FAST TAKES

Skip the extras
Many fast-food restaurants offer better-for-you options like grilled chicken and salads. Yet these meals can become calorie laden with extras like spreads, dressing, and croutons. To keep things healthier, your teen could opt for light salad dressings, such as balsamic vinaigrette. And for sandwich spreads, have her stick with mustard—or just lettuce and tomato.

Keep equipment handy
Make it a cinch for your kids to head outside to play by keeping basketballs, Frisbees, and other gear near your front door. Likewise, stash bicycles, scooters, and helmets in easily accessible spots. To stock up on outdoor play gear, buy used sports equipment at yard sales or secondhand shops, or get hand-me-downs from relatives.

Did You Know?
Experts recommend 1,300 mg of calcium a day for kids ages 9–18. Milk, with 300 mg calcium in an 8-oz. glass, is one of the best sources. Other good options include fortified orange juice, instant oatmeal, tofu, cottage cheese, cooked kale, and canned salmon.

Just for fun
Q: What happened to the centipede that tripped over the soccer ball?
A: She tripped, and tripped, and tripped, and tripped…

Breakfast is king

What better time than the beginning of a new school year to get into a good routine? Encourage your teen or tween to start off every day right with a healthy breakfast. These ideas can help.

Scope out options
Talk about what he likes to eat in the morning. Some healthy choices: Greek yogurt with berries and sunflower seeds, scrambled eggs in a whole-grain pita, or whole-wheat toast topped with peanut butter and banana slices. Your teen might want the same breakfast every day, and that’s okay. Or if he’d rather mix things up, have him post a list of breakfast ideas in the kitchen for quick reference.

Make it easy
Many kids skip breakfast in the rush to get out the door. Try storing breakfast fixings in a basket in the pantry or refrigerator so he can grab what he needs quickly. Or have him get a head start by setting up for breakfast the night before (put out cereal boxes, bowls, spoons, and glasses). Also, remind your teen he could get breakfast—and eat with friends—in the school cafeteria.

Use your leftovers
Last night’s dinner can make for a filling, and fast, breakfast. Place leftovers in single-serving containers for reheating in the morning. Your teen could even spoon casseroles, vegetables, or other leftovers into a cup to take with him. Or suggest that he put leftovers into a tortilla and roll it into a burrito. Note: Using up leftovers keeps you from wasting food—and saves money.

Snacks to tide you over
Steer your teen toward yummy and healthy snacks, and she just might forget about junk food like candy bars and potato chips. Try snack suggestions like these to keep her energized for after-school activities.

● Sweet ‘n’ salty. Mix plain popcorn with dried cranberries, pumpkin seeds, and mini pretzel twists. Divide into 1-cup portions.
● Snazzy salsa. Stir 2 tbsp. crushed pineapple (canned in own juice, drained) into ½ cup salsa. Pack with a sliced red bell pepper and 10 tortilla chips.
● Rice “cookies.” Layer whipped strawberry cream cheese between two small rice cakes for an alternative to a cookie.
Put away the screens

Your child may not realize it, but long hours in front of a screen—whether it’s a phone, laptop, tablet, or video game—can lead to too much eating and too little exercise. Help trim screen time with these strategies.

Have a screen bedtime. Kids sleep better when they’re not texting into the night. Agree on a cut-off time, maybe 30 minutes or an hour before bed, when all screens (including phones) need to be shut off.

Bonus: Without the distraction of buzzing phones, dinnertime will be more enjoyable.

Hold a “screen fast.” Taking a complete tech break can help your tween realize how much time she spends glued to a screen—and how much there is to do without one. Bonus: During your tech fast, you’ll have time to do something active as a family, such as play tennis or walk around a lake.

Create a tech basket. Your child may routinely carry her phone with her everywhere, even at home. Suggest a tech basket where family members (parents, too!) deposit their phones and tablets.

Teen Food & Fitness™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

An apple a day

Take advantage of apple season with these creative ways to enjoy the naturally nutritious fruit.


Apple salad. Dice 1 apple and 2 celery stalks. Toss with 1 tsp. lemon juice, 1 tbsp. light mayonnaise, and 1 tsp. Dijon mustard. Top with ½ tbsp. each chopped walnuts and golden raisins.

Baked apples. Cut a large apple in half, remove the core and seeds, and place in a baking dish. In a bowl, mix 1 tbsp. brown sugar, ½ tbsp. melted butter, and ¼ tsp. cinnamon. Spoon the mixture onto the apple halves, and pour 2 tbsp. water into the dish. Bake at 350º for 40 minutes, until apples are soft.

Q & A

Q: I’d like to find a sport that my son and I can do together. Any suggestions?

A: Sharing a sport is a great way to bond with your child and to inspire both of you to stay active. Ask yourselves these questions to help find the right activity.

Want to play team sports? Look for community clubs or leagues through your local recreation center. Volleyball leagues are popular, and they tend to welcome “newbies” and people of different ages.

Interested in classes? Check local facilities for classes ranging from rock climbing and horseback riding to ice skating, fencing, and more. Toss around options, and decide on something you’d both like to take up.

Prefer something more individual? Practice tai chi while enjoying the outdoors. Look up poses online, then go out back or hike to a nice spot to do the movements. Or start hitting golf balls at a driving range, and play at a public course when you’re ready.

CrossFit training at home

With an easy-to-follow workout, your child can get in on the CrossFit craze without paying for a gym membership. These moves will give her a quick, intense exercise routine.

Box jumps

Stand in front of a step. Using both feet, squat slightly, then jump onto the step and back to the floor. Work up to 10–20 repetitions.

“Tabata”

Do push-ups for 20 seconds, rest for 10 seconds, and repeat 7 more times. Tabata refers to a high-intensity workout of 8 intervals (any kind of exercise, rest) in 4 minutes.

Combos

Ladder repetitions, or working down from a high number to a low one, are common in CrossFit. Try a 10-5-1 combination: 10 high knees, followed by 5 squats and 1 high knee. Eventually, go higher with a 21-15-9 combo (21 high knees, 15 squats, 9 high knees).

In the Kitchen

ACTIVITY CORNER

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

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September 2015 • Page 2

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