

Eating Well During the Teen Years

Many changes occur to your body between the ages of 11 and 16. This is a time of growth, and for you to feel good and have plenty of energy, you must eat well. How active you are will change how much you need to eat. Because you are growing so fast and need many nutrients, it's important to eat a variety of foods. Be sure to watch your portion sizes, as well as what you eat. The following guidelines will help you make good food choices.

Each day you should eat:

- 6-11 servings of whole grain breads, cereal, pasta, and rice (6 ounces)
- 3-5 servings of vegetables
- 4 servings of fruit or fruit juice
(Choose fruit more often than juice. Be sure your juice is 100% juice.)
- 3-4 servings of low fat milk, yogurt, or cheese (3 cups)
- 2-3 servings of fish, chicken, turkey, lean meat, dry beans, nuts, and eggs (5.5 ounces)
- Use margarine, butter, oil, and sweets in small amounts. (6 teaspoons)

Fruits, vegetables, and grains are important because they give you lots of energy, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Try to eat a variety of these foods every day. During adolescence, your bones are also growing and getting stronger. To build healthy bones, you must eat enough calcium. Calcium is found mostly in milk and dairy products. By eating 4 servings of these foods each day you will get most of the calcium you need. If you can't eat at least 4 servings of these foods, ask your dietitian or doctor about calcium supplements.

Source of calcium: (Choose low-fat or non-fat products.)

- Milk (low-fat, skim, or lacto-free)
- Low-fat yogurt
- Cheese
- Pudding
- Frozen yogurt
- Milkshakes
- Ice cream
- Chocolate milk
- Canned salmon
- Greens (1 cup)
- Cheese pizza
- Hot cocoa (made with milk)
- Calcium-fortified orange juice
- Fortified soy milk

Water is another important part of a good diet. Drink at least eight to ten 8-ounce cups of water each day. If you play sports or are very active, you will need more, especially if you are exercising in hot weather.

Good eating habits will also help you stay healthy. Most adolescents should eat 3 meals and a few snacks a day. Skipping meals, especially breakfast, or fasting, is not healthy and may hurt performance in school or sports. If you are trying to gain weight for sports or to increase your strength, you will need to increase the size and number of servings of food you eat. If you have difficulty eating more, drinking Carnation® Instant Breakfast mixed with milk may help. You may want to talk to a dietitian for help with this.

If you are overweight and wish to lose weight, cut back on the size and number of servings of food you eat. Don't drink soda pop, sports drinks, and Kool-Aid®, as they have lots of sugar and calories. Try low-fat or skim milk instead. When you drink milk, choose low-fat or skim milk. To help with losing weight, find a sport, exercise, or activity you enjoy doing at least 3 to 6 times a week. Remember, you are still growing and developing and you should avoid extreme diets that may harm you.

For more nutritional information or to meet with a dietitian, call (816) 234-3468.