

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

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DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative

P.O. Box 110, Gillham, AR 71841

FAST TAKES



Food ads

Kids are often bombarded with ads for soda, energy drinks, candy, and other unhealthy choices via TV, websites, apps, and even video games. How to cut down on the temptation for your child to eat the junk food he sees advertised? Suggest that he use devices *after* a healthy meal or snack. Of course, limiting screen time is another good option.

Rake leaves to stay fit

Raking and bagging leaves is an active way for your teen to help out this fall. If she has younger siblings, she might make a leaf pile for them to jump into. For more physical activity—and a lesson in kindness—



suggest that she offer to rake leaves for older neighbors or ones who are sick.

Did You Know?

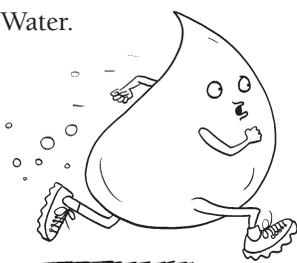
Your child can trim fat in his diet by thinking about the cheese he eats.

For instance, he could choose low-fat cheese at the sandwich shop. Or when he makes snacks, he might try stronger cheeses and use less. Extra-sharp cheddar can stand in for mild, and a sprinkle of Parmesan will make mozzarella go further.

Just for fun

Q: What can run but not walk?

A: Water.



Surprising facts about healthy foods

What's the difference between red and green bell peppers? What does a bouncing cranberry tell you? Share interesting food facts with your tween or teen—along with fun ways to eat these healthy foods.

Carrots are purple, too!

Not all carrots are orange. They also come in white, yellow, and even purple—and each kind provides your teen with different nutrients. Have your child grate multiple colors of carrots for a crunchy slaw or make roasted rainbow carrots for dinner.

All bell peppers start out green

If green peppers ripen on the vine, they'll turn yellow, then orange, and finally red! And the longer ripening time gives red bell peppers twice the vitamin C of green ones. Plus, they have a sweeter flavor. Your child could add diced red



pepper to salsa or pasta sauce, eat raw red pepper spears as a crunchy snack, or make stuffed peppers.

Ripe cranberries bounce

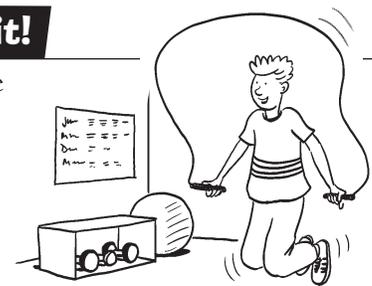
Let your youngster drop fresh cranberries onto her plate. If they bounce, they're ripe! And they're considered a superfood because they're high in antioxidants. Suggest that she use them to make a healthy cranberry sauce or stir cooked cranberries into batter for pancakes or muffins. ●

Fitness challenge: Spell it!

Here's a fun suggestion for building more physical activity into your family's days. Challenge each other to "spell their way to fitness" with this idea.

Start by having your tween write the alphabet on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper and add an exercise that starts with each letter. Hang the whiteboard or paper near an open space, perhaps a corner of the basement or family room.

Now "spell" your names by doing the exercises that match. For example, Jack might do **j**ump rope criss-crosses, **a**lternating leg lunges, **c**rab walks, and **k**nee taps. Then, each day, give each other random words to spell—by exercising your way through them! ●



Add healthy habits— one at a time

Healthy habits will stick longer if your teenager sets and tracks goals that are within reach. Pass along this three-step strategy to him.

1. Be specific. Instead of saying “I want to eat more fruits and vegetables,” your child could commit to including a fruit or vegetable with every snack. Or rather than announcing, “I’m going to exercise more,” he can plan to run three days per week.



see how many he has each week. And he might use a free running app to record his progress. ♥

2. Set up for success. Suggest that your teen create visible reminders of his goals. Maybe he’ll put a fruit bowl on the counter and wash and chop vegetables to keep front and center in the refrigerator. Or have him pick convenient days and times to run and put them on his calendar.

3. Track progress. Encourage your child to post a chart on the fridge where he can record the fruits and vegetables he eats or how far and how long he runs. Other ideas: He could snap photos of his fruit-and-veggie snacks and count the pictures to

Q & A “Exercise makes me hungry”

Q: My son is ravenous after a workout and tells himself that he “deserves” chips or cookies. How can I encourage him to satisfy his hunger with healthier foods?

A: It’s normal to be hungry after exercising, but you can help your child shift his mindset about what he eats. He can compare eating to filling up a car with gas. The right fuel will keep him going throughout the day.

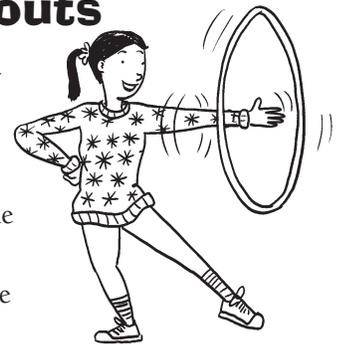
Encourage your son to prepare a healthy snack before his workout so it’s waiting for him when he’s finished. The best post-workout snacks will combine protein and carbohydrates. Here are two examples: a whole-grain bagel with mashed avocado, or a whole-wheat pita pocket with turkey and apple slices. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Hula-hoop workouts

Your teen may have enjoyed hula-hooping when she was little—and she’s not too old for it now. In fact, people of all ages use hula-hoops to stay fit. Suggest these four twists.



1. Walk back and forth, or in a circle, while keeping the hoop going.
2. Swing the hula-hoop around an arm or a leg, and see how long you can rotate the hoop.
3. Place the hula-hoop on the ground, and jump into and out of it for 30–60 seconds. Can you hop in and out on one leg?
4. Hula-hoop to music, and match the beat. When the music picks up, swirl the hoop faster, too.

Tip: Don’t have a hula-hoop? Ask neighbors or relatives for ones they’re not using, or try yard sales or a dollar store. ♥

In the Kitchen

Get creative with oatmeal

Kick oatmeal up a notch with new flavor combinations.

For the basic recipe, stir 1 cup water or fat-free milk into $\frac{1}{2}$ cup old-fashioned rolled oats, add a pinch of salt, and microwave $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 minutes. Then, try fun mix-ins like these.

Savory kale

Stir a handful of fresh kale, a pinch of garlic powder, and black pepper into hot oats. Top with chopped tomatoes and mozzarella cheese.

Roasted pear

Slice pears in half and scoop out the core. Place on a lightly oiled baking sheet and roast at 400° for 20–25 min. Top oats with diced roasted pears, a dash of cinnamon, and a drizzle of honey. ♥

PB&J

Swirl 2 tbsp. peanut butter and 1 tbsp. grape jelly into the cooked oats. (Allergic to peanuts? Substitute any nut or seed butter.)



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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