

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

November 2017

Gwinnett School Nutrition Program

Taylor Blake, MS, RDN, LD

FAST TAKES



Snack on seeds

Seeds are a smart snacking solution. They're high in healthy fats and provide satisfying protein. In small bags or jars, let your teen combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each sunflower seeds and dried cranberries for a simple and energizing trail mix. Or she might roast a couple handfuls of pumpkin seeds with a sprinkle of chili powder for a spicy treat.

Sneakers that fit

Properly fitted sneakers can help prevent injury. Your child may need a



nudge to swap the cool pair he wears to school for a sturdy shoe

designed for running or playing tennis. To save on the cost, shop sales and clearance racks for last year's styles.

Did You Know?

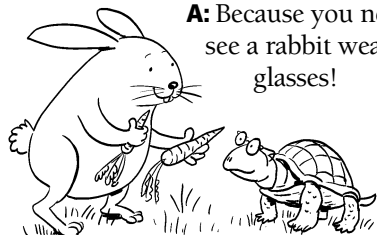
Raw bell peppers are vitamin C superstars!

Compared to a medium orange, a red bell pepper has double the vitamin C and a yellow one has four times the amount. Encourage your tween to enjoy these crunchy vegetables dipped into pesto or chopped into a salad. Or suggest that she cut peppers into thick strips and use them to scoop up hummus.

Just for fun

Q: How do you know carrots are good for your eyes?

A: Because you never see a rabbit wearing glasses!



Whole grains all day long

Working whole grains into your teen's diet can be easier than you think. Try these ideas for adding whole grains to breakfast, lunch, and dinner—and meeting the recommendation to make half of his grains whole.

Make breakfast whole

On weekends, whip up a batch of muffins or pancakes with whole-wheat flour. (If your child isn't used to whole wheat, replace half with white flour.) Freeze, and microwave as needed on busy school mornings. Or have your tween mix whole-grain cereal with his favorite kind. He could increase the portion of whole grain as he develops a taste for it.

Add grains at lunch

Encourage your teenager to choose at least one whole-grain lunch item each day. It could be a corn tortilla for his taco or quesadilla. Or he might try different varieties of whole-grain bread



for sandwiches, such as pita, flatbreads, or mini-bagels.

Eat a colorful dinner

Brown isn't the only color that whole-grain rice comes in—add color to your whole-grain options at dinner with red, purple, and black rice. Prepare them just like brown rice, perhaps adding chicken or vegetable broth for extra flavor. You might cook half white rice and half of another color as a base for a stir-fry or a rice bowl. ●

Active holidays

These activities can keep your whole family moving at holiday get-togethers.

● **Walk it off.** Full from a big dinner? Bundle up and take a family walk before dessert. You might also plan a longer walk or a hike for the morning.

● **Play a game.** Organize a silly group game like Pass the Pear. Split into two lines. The first player in each line holds a pear between her chin and neck. Pass it down the line from neck to neck and then back to the start. No hands allowed! If the pear falls, your team has to start over. The first team to return the pear to player one wins.

● **Teach a sport.** Encourage your tween to teach younger siblings or cousins a sport she plays. Then, she can organize a lacrosse game or a cheerleading routine. *Tip:* Let the little ones teach the older ones the games they play, too. ●

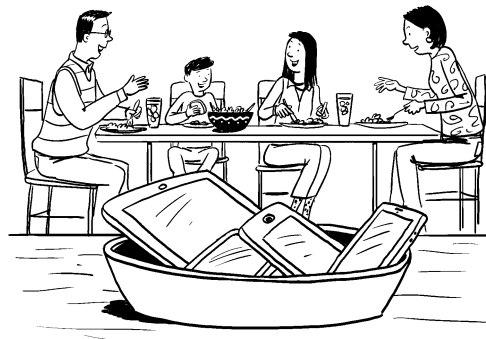


Mindful eating

Eating in front of a television or while swiping a screen can take your child's mind off her food—leading to mindless overeating. Encourage “mindful eating” instead with this advice.

Skip the screens. Turn off the TV, and ask everyone to silence phones and tablets and put them in a basket during meals. Then, carry on a pleasant conversation. *Tip:* Increase mindfulness by talking about the flavors and textures you're enjoying.

Stop before you're stuffed. Have your tween pay attention to hunger cues. When she feels that perhaps she could eat a few more bites but she's satisfied enough to stop, it's likely she has had the right amount of food. ♥



Master mindfulness

This sweet mindfulness exercise may help your tween learn to focus on and savor each bite. Suggest these steps.

1. Hold a raisin. Notice the color and every wrinkle.
2. Smell the raisin, and describe its fragrance.
3. Place the raisin on your tongue. Note the taste and how the texture changes as you chew. Are there any lingering flavors after you swallow?

Idea: Try this with other foods, too!



Q & A Coffee shop smarts

Q: My teenager sometimes goes to the coffee shop with her friends after school. I don't want her to drink caffeine or too much sugar. What should I do?

A: You're right to be concerned. Just one large coffee drink may contain a day's worth of caffeine and sugar for a full-grown adult. Caffeine can increase your teen's heart rate, cause her to feel anxious and jittery, and make it hard for her to sleep.

Before her next coffee shop trip, talk with her about what she might order. You could help her choose decaf, low-sugar options, such as a skinny decaf latte with only one pump of syrup. Or she could opt for herbal tea. Some shops offer lightly sweetened blends in fun flavors like strawberry green tea or pineapple mint. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Start a yoga habit

Many teenagers are discovering yoga these days. The popular workout increases balance, strength, and flexibility, and it can reduce stress, too. Share these tips for getting started:

- Contact a community center or visit yogafinder.com for classes in your area. Some are donation-based, where students pay what (or if) they can. Also, see if your high school offers yoga as a PE elective or if there's an after-school yoga club.
- Take up yoga at home with online streaming videos at sites like doyogawithme.com or videos from the library. Or build your own yoga sequence by collecting photos of poses you find online.

Idea: Join your teen in a yoga practice. It's a nice way to connect with him—as well as with your body and mind. ♥



In the Kitchen

Crazy for cauliflower

Cauliflower is a versatile vegetable that can stand in for other ingredients. Enjoy these healthy riffs on teen favorites.

Buffalo “wings”

Toss 8 cups cauliflower florets with 2 tbsp. olive oil and a pinch of salt. Roast on a baking sheet for 30 minutes at 450°. In a bowl, mix 3 tbsp. low-sodium hot sauce with 1 tbsp. melted butter and 1 tsp. lemon juice. Drizzle cauliflower with sauce, and roast 5 more minutes.

Mashed “potatoes”

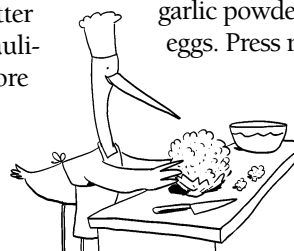
In a medium saucepan, bring 1 cup water to a boil. Add 4 cups chopped cauliflower, cover, and

simmer 12–15 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Mash with a potato masher, then stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light sour cream.

Pizza “crust”

Cook a 16-oz. bag of riced cauliflower according to package directions. Toss with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mozzarella, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each Italian seasoning and garlic powder, and 2 lightly beaten eggs. Press mixture into a round

baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes. Add tomato sauce, cheese, and favorite toppings. Bake 10 minutes. ♥



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