

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

May 2021

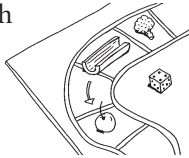
Gonzales Independent School District

## FAST TAKES



### An edible board game

Let your tween create a board game that's also a healthy snack. Maybe he'll invent "Veggie Land," with a path made of celery and carrots, and use radish and cucumber slices as tokens. He can write instructions and teach family members how to play. After your game, eat the board and tokens!



### Did You Know?

Walking while using a cell phone is a safety hazard for pedestrians, and it's unfortunately common among tweens and teens. Remind your child: "Head up, phone down." She should remove earbuds so she's aware of her surroundings and never talk or text when she's on the move.

### Go for low sodium

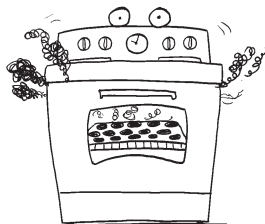
Sauces and dressings can add a lot of sodium to your teen's diet. Suggest that he compare nutrition labels in the store and choose lower-sodium pasta sauce, condiments, and salad dressings. Another option? Make sauces at home, and add flavor with herbs and spices rather than salt.

### Just for fun

**Judy:** I just burned 3,000 calories in 30 minutes.

**Andy:** How?!

**Judy:** I forgot to take the cookies out of the oven!

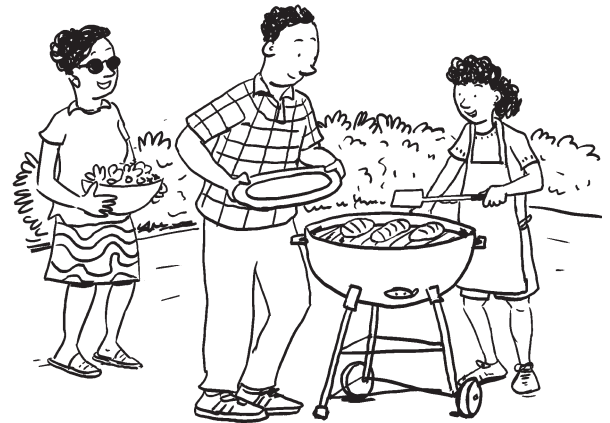


## Smart summer eating

Hot summer days provide plenty of opportunities for your teen to adopt healthy habits. Try these suggestions.

### Take breakfast outside

Picnics aren't just for lunch! Create a routine everyone will look forward to by having breakfast outdoors together on weekends. Imagine listening to the birds chirping while you eat fruit-and-yogurt parfaits, avocado toast with sliced hard-boiled egg, or whole-grain English muffins with nonfat cottage cheese.



produce like zucchini, yellow squash, plums, or apricots.

### Grill it

Grilling trims fat from meat—as it cooks, fat drips off. Teach your teen to brush meat, chicken, or fish with a mixture of olive oil and low-sodium soy sauce (equal amounts of each) before grilling. The grill is also a terrific way to cook fruits and vegetables, since it brings out their natural sweetness. Together, experiment with grilling

### Make "cool" meals

When it's hot, your tween won't be craving heavy stews or pastas. Instead, she might try open-faced sandwiches on one slice of whole-grain bread for dinner. Have her look in cookbooks or online for main-dish salads or cold soups. Or whip up alternatives to mashed potatoes and white rice, such as corn tossed with diced tomatoes, red onions, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. ♡

## All around town

How can your teen get lots of exercise—and get to know your town or neighborhood better? Challenge him to walk or run every street in your area this summer! Here's how.

**1. Map it out.** Get a street map of your town or print neighborhood maps from the internet. He can mark safe routes and highlight each one he takes.

**2. Step it up.** To work different muscles and add variety to his walks or runs, your teen might alternate hilly and flat routes.

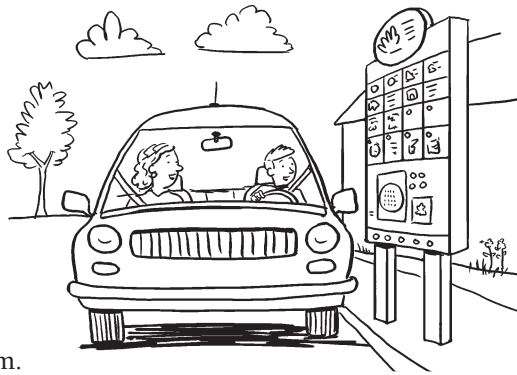
**3. See new sights.** As a bonus, he may discover things he's never seen before, like a colorful mural on the side of a building or a miniature park. ♡



# Choose wisely at the drive-thru

The calories in fast food can add up faster than the time it takes to get your food! Help your teen make healthier choices with these tips.

**Know the numbers.** Have your child read nutrition information on the menu board or restaurant website. He can choose items that are higher in fiber and lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Instead of a special-edition burger loaded with



high-fat toppings, he might order a regular burger with extra veggies. Or rather than a milkshake, he could get a small cup of ice cream. *Tip:* Suggest that your teen decide on his order before going so there's less temptation at the restaurant.

### Order from the "secret menu."

Whether a restaurant actually has a secret menu or not, encourage your child to invent his own meals. He might ask for a plain baked potato and a side of salsa to put on top. Or he could make a grilled

chicken salad by ordering a chicken sandwich with no bun and a side salad. ♡

## Q & A Water: The healthiest beverage

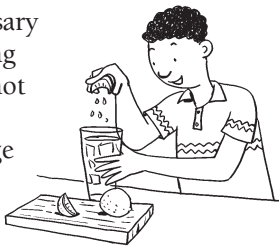
**Q:** I've heard that water is the only drink my teenager needs. How can I get him to drink more of it?

**A:** With zero fat, sugar, or sodium, water is the perfect beverage! Plus, a glass of ice-cold water is refreshing on a hot summer day.

In addition to water, your child also needs fat-free milk for calcium. Keep in mind that sports drinks are only necessary if he's exercising vigorously in hot weather.

To encourage your teen to drink water, suggest that he add a splash of lemon or lime juice to regular or sparkling water. Or he might like unsweetened decaf tea, which of course is mostly water.

Finally, encourage your teenager to carry a refillable water bottle with him to stay hydrated. ♡



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### "Snack" on exercise

Your teen can reap all the benefits of a full workout in 10-minute activity "bites" throughout the day! Share these ideas.

**Jump for joy.** Create a jump-rope routine that includes single and double jumps, side swings, and crossovers.

**Push it.** Strengthen arm and chest muscles by doing alternating planks and push-ups.

**Play with younger siblings.** Give piggyback rides, throw and catch a beach ball, or let little ones chase her around the yard.

**Think outside the box.** Juggle beanbags or balls. Blow up a few balloons and bat them around to keep them all in the air.

*Idea:* Encourage your child to make a three-song playlist for each activity. Since the average pop song is about 3½ minutes long, each playlist will be about 10 minutes. ♡



## In the Kitchen Fruit with a twist

Add more fruit to your teen's diet with these refreshing and creative summertime recipes. They're ideal for dessert or special occasions.

### Peach "nachos"

Cut two peaches in half, and remove pits. Slice thinly, then layer on a plate. Drizzle ¼ cup warm nut or seed butter on top. Sprinkle lightly with mini dark chocolate chips, coconut flakes, and cinnamon.



### Watermelon "layer cake"

Cut three round watermelon "layers," each about 1-inch thick, and remove the rinds. Place one slice on a plate and top with kiwi and banana slices and raspberries. Continue alternating watermelon and toppings to make a three-layer "cake."

### Rainbow kebabs

Thread fresh strawberries, orange segments, pineapple chunks, honeydew melon cubes, and blueberries onto skewers—it's a rainbow! Dip in plain fat-free yogurt. ♡

### 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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