

10

WAYS TO HELP YOUR TEEN EAT HEALTHY



1. HAVE THEM EAT BREAKFAST EVERY DAY

Skipping breakfast can leave your child hungry, tired, and looking for less healthy foods later in the day. When they are hungry is when the easy access to highly processed “junk food” can be the biggest problem.

2. PLAN HEALTHY MEALS AND EAT TOGETHER

Eating together as a family at meal times helps them learn to enjoy a variety of foods, and it shows that eating healthy is important. This can also inspire your teen to take a greater interest in what they are putting into their body.

3. BUY AND SERVE MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

They can be fresh, frozen, or canned. The important thing is that your teen gets into the habit of eating right. Letting them make healthy choices at the store can create good habits for life.

4. BUY FEWER SOFT DRINKS AND “JUNK FOOD”

Sugary drinks and high fat / high calorie snack foods like chips, cookies, and candy are OK once in a while, but keep healthy snack foods on hand too, and offer them more often.

5. START WITH SMALL SERVINGS

Let them ask for more if they are still hungry. It is up to you to provide healthy meals and snacks, but they should be allowed to choose how much food they will eat.

6. OFFER WATER OR LOW-FAT MILK

Fruit juice is a healthy choice, but it can still be high in calories. Fruit juices that have added sugar, or drinks that only have a small amount of actual fruit juice, should be treated like soft drinks.

7. MODEL GOOD EATING HABITS

Basic decisions, such as eating fast food less often or trying healthier options when you do visit a fast food restaurant, can show your teen what healthy eating looks like.

8. DO NOT GET DISCOURAGED

Your teen may not eat a new food the first time it is served. That is okay, and it is part of the process of getting them to eat healthy. Some will need to have a new food served to them 10 times or more before they will eat it.

9. TRY NOT TO USE FOOD AS A REWARD

Promising dessert to a child for eating vegetables, for example, sends the message that vegetables are less valuable than dessert.

10. MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES MORE ACCESSIBLE

Putting nutritious foods where they are easy to see and keeping high-calorie foods out of sight can make a big difference. People of all ages often go for what is most easily available.



A PARENT'S ROLE

In this time where “junk food” is so cheap and easy, getting your teen to eat right can be a big challenge. However, following the steps discussed here can help you set them down a path of good choices and habits that will benefit them throughout their life. The challenges that you face in trying to get your teen to eat healthy are common, and there are many other resources that you can use. If you have serious concerns about your teen’s eating habits or their relationship with food, consult a healthcare professional.

**GOOD EATING HABITS NOW
CAN LAST A LIFETIME.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Health and Human Services
eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/nutrition

MyPlate

www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/healthy-eating-teens