

### Eat Smart and Be Active to Be Your Best

As a teenager, you're starting to make more choices about your life. Decisions about your food choices and physical activity will affect your body and your health—today, and as you become an adult. Now is the time to take charge of your body with healthy eating and physical activity habits.

#### You Are What You Eat

You may already know that it's smart to eat a variety of foods from different food groups every day. That's because the foods you eat supply fuel and important nutrients to help power your body and your brain. What you eat can make a difference in how you look and feel—and how you do in school. Other eating habits, like where and why you eat, also play a part. Take a look at your eating habits and decide where you can make some small changes to help you eat sensibly. Try some of these tips for starters:

*Think about your food choices.* Eating right is all about what and how much you choose to eat—it's not about giving up your favorite foods. When you balance your food choices over several days, you can enjoy favorite foods and get enough of the nutrients your body needs without overdoing it. So, if you decide to go for an extra slice of pizza or an ice cream sundae, balance these with lower-calorie choices at another meal or the next day.

*Re-focus your fluids.* Beverages that deliver a nutrition kick include fat-free, milk or 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Try replacing regular soft drinks with water, a nutritious beverage or a low-calorie beverage to be calorie-wise.

*Satisfy your sweet tooth.* Try delicious, nutritious fruit when you have a taste for something sweet. Slice a banana onto your morning cereal, munch a bunch of grapes as part of lunch, crunch on apple slices for a snack or chill out with frozen fruit pieces, such as grapes, berries or melon.

*Pay attention to your food.* Eat meals with your family—it's great to connect over food. Studies show that eating as a family promotes better nutrition. If you eat in your room or in front of the TV, it's easy to lose track of how much you're eating. It's best to eat your meals and snacks at a table. Serve up the amount you plan to eat before you sit down, so you don't overdo it on calories.



*Eat for the right reason.* Eat when you're hungry. If you find yourself eating when you're not hungry, try doing something else to get your mind off food. Drink water, call a friend, get moving, read or work on a project. These activities can help you cut back on eating when you're feeling thirsty, bored, upset or stressed.

#### MyPyramid—for Teens, too

MyPyramid tells us how to eat smart and be active. Go to [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov) and enter your age, gender and physical activity level. You can print out a MyPyramid food plan designed just for you.

MyPyramid gives some general advice about eating. Each of the five different-colored bands represents a food group (there's another band for "oils"). Choose foods from the different food groups each day because each food group has an important job in keeping you healthy.

- Grains give you energy and fiber.
- Vegetables give you vitamins A and C for healing and fighting illness.
- Fruits also supply vitamins A and C.
- Milk products help you get enough calcium for strong bones.
- Meat & Beans give you protein, B vitamins and iron to keep you strong.

While MyPyramid includes all kinds of foods, remember that not all foods are created equal. The wider base of each food group holds nutrient-rich foods that you should choose most often. As the band gets narrow near the top, this reminds you to eat less of the foods with extra fat and sugars.

#### Get a Move On!

Being active means moving your body. It doesn't have to mean playing sports or taking a fitness class. You can choose fun activities and do them on your own or with your friends or family. Being active helps you strengthen your bones and build muscle. It helps you feel better and gives you more energy to

do other things. Physical activity can also help you think and concentrate better, feel less bored, be better able to handle stress and manage weight.

Make some simple changes in your daily routine, like spending less time in front of the TV or computer, so you have some extra time for activity. What you choose to do is up to you. Just pick something you enjoy and keep it up. Try out some of these fun ideas to put more action in your life.

- *Put your feet in motion.* Turn on your feet and let them walk. Walk to school, to work, to a friend's house, to the store, around the mall or wherever it's safe to walk. While you're at it, walk your dog (or your neighbor's dog).
- *Spin your wheels.* Hop on your bike, in-line skates, skateboard or scooter and roll around the neighborhood. Make your muscles do the work while you enjoy the outdoors.
- *Draft your own team.* You don't need to be on a team to enjoy sports. Grab your friends and form your own team as you play volleyball, shoot hoops, kick a soccer ball, play street hockey or throw around a football or baseball. Or visit your local recreation center for open gym and try out other fun activities like tennis, swimming or dance classes.
- *Shake it up.* Turn on your favorite tunes and move to the music. Play a dance video game, dance with friends or practice dance moves while you're doing something else, like talking on the phone, watching TV or cleaning your room.
- *Get out and play.* You're never too old to play. Whether you're babysitting or hanging out with younger brothers or sisters, organize active play—enjoy hopscotch, tag, hide-and-seek, hula-hoops, jump rope, kick ball or flying disk games.

- *Make chores count.* When you help out around the house, you can help your body, too. Put your muscle into chores like vacuuming, mopping the floor, mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, raking leaves or washing the car. Offer to help out your neighbors and, possibly, earn extra cash while you help yourself.

### Snack On

Snacks are a smart way to help fill in missing food groups. Here are a few easy, delicious *and* nutritious snack ideas you may want to try:

- Munch 1 oz of peanuts (a small handful).
- Top whole-grain crackers with cheese.
- Snack on fresh fruit: an apple, banana or orange.
- Dip carrot sticks or cherry tomatoes in salsa or reduced-fat dressing.
- Spread peanut butter on graham crackers; enjoy with low-fat milk.
- Try hummus (chickpea dip) with crackers or veggies.
- Pair up a glass of 100% fruit juice and a handful of nuts and dried fruit.
- Layer non-fat yogurt with berries and crunchy whole-grain cereal.
- Roll-up deli-style lean turkey or ham in a lettuce leaf for a quick wrap.