11–13 years

Fueling Your Thoughts

• Are you concerned with your child’s eating habits or level of activity?
• Do you and your child eat vegetables every day?
• How many meals do you eat as a family each week? How many are from fast food, take out, etc.?
• What beverages do you buy?
• How much time does your child watch TV, play on the computer, play video games, or text daily?
• What do you and your child do to stay active?

Nutrition Tips
By providing nutritious foods to your child, you help him or her improve strength, energy, attention span and the ability to keep up with friends.

• **Breakfast**—Eating a healthy breakfast every day is recommended.
• **Lunch**—Review school menus with your child and plan ahead; or pack a lunch with at least 4 out of the 5 food groups (calcium foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein).
• **Snacks**—Eat only when hungry. Stock up on ready-to-eat vegetables, fruit, cheese, yogurt, milk, lean meats, whole grains, low sugar cereal or nuts.
• **Dinner**—Eat as many meals as possible as a family at the dinner table. Be sure to slow down, enjoy, and turn off screens.
• **Eating Out**—Keep portion sizes small or share meals (don’t “super size”).
  • Choose fruit or salad instead of fries, milk instead of soft drinks, baked or broiled instead of fried.
• **Beverages -Think Your Drink!**
  • The best choices are water or milk.
  • Limit sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, punch, juice drinks, energy drinks and caffeine containing beverages.
  • Regular intake of too much caffeine can lead to trouble sleeping, rapid heart rate, anxiety, poor attention span, headaches or shakiness.

Your main job is to offer a variety of healthy foods (fruits, vegetables, milk, yogurt, cheese, whole grains, meat, poultry, fish and eggs).

Parents

• Make sure you and your kids are active 60 minutes every day. Focus on FUN, including both organized and free play.
• Count time spent doing chores: car washing, walking the dog, dusting, sweeping, pulling weeds, raking leaves or shoveling snow.
• Involve the whole family in physical activity because you are role models!
• Be a good role model for your kids – be active and eat healthy foods.
• “Screen time” (computers, TV, phones, gaming systems, texting, etc.) should be limited to 2 hours or less daily (pre-plan how “screen time” will be used).
• Screens may be monitored easily if moved to a common area; keep them out of child’s bedroom.
• Make sure your child is sleeping at least 10-11 hours per night. Keeping regular bed time is critical to good health and weight maintenance.
• Caffeine can interfere with a healthy sleep routine.
• If you have concerns about your child’s weight, physical activity or eating behaviors, ask your healthcare provider.