to getting fit

Your teen can reach her fitness goals even if she has a busy schedule or faces other obstacles. Suggest these ways to overcome bumps in the road.

Not enough time. Encourage your child to write out her schedule and cut back where she can to fit in more workouts. For example, she might watch less TV or spend less time playing games on her phone.

Feeling tired. Have her try exercising at different times to see when she has the most energy, perhaps right when she gets home from school or on weekend mornings.

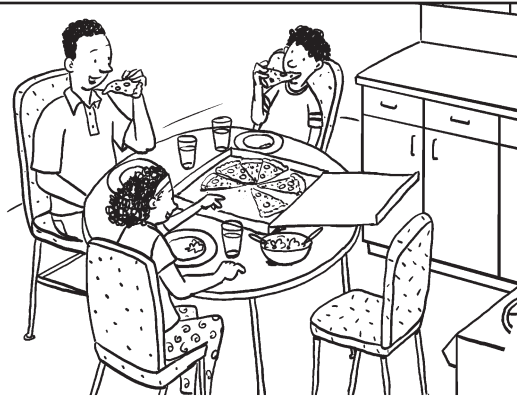
All-or-nothing thinking. If your teenager skips a day of working out, she shouldn't give up. Instead, she might run a little farther or do a few extra sit-ups the next day. ♥



A healthier pizza night

Is your family trying to eat better? Pizza night doesn't have to be a thing of the past. Just use these easy ideas to make it a little healthier.

● **Choose the right crust.** Pick thin crust instead of pan or stuffed crust to trim calories, fat, and sodium. If the pizza place offers whole-wheat crust, you might order that for extra fiber.



● **Top with care.** Opt for red sauce rather than a cream-based sauce. Try grilled chicken in place of higher-fat meats like pepperoni and sausage. And pile on vegetables, such as spinach, red bell pepper, and onions.

● **X out extras.** You could ask the pizza shop to hold any dipping sauces like garlic butter, ranch, or nacho cheese.

● **Select sensible sides.** Instead of wings, garlic knots, or fried mozzarella sticks, go for a side salad with vinaigrette.

Idea: Rather than ordering pizza, try to make your own healthier versions! Use flatbread or ready-made whole-wheat dough. Brush with a thin layer of sauce, and add veggies and a sprinkling of cheese. Everyone will have fun customizing their pies. ♡



PARENT TO PARENT Bullying and food allergies

My daughter Mallory started coming home from school hungrier than usual. When I asked her about it, she admitted that some girls had been teasing her about her peanut allergy. One girl even walked by Mallory's lunch table and smeared peanut butter on her tray, so now she's afraid to eat at school.

I consulted our allergist, who explained that this is a form of bullying, and sadly it's not uncommon. He said I should call the school counselor, who can talk to the girls involved and inform the cafeteria staff.



Also, he suggested ways Mallory can protect herself, like never leaving food unattended and confiding in friends who could help her be aware of potential threats. Finally, he recommended that Mallory and I regularly review what to do if she has an allergic reaction. ♡

ACTIVITY CORNER

Exercise at your desk

Your child probably spends a good part of each weekday sitting down to do classwork or homework. Suggest these exercises to keep his muscles moving when he's at a desk.

Leg lifts: Extend one leg parallel to the floor (without locking your knee). Hold 15 seconds, and lower. Do 10 reps with each leg.

Calf raises: With knees bent, lift both heels 4–6 inches off the floor and return to start position. Do 30 reps.

Shoulder shrugs: Raise your shoulders toward your ears. Hold 5 seconds, and lower. Repeat 10 times.

Tip: Encourage your teen to stand at a counter or a high table at homework time. Or look for a standing desk at a yard sale or secondhand store. ♡



In the Kitchen Hold the bread!

Here's a secret: You don't need bread to make sandwiches, roll-ups, or wraps. Try these yummy breadless recipes.

Turkey cucumber roll-ups

Slice a cucumber into 8 long, thin strips. Spread each slice with hummus, and top with a thin turkey slice and fresh spinach leaves. Roll up, and secure with toothpicks.

Toasted sweet potato sandwich

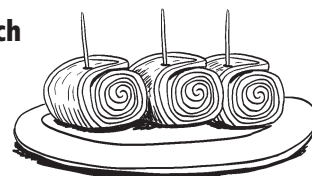
Cut a sweet potato lengthwise into 1/4-inch slices. Brown in the toaster until tender. For each "sandwich," spread 1 tbsp.

fat-free cream cheese on a sweet potato piece, add 3 thin apple slices, and sprinkle with 1/8 tsp. cinnamon. Top with another sweet potato slice.

Strawberry chicken lettuce wraps

Whisk together 3 tbsp. no-sugar-added strawberry preserves and 2 tbsp. each of apple cider vinegar, olive oil, and chopped red onion. Toss with 2 cups

chopped cooked chicken. Divide the mixture among 4 large lettuce leaves, and fold over. ♡



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 CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • 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