

# 14–18 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).**

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## 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.

## Tips Regarding Teens

- Do not criticize your teenager about their size and shape. Focus on strengths rather than appearance.
- Remember that parents can still influence choices... as a parent you are still the role model!