

A TEEN'S GUIDE TO NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING

What You Need to Know about Nutrients, Calories and More

Are you tired of hearing about diets that limit your food choices or just worried that you might not be eating right? On top of that, your weight and body are changing in a lot of ways that you might not want any part of. This guide has been developed to help you understand what really counts when it comes to eating healthy.

NUTRITION & YOUR CHANGING BODY

Adolescence is a time of many changes and good nutrition plays an important role in the development of your body, mind and spirit. During this time of rapid growth and maturation, you should avoid extremes like weight-loss "diets" and instead focus on feeding your body plenty of nutrients, while learning to appreciate your changing appearance and personality.

THE BENEFITS OF HEALTHY EATING

Healthy eating involves knowing what foods to eat and which ones to limit. You can expect some major benefits by eating a healthy diet:

Healthy Eating Benefits You Today

By eating a healthy diet, you will experience:

- Increased concentration for learning
- Better sports performance and physical potential
- More energy to do the things you want to do
- Stronger bones
- Healthier complexion
- Healthier body weight
- Better mood
- Increased resistance to stress and infection

Healthy Eating Benefits You Later

While you may not be concerned about this today, a good diet will help you become a healthier adult by decreasing your risk of "diet-related diseases," such as:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Osteoporosis

Do your parents or grandparents have any of these diseases? If they do, wouldn't it be great if you could reduce your chance of following in their foot steps? Healthy eating now can reduce your risk of developing these diseases later on while also helping you look and feel great during these exciting and memory-filled teen years.

7 ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR TEENS

Because of the rapid growth and development during adolescence, teenagers need extra energy, calcium, and iron as well as sufficient protein, vitamins and minerals. Here are some specifics that will help you as you are making meal and snack selections throughout the day.

Essential Nutrient #1: Carbohydrates

- **Why You Need It:** Carbohydrates (or "carbs" for short) are the body's ideal energy source. They provide fuel for your muscles, brain and central nervous system to function properly. In fact, your brain depends exclusively on carbohydrates for energy to think, react, learn, and process information. Carbohydrates are NOT the enemy—especially for growing teens. It's important to include the appropriate amounts and types of carbohydrate-rich foods in your diet.
- **How Much You Need:** About half (50-55%) of the calories you eat should come from carbohydrates—that's several hundred grams of carbs per day.
- **Where to Get It:** Carbohydrates are found in lots of different foods. But the healthiest carbohydrate choices include whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Limit

Essential Nutrient #2: Protein

- **Why You Need It:** When you eat protein, your body breaks it down into building blocks (amino acids) so it can be used to build, repair, and maintain your skin, muscles, organs, blood, and even bones. Because your body is "building" a lot as you grow, your need for protein is high.
- **How Much You Need:** About 15-20% of the calories you eat should come from protein—that's about 50 grams of protein each day.
- **Where to Get It:** Protein comes from animal sources (beef, pork, poultry, fish and eggs) and plant sources (nuts, peanut butter, seeds, beans, and soy foods). Other foods like eggs and dairy also provide protein.

Essential Nutrient #3: Fat

- **Why You Need It:** Dietary fat is necessary for growth, development and cell maintenance. You also need fat so that you're able to absorb and use vitamins A, D, E and K (called "fat-soluble" vitamins). Certain fats also protect your body against disease.
- **How Much You Need:** No more than 1/3 (30%) of the calories you eat should come from fat.
- **Where to Get It:** Include some "healthy" fat each day, from foods like walnuts, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, peanut butter, and sunflower seeds. Limit "unhealthy" fats like high-fat junk food (chips, cookies, ice cream, etc.) and fried foods to only a few times a week.

Essential Nutrient #4: Calcium

- **Why You Need It:** Of course, calcium is important for strong bones. And because you'll experience nearly half of all your skeletal growth during your teen years, calcium is crucial. But this mineral has other functions too, like helping your muscles contract, your blood clot, your nerves function properly and your heart beat. Because of this, teens need even more calcium than adults.
- **How Much You Need:** Aim for at least 1,300 mg of calcium per day.
- **Where to Get It:** Calcium occurs naturally in milk products (milk, cheese and yogurt). Many other foods are "fortified" with added calcium, such as calcium-fortified orange juice, soy milk, tofu, and even some cereals. Calcium supplements are also good choices, but talk to your doctor before taking these on your own.

Essential Nutrient #5: Iron

- **Why You Need It:** Iron is an important nutrient for guys and girls. As a guy's muscle mass increases during adolescence, he needs extra iron to help support the increases in blood volume that accompany muscle growth. And girls need iron too, to help make up for iron losses that occur as part of their menstrual cycle.
- **How Much You Need:** Teens need 11-15 mg of iron each day.
- **Where to Get It:** Iron is found in red meat, fortified grains and fortified cereals.

Essential Nutrient #6: Zinc

- **Why You Need It:** Zinc is a mineral that helps you maintain a healthy immune system. It's also an essential nutrient for cell division, cell growth, wound healing, and the proper utilization of carbohydrates for energy—all of which are very important during times of growth.
- **How Much You Need:** Aim for about 10 mg of zinc each day.
- **Where to Get It:** The best food sources of zinc include seafood, meat, poultry, beans and peanuts. Animal sources of zinc are the most easily absorbed. Too much zinc can be toxic, so make sure your total intake from food and supplements doesn't exceed 40 mg per day.

Essential Nutrient #7: B-Complex Vitamins

- **Why You Need It:** A group of vitamins known as the "B-complex" vitamins are important for teens. This includes vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B3 (niacin) and folic acid (folate). These B-vitamins promote a healthy metabolism, which provides energy.
- **Where to Get It:** B-complex vitamins are abundant in whole grains, rice, nuts, dairy, eggs, meats, fish, fruits and leafy green vegetables.

WHAT ABOUT CALORIES?

Calories provide energy for your body's basic functions (breathing, digestion, circulation and more) and other physical activities (from writing to running). We know that you want to be informed when it comes to calories, but we don't want you to think that you need to fear calories, count calories, or restrict calories. Teenagers need the right amount of calories to support the rapid growth and development that takes place during adolescence.

- Girls typically need around 2,000-2,400 calories daily.
- Guys need anywhere from 2,500-2,900 calories daily.
- Teens who are active in sports and athletics need even more—as much as 3,000 for athletic girls and 5,000 for athletic boys.

While calories do count, there is no need to count them. It is not as important for you to know how many calories are in a food as it is to know which foods provide the most nutrition for those calories. For example, the fact that 10 peanut M&M's provides 103 calories is not nearly as important as knowing that there is no significant nutrition in those 103 calories. Calories that don't provide any nutrients are known as "empty" calories—they provide your body with calories (for few minutes of quick energy) but nothing else. On the other hand, it is helpful to know that an eight-ounce glass of skim milk provides 90 calories, eight grams of protein, and other important vitamins and minerals. For about the same number of calories, you could choose candy that does not provide nutrition for your body, or a nutrient-rich food, such as milk, that helps your body function at its best.

Look before you bite! Focus on the nutrients that come with the calories you eat, not calories alone. The higher a food or drink is in key nutrients the better. Read the food label and look for the amount of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, calcium, iron and fiber.

3 KEYS TO HEALTHY EATING FOR TEENS

Now that you know which nutrients you need to keep your growing body healthy, these three keys for a healthy diet will help you get the right amounts each day.

1. **VARIETY.** Because of the rapid growth and development during adolescents, teenagers need extra energy (calories), calcium, and iron as well as sufficient protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Oranges provide vitamin C but no vitamin B12; cheese provides B12 but no vitamin C. To get all the nutrients you need for proper growth and development, include a variety of foods from each group of the food guide pyramid each day:

- **THE GRAIN GROUP** includes foods like breakfast cereal, oats, bread, rice and pasta. Grains and carbohydrates are NOT the enemy—especially for growing teens. Aim for 6-11 servings each day, using the following chart as a guide.

THE GRAIN GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Whole grain breads, pasta and cereals, oats, brown or white rice, baked tortillas and pretzels	Angel food cake, fat-free cookies, fig bars, pancakes and waffles	Pastries, pies, doughnuts, granola and buttered popcorn

- **THE VEGETABLE GROUP** includes fresh, frozen and canned foods like carrots, asparagus, vegetable juice, salad, broccoli and more. Teens need 3-5 servings each day.

THE VEGETABLE GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Fresh, frozen, canned, steamed or dried vegetables	Olives and avocados	Vegetables in butter or cream sauce and fried vegetables

- **THE FRUIT GROUP** includes fresh, frozen and canned foods like applesauce, raisins, apples, oranges, 100% fruit juice and more. Teens need 2-3 servings each day.

THE FRUIT GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Fresh, frozen, canned, steamed or dried fruits	Fruits canned in syrup and fruits with added sugar	Fruits in butter or cream sauce and fried fruits

- **THE MILK GROUP** includes dairy foods like milk, yogurt, cheese, and calcium-fortified products like soy milk. Your bones will experience more than half of their growth during adolescence, so getting enough calcium is important for teens, who need 3-4 servings each day.

THE MILK GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Skim milk, 1% milk, nonfat yogurt, fat-free cheese and soy milk	2% milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, light cream cheese and light sour cream	Whole milk, regular cheese, cream, whipped cream and ice cream

- **THE MEAT & BEANS GROUP** includes protein-rich meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, nuts and seeds. Because protein helps build, repair and maintain your body's skin, muscles and blood, it's important for teens to eat 2-3 servings each day to meet their protein needs (about 50 grams daily).

THE MEAT & BEANS GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Lean meats and fish, skinless poultry, beans, tofu and egg whites	Egg yolks, fish sticks, chicken nuggets, turkey dogs and peanut butter	Bacon, sausage, salami, ribs and fried meats

- **THE FAT & OIL GROUP** includes vegetable oils used in cooking, foods made from oil (salad dressing, fried foods, mayonnaise and margarine), and foods that are naturally high in oil (such as olives, avocados and nuts). Fat is essential for health, but it's important to make healthy fat choices whenever possible and to eat fats sparingly.

THE FAT & OIL GROUP		
Choose Daily	Choose Occasionally	Choose Rarely
	(1-2 times/week)	(1-2 times/month)
Olives and olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil	Heart-healthy margarine, low-fat salad dressings, and mayonnaise	Butter, lard, shortening and hydrogenated oils

2. **MODERATION.** There are no “good” or “bad” foods — only those that should be selected frequently and those that should be selected occasionally. Pizza, chicken nuggets, fries and a soda are fine a couple times a week, but shouldn't be the main foods you eat. Similarly, a diet of all fruit can be too much of a good thing (and too little of other things). Use these tips for eating moderately:
- When your choices are healthy 95% of the time, you can enjoy special treats the other 5%.
 - Make smart, nutritious choices from each food group.
 - Don't deprive yourself. Eating should be enjoyable, and you don't have to swear off your favorite foods to be healthy.
 - Any eating plan that calls for the elimination of certain foods or food groups entirely; that is too high or too low in certain nutrients; or that is too low in calories should be avoided.
 - Eating healthy should last a lifetime—not a week, a month or even a year. Eating in moderation is a key to a healthy lifestyle.
3. **PROPORTION.** Selecting the right foods to build a healthy body also means choosing portions that are proper serving sizes. The terms "portion" and "serving" are often used interchangeably, but they don't mean the same thing. A "portion" is the amount of food YOU choose to eat for meals or snacks (like a plateful of pasta or a handful of raisins). In comparison a "serving" is the amount of food that experts recommend you eat (like 1 cup of milk or 1 ounce of bread). Servings are listed on a food's nutrition facts label too. When choosing a portion, try to make it as close as possible to its recommended serving sizes. Here are some visual examples to help you make wise portion decisions:
- One serving (1 oz) of bread = an index card
 - One serving (1/2 cup) of cooked rice, pasta or dry cereal = a billiard ball
 - One serving (2-3 oz) of meat, poultry or fish = a video iPod
 - One serving (2 Tbsp) of nuts or peanut butter = a ping pong ball
 - One serving (1/2 cup) of fruits and veggies = a light bulb
 - One serving (1 oz) of cheese = a pair of dice
 - One serving (1 cup) of milk = a baseball
 - One serving (1 tsp) of butter or margarine = a dice

MY PYRAMD RECOMMENDATIONS**GIRLS**

FOOD Group	Recommended daily serving size	Real meal choices
GRAIN Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
VEGETABLE Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
FRUIT Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
MILK Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
MEAT & BEANS Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:

BOYS

FOOD Group	Recommended daily serving size	Real meal choices
GRAIN Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
VEGETABLE Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
FRUIT Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
MILK Group		breakfast:
		lunch:
		dinner:
MEAT & BEANS Group		breakfast:
		lunch:

Name _____

Period _____

Regents Biology

Date _____

3 KEYS TO HEALTHY EATING FOR TEENS — QUESTIONS

1. List and briefly explain the three keys to healthy eating for teens

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. List the six food groups that we must include in our daily diet.

3. List examples of the types of food in the **Grain Group**.

4. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Grain Group**?

5. Which foods in the **Grain Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

6. Which foods in the **Grain Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

7. List examples of the types of food in the **Vegetable Group**.

Name _____

8. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Vegetable Group**?

9. Which foods in the **Vegetable Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

10. Which foods in the **Vegetable Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

11. List examples of the types of food in the **Fruit Group**.

12. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Fruit Group**?

13. Which foods in the **Fruit Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

14. Which foods in the **Fruit Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

15. List examples of the types of food in the **Milk Group**.

16. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Milk Group**?

17. Which foods in the **Milk Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

18. Which foods in the **Milk Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

19. List examples of the types of food in the **Meat & Beans Group**.

20. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Meat & Beans Group**?

21. Which foods in the **Meat & Beans Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

22. Which foods in the **Meat & Beans Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

23. List examples of the types of food in the **Fat & Oil Group**.

24. How many servings per day should you include in your diet from the **Fat & Oil Group**?

25. Which foods in the **Fat & Oil Group** would make the best choice for healthy meals?

26. Which foods in the **Fat & Oil Group** should you try to eat the least for healthy meals?

27. List the foods you normally eat in a day and compare it to these guidelines.

Name _____

Period _____

Regents Biology

Date _____

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY EATING PLAN

Putting the three keys of healthy eating into an actual nutrition plan can be overwhelming at first. Start by making small changes, like drinking more water or swapping nutritious foods for "empty calories", for example. Use the following tips when choosing foods and planning your meals:

- Breakfast is mandatory. It boosts your metabolism, energy levels, concentration and ability to learn. Get healthy and quick breakfast ideas.
- Space out your meals and snacks so that you're eating every few hours. This keeps your energy levels up, your weight controlled, and your body functioning at its fullest capacity.
- Choose nutritious snacks to help meet your body's needs for key nutrients.
- Choose water, skim milk and 100% juice to stay hydrated. Aim for at least 8 cups of water daily. Limit diet soda (it has zero calories, but more importantly, zero nutrients) and avoid energy drinks, which can be unsafe and full of added sugar.
- Go for whole grains! They provide more fiber, protein and nutrients.
- Choose lean meats that are baked, broiled or grilled instead of breaded or fried.
- Listen (and honor) your body's cues when you are hungry and when you are full.
- Don't eat mindlessly. Eat at the table, not in front of a TV or computer. This way, you'll pay attention to your portion sizes, choices and your body's signals of fullness.
- Avoid super sizing, double and triple burgers and fried foods when dining out.
- Try to eat at least one fresh fruit and vegetable daily.

Eating a nutritious diet and following a moderate exercise program are healthy ways for you to improve your body's appearance—but more importantly, these practices take care of your body from the inside-out!