

Nutrition

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- Your teen will be selecting their own food choices for snacks and some meals when away from home, although you are still responsible for the food choices that are brought into the home. Encourage them to make healthy choices, but do not harp on them when they do not.
- Parents are responsible for the what, **when, and where**.
- Adolescents are responsible for **what and how much**.
- Continue structured family meals and snack times as often as possible. Adolescents who have meals with their families do better nutritionally, socially, and emotionally. Keep the conversations interesting and light to involve your teen. Make these family meals a priority and a pleasant time to connect.
- Teach your teen to be responsible for eating three meals and two snacks each day.
- Encourage water and healthy snacks between meals instead of grazing or consuming empty calories.
- Avoid any form of screen time, including TV, computers or tablets, and cell phones, during mealtimes; distracted eaters tend to eat more than they need for their bodies.
- Avoid skipping meals, especially breakfast. This can lead to over-hunger which can lead to overeating.
- Avoid or limit empty calorie foods such as chips, sweets, and fast food.
- No sugary drinks including soda, Kool-Aid, juice, energy drinks, and sports drinks. Energy drinks are not a healthy choice and should be avoided. **Water is best for hydration.**
- Teens can assist with meal preparation, set the table, clean up, wash dishes, and other kitchen tasks.
- Teens can still learn to like a variety of foods. Continue to encourage trying new foods in a variety of ways.
- Half of a meal plate should be filled with a variety of colorful fruits and veggies and the other half with protein and whole grains.
- If your teen has health, or nutritional questions, discuss these with your pediatrician or ask for a referral to a dietitian. No child should ever adopt fad diets.

Five ways to spot a fad diet

1. The diet is based on drastically reducing, or cutting, calories.
2. The diet is based on taking special pills, powders, or herbs.
3. The diet requires only specific foods or foods in certain combinations.
4. The diet completely cuts out fat, sugar, and/or carbs.
5. The diet requires skipped meals or meals to be replaced with special drinks or food bars.

Did you know?

Your teen's bones are accepting calcium deposits but will only continue to for another 10 years. They need three to four cups of calcium-rich foods to meet their needs for strong bones and teeth. (See the last page for a list of calcium-rich foods.)

How much should my child eat?

- There is some variation at this age as kids go through growth spurts at various times and have different activity levels.
- Below are two additional resources for customized nutrition and meal ideas/tips:
 - [MyPlate](#)
 - [Nutrition](#)



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Healthy snack ideas

- Apple slices dipped, or lightly spread, with peanut butter
- Blend low-fat milk, frozen strawberries, and a banana for a healthy smoothie drink
- Snack kabobs - alternate cheese cubes with pieces of fresh fruit
- Healthy trail-mix with a small amount of dried fruit, nuts in a snack-size baggie, or cup
- Yogurt parfait with layered plain yogurt and fruit, top with granola
- Veggie match sticks with hummus
- Hardboiled egg slices with low fat cottage cheese

Sample menu

Fruit – 2 cups

1 cup of fruit counts as:

- 1 cup raw or cooked
- Whole fruit – apple, orange, banana

Vegetables – 3 cups

1 cup of vegetables counts as:

- 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables; or
- 2 cups leafy salad greens; or
- 1 cup 100% vegetable juice

Grains – 6-ounce equivalents – $\frac{1}{2}$ of all grains should be whole grains

1 serving of grains counts as:

- 1 slice of bread; or
- 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal; or
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal

Protein – 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalents

1 serving of protein counts as:

- 3-ounces of lean meat, poultry, or seafood; or
- 1 egg; or
- 1 tbsp. peanut butter; or
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked beans or peas; or
- $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce nuts or seeds

Dairy – 3-4 cups

1 cup of dairy counts as:

- 1 cup milk; or
- 1 cup yogurt; or
- 1 cup fortified milk alternative; or
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 ounces natural cheese



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Additional Resources

- [5-2-1-0 Let's Go!](#)
- [Interactive Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition](#)
- [100 Calorie Snack Ideas](#)
- [Eating Healthy on a Budget](#)
- [Food, Financial, and Medical Care Assistance](#)
- [Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight – American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Weight Management Program – Riley Hospital for Children](#)
- [Nutrition and Physical Activity Tips – Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#)
- [Physical Activity – Riley Hospital for Children](#)
- [GOAL Program - Get Onboard Active Living](#)



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