

Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

October 2013

Manitou Springs School District # 14
Paula Faucette - Food Service



FAST TAKES

Homemade bread crumbs

Making bread crumbs is easy—and a great way to use up bread that's getting stale. Your tween might tear chunks of whole-wheat bread into a food processor or blender and pulse into crumbs. Or he could toast the bread, place it in a zipper bag, and smash it with a rolling pin. Freeze the crumbs, and use in meatballs or casseroles.

Active volunteering

In many areas, teens have to complete community service hours to graduate. Suggest that your high schooler look for volunteer opportunities that involve physical activity. For example, she might help coach kids' sports teams, plant neighborhood gardens, or clean up a park or a beach.



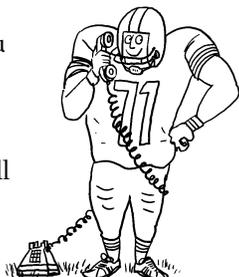
Did You Know?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has lowered the calorie count on a serving of almonds. That's right—almonds have 20 percent fewer calories than previously thought. A 1-oz. serving is now listed at 129 calories, rather than 160. *Bonus:* Almonds are packed with nutrients, and a handful makes a good snack.

Just for fun

Q: What do you get when you cross a telephone with a very big football player?

A: A wide receiver!



Think before you eat

Have you ever noticed your child snacking right after you've finished a meal? Sometimes kids eat out of habit, not because they're hungry. Help your teen figure out her hunger cues—and avoid mindless eating—with these strategies.

Slow down

Point out that it takes time for your stomach to fill up and let your brain know "I'm full." If your child eats slowly, she can tell when she's full. Suggest that she eat about three-quarters of what's on her dinner plate and then wait a few minutes. She may find that she's no longer hungry and doesn't need to finish the rest.

Avoid "screen eating"

When your tween eats while watching TV, playing video games, or texting, she's probably not even noticing what—or how much—she's eating. Agree on a family rule of "No screen time while eating." That will help everyone focus on what they're eating rather than what's on the screen.



Learn to savor

Encourage your family to notice what the food really tastes like—then they'll be less likely to overeat. During meals, have each person give three adjectives to describe the food they're eating. The catch? You can't repeat a word anyone else has used. For example, the corn might be "yellow, firm, and sweet," or the fish stew could be "spicy, colorful, and succulent."

Note: Your teen may be reaching for a snack because she's thirsty, not hungry. Before she eats something, suggest that she drink a glass of water. ♥

Two-player games

When there aren't enough kids around for a real game of basketball or hockey, try these versions for two players. They're a little silly, but a lot of fun! *Note:* Use a pair of rolled-up socks for the ball or puck.

Basketball. One player forms a basket with his arms while the other tries to toss the ball in. (No dunking allowed!) To make things more challenging, and more active, the "basket" should move around as much as possible.

Field hockey. On a garage floor, driveway, or playground blacktop, use sidewalk chalk to draw a goal. Then, play with brooms or real hockey sticks. One person defends the goal, while the other tries to score. Play five periods (one minute each), and switch roles. ♥



Learning about food labels

Let your tween or teen know there's a lot more to a food label than the calorie count. He can tell how healthy a food is, and decide whether to eat it, by reviewing the numbers.

Check out the percentages. Fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, and vitamins are listed in grams (g) or milligrams (mg), along with the percentage they provide in a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet. You could discuss those percentages while looking together at



some of his favorite foods. He might reconsider a single-serving bag of potato chips, for example, when he sees it could have close to a third of his daily fat and sodium intake.

Go for nutrients. Percentages will also tell him whether foods are nutrient-rich. As a rule of thumb, more than 20 percent of a daily serving is excellent for a nutrient, 10 to 19 percent is good, and less than 10 percent is low. For instance, 8 oz. of milk give him 30 percent of his daily calcium and 25 percent of vitamin D. *Note:* For foods without a label, like produce, he can find the information on store signs or online. ♥



Q & A Sports for all

Q: My son, Jackson, has high-functioning autism. I'd like to get him involved in sports, but I'm not sure where to start—any ideas?

A: The first step is to ask Jackson what sports he enjoys in PE class or at home. Does he prefer team sports like soccer and basketball or individual activities such as running, swimming, and biking?



Then, talk to his resource teacher or occupational therapist. Do they recommend that he play on a school team, or would a community league or class be a better fit?

Local autism support groups or your parks and recreation department can also help you find the right activity for Jackson. Many communities have programs tailored toward the needs of children with autism. For example, they may play with modified rules or offer a higher adult-to-child ratio. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Autumn fun

Seasonal favorites can give your family a chance to enjoy added exercise and healthy foods. Here's how.

Pick produce

Look online or in newspapers for places where you can pick your own pecans, apples, or pears. You'll get exercise walking through the orchards and farms, and you'll bring home produce to eat whole or turn into breads, applesauce, or jams.



Rake leaves

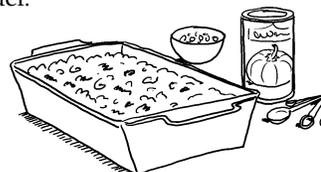
Together, clear your yard or a neighbor's. Your tween might even invite her friends over to create a huge pile to dive in. Then, they can pack the leaves into bags. *Idea:* After the hard work, serve hot chocolate made with fat-free milk. ♥

In the Kitchen Pumpkin for dinner

Canned pumpkin isn't just for pie! High in fiber and low in fat, pumpkin can go into hearty stews, tasty sauces, and recipes like these.

Pumpkin ziti

1. Cook 6 oz. whole-wheat ziti pasta according to package directions. Drain.
2. In a saucepan, heat $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin puree, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-sodium chicken broth, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat-free milk, 1 tsp. olive oil, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. garlic powder.
3. Stir in the pasta, 1 cup frozen peas, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese. Cook until hot.



Pumpkin shepherd's pie

1. Boil 1 peeled, diced potato until tender. Drain, and return to the pot. Add 1 cup pumpkin puree (from a 15-oz. can) and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-fat cheddar cheese. Whip.
2. In a skillet, brown $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. extra-lean ground beef. Add 1 tbsp. flour and 1 tsp. onion powder, and cook 4 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 cup fat-free beef broth and the remaining pumpkin puree until thick. Spoon mixture into a casserole dish, top with potato-pumpkin mixture, and broil 5 minutes. ♥

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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