

NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR KIDS 12-18 YEARS OLD

GOOD NUTRITION: A PARENT’S ROLE

- Parents continue to be a strong influence on their teen’s behavior and habits, so *lead by example!* Parents should remember to eat a healthy diet (including breakfast), be mindful of portion sizes, and make time for exercise.
- Adolescence is a time of rapid growth, faster than any other time since your child’s first year of life. An increase in your teen’s appetite is normal.
- When grocery shopping, read food labels and limit highly processed foods with low nutritional value, those that are high in sodium or contain trans-fats. The benefits of limiting salt and eliminating preservatives outweigh additional prep-time.
- Eat family meals as often as possible. When teens eat regularly with their families, they increase their intake of fruits, vegetables, fiber and nutrients from food, and they consume less fried foods, pop, and saturated and trans-fats!
- Encourage water or milk instead of pop, sweetened juices or sports drinks – these are all major contributors to excessive calories in the diet!
- Don’t allow your teen to have a TV in the bedroom. This is correlated with a significant increase in TV viewing time and a far greater risk of being overweight! Also, parents should help their teen to balance “screen time” (including TV, computer & video games) with physical activity.
- Watch for the following signs of eating disorders in your teen, and contact your South Lake clinician with concerns:

Anorexia – Excessive weight loss in a short period of time, obsession with physical exercise, eating in secret, unhappy with appearance, loss of menstrual period, constantly dieting although already thin, depression.

Bulimia – Binge-eating with no noticeable weight gain, obsessions with physical activity, disappearance into a bathroom for long periods of time, vomiting or laxative use, unusual interest in certain foods, unusual eating rituals, depression.

- Promote a healthy body image. Keep the focus on good nutrition and physical fitness rather than weight or clothing size. Talk to your teen about how the media may affect his image of himself.

GOOD NUTRITION: A TEENAGER’S ROLE

Make time for breakfast every day

- Skipping breakfast is associated with obesity and poor school performance. Teens often miss breakfast due to lack of time. Try waking up a few minutes earlier and making breakfast a priority.
- If you’re always racing out the door, encourage your parents to stock “on the go” foods such as trail mix, low-fat granola or breakfast bars, cheese sticks, sandwiches or fruit to eat at school.

Get your calcium

- Due to the rapid growth during this time of your life, you need about 1300-1500 mg of calcium per day. This is equivalent to 4 to 5 servings per day of calcium-rich foods (dairy, calcium-fortified orange juice, tofu, collared greens, etc.).
- You also need Vitamin D – 600 IU/day.
- If you’re lactose intolerant, try: smaller portions of dairy throughout the day, lactose-free dairy products, or lower lactose cheese varieties such as cheddar, colby, swiss and parmesan. Also consider Lactaid pills or powder to help with the digestion of lactose.
- Avoid soda pop – this pulls calcium out of your developing bones

What about fast food?

- Keep fast food meals limited to no more than once per week. Substitute milk or water for pop. Avoid “super sizing”.
- Try a salad at a fast food restaurant instead of burgers and fries, but be sure to use a low fat and low calorie dressing.
- If you’re ordering a burger and fries, try their regular sizes instead of the larger versions (like Big Macs or Double Whoppers).

Staying active

- Make physical activity a priority each day! Try simple things like using stairs instead of an elevator or escalator, walking or riding a bike instead of taking the car. Aim for *at least 30 to 60 minutes* of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.
- Keep a limit on “screen time” (TV, computer and video games) to a maximum of 1 to 2 hours per day.
- Avoid watching TV while eating meals or snacks. This leads to excessive caloric intake.
- If you’re not in an organized sport at any given point during the year, try teaming up with a friend, parent or sibling to do a physical activity you both enjoy. This keeps it fun, and helps motivate you both to stay active.

The Daily 5-2-1-0

 <p>5 servings of fruits & vegetables</p>	 <p>2 hour limit on screen time (TV, computer, & video games)</p>	 <p>1 hour active play or exercise</p>	 <p>0 liquid calories (pop, sweetened juices, or sports drinks)</p>
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For more advice, check out our website at www.southlakepediatrics.com for links and information, or talk to your South Lake clinician.