**Sure, good nutrition and regular exercise will keep your child fit. But did you know they also help build strong bones?**

During the tween and teen years, bones finish developing, becoming strong and dense—and ready for a lifetime of use! Guide your youngster toward keeping her bones healthy with these ideas.

**Get enough calcium**

Kids ages 9–18 need about 1,300 milligrams of calcium each day. Good sources include fat-free milk and low-fat yogurt (both about 300 mg per cup) and cheese (about 300 mg for 1 1/2 oz. cheddar). You can also add calcium to your child’s diet by buying calcium-fortified orange juice and bread.

**Apple chips**

Try this clever way to add more fruit into your teen’s diet. Help him cut two apples into thin slices using a knife or a food processor fitted with a slicer. Lay the slices in a single layer on a baking sheet, and sprinkle with a mixture of 1 tsp. sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon. Bake at 200° for 2 1/2–3 hours until crisped.

**Cut out soda**

When your tween has soda, it’s often in place of calcium-rich milk. If she drinks soda frequently, it may be easier for her to cut back gradually. Say she normally has two sodas a day—she could exchange milk for one soda at first and eventually substitute water for the second one.

**A recent study found that kids who are in shape get higher grades. They also have better memory, concentration, and other skills that help them succeed in school. Tip: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that tweens and teens get at least 60 minutes of exercise each day.**

**Better bones**

**Did You Know?**

A recent study found that kids who are in shape get higher grades. They also have better memory, concentration, and other skills that help them succeed in school. Tip: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that tweens and teens get at least 60 minutes of exercise each day.

**Just for fun**

Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

A: Snowflakes.

**Smart about soup**

A soothing bowl of soup is just the thing to warm your tween up in winter. Use these strategies to make sure his bowl is good for him, too:

- Look for broth-based soups instead of creamy ones. Cream-based soups usually have more fat and calories. For example, vegetable minestrone soup is lower in fat than cream of mushroom.
- Choose canned soups with less sodium. Be sure to read the labels to compare, as brands and varieties can vary greatly. If you’re making your own soup, cut the salt in half. As your child gets used to less salt, he won’t notice the difference.
- Add in vegetables. Your teen could stir cooked carrots and celery into canned chicken noodle soup or mix cooked zucchini slices and corn into homemade tomato soup, for instance.
Try these yummy recipes for healthier holiday desserts.

**Gingerbread**
1. Beat together 1 cup molasses, 8 oz. nonfat sour cream, 2 tbsp. melted butter, ¼ cup brown sugar, 1 egg, 1 tbsp. ground ginger, 1 tsp. baking soda, and ½ tsp. salt. Add in 1 cup each whole-wheat flour and all-purpose flour.
2. Pour batter into a greased 8-inch square pan, and bake at 325° for 35 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Lighten up holiday desserts

**Chocolate pudding**
1. In a saucepan over medium heat, whisk together ¼ cup sugar, ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, 2 tbsp. cornstarch, and 2 cups skim milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly until thickened.
2. Remove from heat, mix in 2 tsp. vanilla, and divide into four bowls.
3. Refrigerate until firm. Garnish with orange slices or berries.

**ACTIVITY CORNER**

Enjoying winter hikes

Cold-weather hikes can be just as thrilling as warm-weather hikes. Consider these suggestions.

**Choose a route**
A beautiful iced-over waterfall or a gorgeous valley view gives your tween or teen something to look forward to and enjoy along the way. Ask her to search online for a hike with an interesting destination.

**Dress in layers**
To stay comfortable, suggest that your child wear layers and take along a hat and gloves. When she gets warmer, she can remove a heavy jacket but still have a lighter one underneath. **Hint:** Have her carry a backpack with room for the layers she sheds.

**Go for a challenge**
As your youngster gets more comfortable on trails, encourage her to choose ones that are longer or have more hills. Or she could do intervals by walking faster for 10 minutes and then more slowly for 5 minutes.

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