

# Teen Food & Fitness

Healthy Ideas for Middle and High School Students

February 2017

Albuquerque Public Schools  
Student, Family and Community Supports



## FAST TAKES

### What is quark?

If your child likes Greek yogurt, he may also enjoy quark. This creamy cheese is packaged and eaten like yogurt, and it's similar in taste and texture—just slightly less tangy. To avoid added sugar, buy plain quark, and have your tween stir in berries or cut-up fruit.

### Stay fit, raise money

Active fund-raisers can be fun for your teen and her classmates. Together,



brainstorm ideas she could bring to her team or school club. For example, stu-

dents might take pledges to participate in a dance-a-thon or hula-hoop-a-thon. Or they can get a workout by holding a car wash.

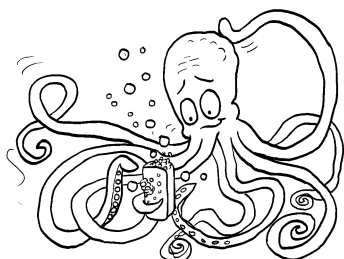
### Did You Know?

Many teenagers do not get enough fiber in their diets. Since most of the fiber in fruit is in the skin, encourage your child to eat whole apples, pears, and peaches rather than peeling them. Suggest whole fruits over applesauce or diced-fruit cups, too.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What's the hardest thing about being an octopus?

**A:** Washing your hands before meals!



## Habits that boost energy

Tweens and teens need plenty of energy to power through their busy days. Encourage your child to develop habits like these that will give him energy to learn and stay active.

### Plan regular meals

Skipping meals could leave your teenager feeling tired and unfocused. Have him eat breakfast—at home or at school—so he's alert for morning classes. Then, eating a nutritious lunch will help him avoid a mid-afternoon slump. Also, help him come up with healthy after-school snacks that will keep him going for homework and activities.



### Choose foods wisely

Foods that take longer to digest provide lasting energy. These include whole grains, green vegetables, and legumes (beans, peas). For an energy-rich breakfast, your child might eat whole-wheat toast and a black bean and cheese omelet topped with mango salsa. A power snack could be snap peas dipped

in hummus. On the other hand, cookies, candy, and chips provide only a temporary boost of energy—and also give a hefty dose of sugar or fat with little in the way of vitamins, minerals, or fiber.

### Get enough sleep

Teenagers need 8–10 hours of sleep a night, but most do not get that much. Electronics are a big culprit—have your child silence his phone or tablet and place it in another room before he goes to bed. Help him set a regular bedtime, and suggest that he turn in 30 minutes early to wind down with a book or music. ♥

## Ready to work out

Whether your child is meeting a friend for a morning run or heading to an early sports practice, she can prepare the night before with these ideas.

● **Pack a gym bag.** She could include a headband or ponytail holder, a towel, a water bottle, and a clean outfit. Suggest that she place the bag by her bedroom door along with her socks and shoes so she's all ready to go.

● **Sleep in workout clothes.** Wearing a T-shirt and sweatpants to bed saves your teen a step in the morning. Plus, they're comfortable! ♥

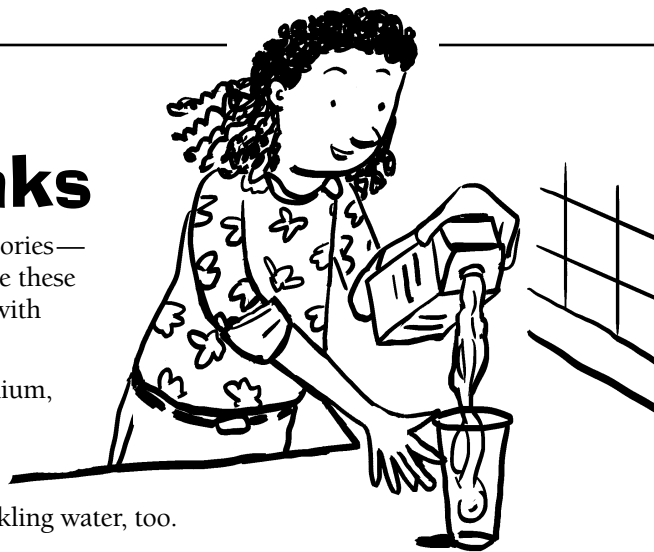


# Cheers to healthy drinks

Drinks can be a major source of calories—including empty ones from soda. Share these tips for healthy beverage alternatives with your tween or teen.

**Water.** With zero calories, fat, and sodium, water is your teen's best bet. Let her experiment to see how she prefers to drink it—icy cold, cool, or at room temperature. She might try sparkling water, too.

**Milk.** One cup of regular nonfat milk has about 25 percent of the calcium your child needs every day for strong bones.



Or look for calcium-fortified soy, coconut, or almond milk. In addition to drinking milk plain, she could put it in smoothies or use it instead of water when making oatmeal.

**Juice.** Read labels carefully to choose 100 percent juice—“fruit drinks” actually contain very little fruit. And because even real juice is high in natural sugar and calories, have your teenager limit it to a glass a day. *Tip:* Suggest that she dilute 1 cup of juice with 1 cup of water. ♥

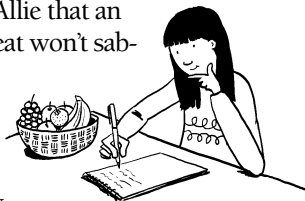
## PARENT TO PARENT

### Progress, not perfection

I'm thrilled that my daughter, Allie, is trying to eat healthier these days. But she puts a lot of pressure on herself to be perfect. When she “cheated” and ate a candy bar last week, she got upset and said she'd have to eat salad all week to make up for it.

I assured Allie that an occasional treat won't sabotage her efforts. So instead of focusing on one candy bar, I suggested that she write down the healthy changes she's made. Allie wrote that she's eating more vegetables, choosing lean cuts of meat, and limiting fried foods.

Reading about the new routines she has adopted made her feel better. I think Allie is realizing that staying healthy is about progress—not perfection. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

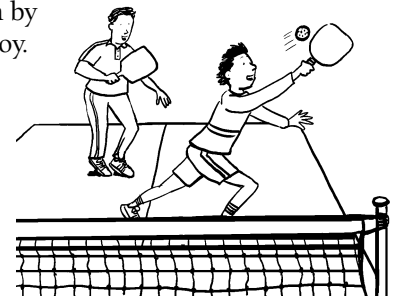
### Find your family sport

Start a new family tradition by choosing a physical activity that everyone can enjoy. For inspiration, consider:

✓ **Jump rope.** Try weekly jump rope sessions. See who can jump solo the longest, or try double Dutch together.

✓ **Inline skating.** Lace up your skates and strap on helmets for regular trips around the neighborhood. *Idea:* If you go on vacation or travel to visit relatives, take or rent inline skates to explore routes in other towns.

✓ **Pickleball.** Kind of like tennis, badminton, and Ping-Pong all rolled into one, this game is fun for all ages. Players use small paddles to hit a plastic ball back and forth over a net. Play indoors or outdoors, singles or doubles. You might even invite grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins to join you. ♥



## In the Kitchen

### Pasta-licious

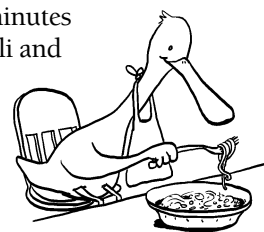
Pasta dishes are delicious and satisfying. For each of these recipes, cook 1 lb. of your favorite noodles according to package directions.

#### Pesto chicken and broccoli (serves 6)

Add 2 cups fresh broccoli florets to pasta water during the last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain. Toss broccoli and pasta with 2 tbsp. olive oil and ½ cup pesto sauce (homemade or store-bought). Stir in 2 chopped cooked chicken breasts. Top with Parmesan cheese, if desired.

#### Tomato-y Cajun pasta (serves 6)

Heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in medium skillet, and saute 1 tsp. minced garlic. Add 1 28-oz. can peeled whole tomatoes. When the sauce is bubbly, mash with a fork. Reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir together cooked pasta, tomato sauce, 1 tsp. Cajun seasoning, and 1 cup shredded mozzarella until the cheese melts. Sprinkle with 1 chopped green onion. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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