

Healthy Living

Patient Information from the American Chiropractic Association

Fun Ways to Get Fit

Eating healthy and exercising don't have to be boring! You can spice up nourishing snacks and get exercise without even realizing it with the following tips.

Eating Right

Let's work our way up the food pyramid starting with grains. You should be eating about 6 oz. of grains every day—try to make at least half of them whole grains. This isn't as bland as you may think. For breakfast, try whole-grain cereals like Cheerios or Raisin Bran or oatmeal. For snacks, munch on low-fat popcorn, and ask your mom to substitute brown rice for white rice at the dinner table. And remember, just because bread is brown doesn't mean it's whole grain. Take a look at the packaging to make sure it says "whole wheat" or "whole grain"—and check the label on the back to be sure it has at least 2g of fiber.

You need 2.5 cups of vegetables a day. Have fun with your veggies by choosing different colors for your plate. Go green with broccoli or asparagus, and reach for orange with carrots and sweet potatoes.

Every day you should eat at least 2 cups of fruit, but this shouldn't be hard. Fruits are just nature's candy—sweet and delicious. Try dried fruits for an easy snack, or add berries to your cereal or oatmeal in the morning. You can also add frozen fruit to smoothies for a tasty treat in the summertime. Don't get tricked by juices: Read the label, and make sure they're 100 percent fruit! If water and sugar are main ingredients, they are not!

Calcium builds strong bones. Make sure to eat 3 cups of calcium-rich foods, like milk, on a daily basis. Check the labels to make sure your milk, yogurt or cheese is low fat. You can grab a yogurt for a delicious snack on the go and toss in some fresh fruit for an added flavor—and nutrient—bonus!

Protein—which you need for building muscles—can be found in lots of different foods from chicken, turkey and fish to nuts, seeds and beans. Ask for your meat baked, broiled or grilled, not fried, and spice up a



salad with chickpeas, sunflower seeds or almonds. Peanut butter falls into the protein category, as well, but be sure to eat only small servings as it's also high in fat.

Get your fat facts and your sugar smarts from the nutrition labels of food and drink. Limit foods that are high in fats and sugars.

Make snacking more fun by creating your own popsicles or blending all your favorite fruits into a smoothie. Then go get some exercise by playing a game of kickball with your friends.

Get Moving

Turn the TV off, and move more. Aim for at least 60 minutes of activity every day. Swim, run, walk the dog, bike, rollerblade, climb trees, play outside with friends—it all counts!

Fun Ways to Exercise

- **Weight lifting.** Ask your PE teacher or an adult to teach you how to do it right, so you don't hurt yourself. Take turns with a friend to give your muscles a break between repetitions.

- *Playing a pickup game* of soccer or baseball with friends.
- *Kayaking.* Head down to a lake or a river and paddle around.
- *Jumping rope.* Have a competition with friends to see who can go the longest without stepping on the rope.
- *Dancing.* Turn up the volume on your favorite tunes, and invite your friends over for an impromptu dance party. You can find a lot of great music on www.YouTube.com.
- *Rollerblading.* Dust off your skates, grab your friends and hit the sidewalk for a tour of the town or bring your hockey stick and join in a game of street hockey.

Don't Forget Water

Drink plenty of water. Hydration is the key element to being fit. Teenagers need at least eight 8-oz. glasses a day. If you are not a teenager yet, you should drink at least five. Don't replace water with fruit juices, sodas or high-sugar sports drinks because these actually dehydrate your body.

Get Plenty of Sleep

Nobody wants to have an early bedtime, but catching some extra z's is good for your body. Young children need as much as 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night, and eight hours is ideal for older kids.

If you don't get enough sleep and rest, you may have a harder time learning at school and reach for food more, to get additional energy. Turning off the TV and computer well before bedtime will help you get to sleep much quicker. Instead, read a book or talk to your parents or siblings about your day. ■

Make Fun Snacks and Share Them with Friends

Ants on a log:

Spread peanut butter on a celery stick and decorate with raisins.

Fruit smoothies:

Blend low-fat yogurt, orange juice and your favorite fruits together for a refreshing snack.

Trail mix:

Make your own trail mix by combining your favorite nuts, seeds and dried fruits.

Take a dip:

Dip veggies in low-fat ranch dip or hummus, and try dipping fruits such as apples in peanut butter.

Homemade popsicles:

Fill an ice cube tray with lemonade or another fruit juice and place popsicle sticks in each compartment to make your own frozen treats.

Mini pizzas:

Smear some tomato sauce on half of a whole grain English muffin, sprinkle on some low-fat cheese, add chopped vegetables and a little bit of lean meat and pop it in the microwave or toaster oven for a minute.



For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find a doctor of chiropractic near you, go to the Patient Information section on ACA's Web site at www.acatoday.org or call 800-986-4636.

Caitlin Lukacs, *Writer*