

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2010

La Joya Independent School District  
Child Nutrition Services

## FAST TAKES



### Weighing calories

Make sure your child knows that calories are not created equal. For example, an apple has the same number of calories as a handful of French fries. But apples have fiber and vitamin C, while fries are heavy on fat and sodium. Talk to your teen about choosing foods that are worth their calories.



### Garlic for health

Fresh garlic is a healthy way to boost flavor. Add crushed garlic to foods your children like, such as pasta, soups, or stir-fries. You can buy peeled garlic cloves (in jars or bags) and crush them with a garlic press, or get packages of already-crushed garlic frozen in cubes.

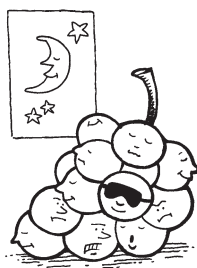
### Did You Know?

More time for lounging and snacking means that teens tend to gain weight over the summer. Encourage your child to exercise daily. For instance, she can stay active at the pool by swimming laps. Or she might exercise at the beach by batting around a beach ball. Also, cooler morning or evening hours are ideal for jogging and walking.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why don't grapes snore?

**A:** They don't want to wake up the rest of the bunch.



## Stay hydrated

Active children need plenty to drink, especially on hot summer days. Here are ways to help your teen or tween develop good habits.

### Stick with water

With no calories, fat, or sodium, water is the best choice for all-day drinking. Keep reusable water bottles on hand, and make sure your child takes one when he goes off to play.

*Tip:* Fill the bottle the night before (leaving room at the top), and freeze it. By the time your teen is ready to drink it, the ice will have thawed into cold, refreshing water.

### Keep drinking

Encourage your youngster to “pre-hydrate,” or drink water before a game or practice starts. Then, he should take water breaks every 15–20 minutes while playing. After exercising, he should drink water again. *Note:* The larger a child is, the more he'll need to drink. For example, a teen who weighs 132 pounds



needs about 9 ounces of water each time he drinks. (An ounce is about two gulps.)

### Avoid dehydration

If your teen waits until he's thirsty to drink, he has waited too long, since thirst is an early symptom of dehydration. Discuss signs of being dehydrated, such as dry or sticky mouth, headache, dizziness, nausea, cramps, extreme tiredness, and—of course—thirst. *Note:* If your child shows symptoms, he needs water, shade, and rest right away. If he's not improving, seek medical attention. ♥

## Bike safety

Biking is a great way for kids to get places, have fun, and enjoy exercise. Help your teen stay safe with these rules:

- She should always wear a helmet. Make sure her helmet fits correctly (have it checked by an expert at a bike shop). Let the person show her how to tighten the chin strap so the helmet sits on top of her head properly.
- Have your teenager use bike paths, bike lanes, or side streets that you consider safe. Remind her to obey traffic laws and never wear headphones while biking.
- She should wear bright clothing while she rides. If she's biking after dark, have her also wear reflective tape, and put lights on the front and back of her bike. ♥



# Active businesses

Your child can earn spending money *and* stay active over the summer. How? By starting a business.

Suggest that she make flyers listing her prices and hours and hand them out to neighbors. Here are some ideas:

**1.** If your teen likes animals, she could offer a dog-walking service. She might have regular clients who work all day or occasional customers who take all-day outings. For extra



exercise—and money—she could also wash pets or play with them while their owners are away.

**2.** Yard work can give your child a real workout. She can water flowers and bushes, pull weeds, mow grass, and sweep porches and sidewalks. She could also plant flower or vegetable gardens and keep them weeded and watered.

**3.** Car washing burns calories and keeps teens cool on hot summer days. It's also a great job to do

with friends. They might organize a car wash in your driveway, or gather a bucket, sponges, soap, old towels, and a hose and take their service door-to-door. ♥

## Q & A Around the world

**Q:** My daughter recently had Japanese noodles at a friend's house and loved them. How can my family branch out and try foods from other cultures?

**A:** You might start by browsing the international food aisle at the grocery store. You'll find a variety of packaged foods, canned goods, and juices.

If your family is used to eating Italian or Chinese carryout, consider Indian or Thai for a change. You can try an Indian curry or tandoori chicken (baked in a clay tandoor oven). Or sample pad Thai, a national dish of Thailand with stir-fried rice noodles, cooked egg, bean sprouts, and chicken, shrimp, or tofu.



With your teen, check the library for ethnic cookbooks or look online for recipes from other countries—perhaps ones that kids in her school come from. You might work your way around the globe by trying food from a different country each month! ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Backyard games

There are lots of opportunities for physical activity right in your backyard. Share these ideas for two games your teen can play with his friends.



**No-net volleyball.** Use a clothesline or line up soccer cones as a volleyball net. Or create an imaginary boundary, such as a “line” between two trees. Then, hit a volleyball back and forth. *Idea:* Play a game of Newcomb, where players catch the volleyball and throw it back.

**Crazy hockey.** Gather two small plastic balls, hockey sticks, and obstacles (bucket, cardboard box). Set up the course, and at the count of three, each person hits his ball around the obstacles. The first one to the finish line wins. ♥

## In the Kitchen

### Summer treats

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy cold foods. Here are a few recipes to try.

**Easy guacamole.** Scoop out and mash 2 avocados. Add ¼ cup salsa and a splash of lemon juice. Eat with whole-grain tortilla chips, or spread on a turkey sandwich.

**Grilled vegetable salad.** Grill asparagus spears, small red potatoes, quartered onions, and zucchini strips. Mix together a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and toss the vegetables and dressing together. Refrigerate overnight.

**Cold burritos.** Mix 3 chopped tomatoes, 1 diced mango, kernels cut from 1 cooked ear of corn, 1 can black beans (drained), and shredded lettuce. Sprinkle with a pinch of chili powder, and wrap in whole-wheat tortillas.

**Fruity ice cream sandwich.** Spread a thin layer of low-fat vanilla ice cream on a graham cracker. Top with sliced strawberries, a layer of fresh blueberries, and a second graham cracker. Wrap in plastic, and freeze for about 30 minutes. ♥

