

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2018



## FAST TAKES

### A "cool" pool exercise

For a fun way to get fit this summer, suggest "water walking." Your teenager and her friends could chat while they walk laps at a neighborhood pool. The

water provides resistance, which helps strengthen muscles. *Tip:* Suggest that she look for water aerobics classes at a rec center or public pool.

### Did You Know?

Omega-3s are the "good" kind of fats.

These nutrition superstars help keep your tween's brain and heart healthy, fight inflammation, and more. He can find them in foods like salmon, tuna, walnuts, and chia seeds. He might enjoy grilled salmon brushed with tangy barbecue sauce or a smoothie with ground chia seeds.

### Contact lens care

Does your child wear contact lenses? Encourage her to look up and follow the care guidelines for her lenses. For example, wearing two-week lenses longer may cause an eye infection. Have her mark her calendar when she puts in new contacts and note when she should replace them.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What can you serve but never eat?

**A:** A volleyball.



Washington County Virginia Public Schools  
Ms. Francine Ivery, Manager School Nutrition

## Smart summer snacking

When your tween is hungry between meals this summer, will he reach for carrot sticks or a bag of potato chips? Having healthy items on hand, no matter where he is, can help him make wise choices. Try these suggestions.

### On the go

If your child is heading out with friends or family, encourage him to think portable. He could pack raw sugar snap peas, sliced bell peppers, and broccoli florets with a container of hummus or low-fat ranch dressing for dipping. Plain popcorn, almonds, and sunflower seeds are other easy-to-carry snack options.

### Outdoor play

Hot days call for cool treats. Your teen will want something refreshing during breaks from sports or other physical activity. Suggest frozen grapes for a snack bursting with vitamin K and antioxidants. Have him spread grapes in a single layer on a cookie sheet and freeze

for 2 hours. Or he might puree favorite fruits and freeze into ice-pops.

### At home

Ask your tween to post a list of snack ideas using items in the refrigerator or pantry. He might include "toothpick kebabs with cherry tomatoes, chunks of cheese, and spinach leaves" or "cottage cheese with blueberries." *Idea:* As your child helps to clean up after dinner, have him portion out leftovers into small containers for easy snacking and add those to his list, too. ♡



## Picnic food safety

Picnic season is here! Share these strategies with your teen to keep the fun in outdoor eating by avoiding foodborne illnesses:

- Wash your hands often. Your teenager can carry hand sanitizer in case soap and water aren't available.
- Pack a cooler with ice or an ice pack to keep perishables cold. *Idea:* Your child might freeze a water bottle to use as an ice pack—then she can drink the water when it thaws.
- Never leave perishables, such as meat, eggs, seafood, or cheese, out for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if it's hotter than 90°. ♡



# Easy container gardens

With a few supplies, your child will learn how food grows and gain the satisfaction of planting, growing, and eating from her own container garden. Use these tips to get started.

**What?** No yard? No problem. Container gardening lets your teen grow plants in pots instead of in the ground, making it perfect for smaller spaces. Pots can be placed in a tiny yard, on a porch or deck, or on a sunny windowsill indoors.



**Which?** Encourage your teenager to focus on veggies she'll enjoy eating. For example, she might grow a "pizza garden"—tomatoes, green peppers, and oregano all do well in pots. A "soup garden" could include peas, onions, and green beans.

**How?** Together, visit a discount retailer, a nursery, or a hardware store. An employee can help your child pick out seeds or plants, the right soil, and pots. To learn how to plant and tend her garden, she could ask about free classes, get a how-to book at the library, watch videos online—or talk to relatives or neighbors who have a green thumb! ♡

## Q & A Understanding nutrition information

**Q:** My family is trying to eat a healthier diet. How can we make sense of nutrition information on food packages?

**A:** The Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods will be easier to understand once you and your family learn what the numbers mean.

The key is to read the serving size first. Then, you can see how many calories are in that serving, and also how much fat, sodium, sugar, fiber, and protein it contains. Eat two servings, and you've had double the numbers.



Wondering what kinds of numbers to look for? For sodium and saturated fat, the lower the number, the better. And for fiber, vitamins, and minerals, higher amounts are healthier. For example, look for packages with less than 140 mg sodium per serving, or for 2.5 grams or more of fiber. ♡

### 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.

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## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Frisbee "ball"

Combine a Frisbee with your teenager's favorite sports for a mash-up that delivers hours of fun and exercise. Enjoy these games.

#### Basketball

Throwing a Frisbee into a basketball hoop sounds challenging. But with practice, your teen might sink a shot! Take turns tossing the disc toward the hoop. Earn 1 point for hitting the backboard, 2 points for grazing the net, 3 for touching the rim, and 5 if it goes through the hoop. The first player to reach 21 points wins.



#### Baseball

Trade a Frisbee for the ball and bat in this version of the summer classic. Set up bases using old magazines or other markers. The person "at bat" tosses the disc into the field, trying to avoid infielders and outfielders, and runs the bases. If his throw is caught on a fly or he's tagged with the Frisbee, he's out. Score a run by reaching home plate. Teams switch after three outs, and high score wins after 9 innings. ♡

## In the Kitchen

### Grilled fruit: A sweet surprise

Burger, hot dog, or...mango? Barbecuing isn't just for meat! Here's how to grill fruit with flair this summer.

#### Honey-lime cantaloupe

Combine the juice of 1 lime with 1 tbsp. honey, and set aside. Cut cantaloupe into wedges and peel. Grill 3–5 minutes per side or until grill marks appear. Drizzle the honey-lime mixture over the warm cantaloupe.



#### Island yogurt

In a small bowl, mix 1 cup nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt and 1 tbsp. shredded coconut. Cut 2 mangoes in half, and remove the pits and peels. Grill 2 minutes per side. Top each half with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the yogurt mixture and chopped fresh mint.

#### Peach crisp

Halve 2 peaches, and discard the pits. Place each half cut-side down, and grill 4–5 minutes per side. Sprinkle each half with 1 tbsp. granola. ♡