

Healthy Eating For Teenagers

Growing bodies require extra nutrients! This is why a healthy diet for teenagers includes plenty of fruits and vegetables, bread and cereals, dairy products and meat or meat substitutes with small amounts of 'treat' foods such as biscuits, cakes, lollies or foods high in fat and sugar.

What is a 'Healthy Diet'?

Bread and Cereals:
Eat at least 5 serves each day

Fruit and Vegetables:
Eat at least 7 serves each day, including 2 fruit and 5 vegetables

Meat/Meat Substitutes:
Eat 1-2 serves each day

Dairy Products:
Include 3-4 serves each day

Butter, Margarine, Fats:
Use at least 1 tbsp each day

Choose these sometimes or in small amounts

Drink plenty of water

Recommendations:

- **Eat regularly.** Aim for 3 meals per day and include 2 or 3 'snacks' if your appetite demands it!
- Make exercise and activity a fun part of daily life.
- Choose low fat dairy options, decrease fruit juice consumption, soft drinks and cordial; replacing these with water or low joule options.
- Maintain a healthy body weight for your shape and height. Remember, everyone has a different body shape, so what works for you is different to everyone else!

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Nutrients and why we need them:

Calcium

Calcium is essential in our diets for maintaining healthy bones and teeth. When rapid growth occurs, such as during teenage years, your diet needs to be rich in calcium-rich foods. Calcium is found largely in dairy foods or fortified soy beverages with smaller amounts in non-dairy foods such as nuts, sesame seeds, legumes and fish (only if you eat the small bones). You should include 3-4 serves per day. 1 serve is found in 1 cup of milk, 2 slices of cheese, 1 cup of almonds or 1 small carton of yoghurt.

B12 and Folate

Our body requires vitamin B12 and folate for cell division, formation of red blood cells and the maintenance of our nervous system. B12 occurs naturally in animal products such as red meat, poultry and seafood as well as milk, yoghurt, eggs and cheese. B12 is not naturally found in plant foods. Rich sources of folate include green leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, cabbage and asparagus, as well as lentils and nuts.

Iron

Iron is needed for blood cells and energy, especially in teenage girls. Easily absorbed iron is found in lean red meats, chicken and fish.

Vegetarian Teenagers:

A healthy diet need not include meat. However, as meat is an important source of iron and vitamin B12, it is vital to eat other iron and B12 rich foods to ensure optimal health and growth.

- **Iron** can be found in plant foods, such as legumes, tofu, wholegrain bread, and fortified breakfast cereals. Consuming foods rich in vitamin C in the same meal, such as citrus or tropical fruits and tomato juice, can increase iron absorption.
- **Vitamin B12** is not found in plant products, so if you are vegan or do not regularly consume meat, eggs or dairy products you may need to take a vitamin B12 supplement. Some specialized products are fortified with B12. These include some soy milks, soy meat slices, soy sausages etc.

Abnormal blood levels of these nutrients can be caused by dietary, lifestyle and other factors. Please consult your Doctor and/or Dietitian for advice.

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Hydration:

In hot weather, it can be very easy for physically active teenagers to suffer from dehydration or heat exhaustion. It is a good idea to carry a water bottle in order to keep hydrated.

- **What to drink:** Water is the best thirst quencher. Sport drinks may offer a small additional benefit over water if an individual is exercising at a high intensity for more than 90 minutes. Avoid consuming sugary drinks such as soft drinks and energy drinks as they usually provide 'empty' kilojoules and can contribute to weight gain.
- **How much to drink:** At least 400 mls is required prior to exercising and 200 mls is required every 20 minutes during exercise. This is equivalent to 600 mls of water per hour. However, these quantities will vary according to exercise intensity and individual needs. On average per day we should drink 2L of fluid.

Sample Meal Plans

Non-vegetarian teenagers:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Breakfast	1 cup cereal 1 cup skim or low fat milk/soy milk 1 cup berries or 1 small glass freshly squeezed juice	2 slices wholegrain toast ½ cup (125g) cottage cheese 1 banana or 1 small glass freshly squeezed juice	2 weetbix 1 slice wholegrain toast and margarine with fruit spread 1 cup skim or low fat milk/milk/soy milk	½ cup natural muesli 1 cup skim or low fat milk / soy milk 2 Tbsp mixed dried fruit	2 slices wholegrain bread 2 eggs (boiled/poached/scrambled) 2 medium stone fruit or 1 small glass freshly squeezed juice
Mid-morning	2 ryvita 1 slice low fat cheese (30 g)	200g low fat yoghurt ½ cup cereal	30g mixed nuts 2Tbsp sultanas	1 apple ½ cup cottage cheese (125g)	'Up & Go' or low fat fruit smoothie
Lunch	Whole-grain sandwich/ roll with 2Tbsp hummus/fallafel 1 cup cherry tomatoes and cucumber	1 cup Pasta salad with 90g tuna. 1 cup carrot and celery sticks	Wrap with ½ cup assorted vegies and 60g chicken	Mixed vegetable salad with 60g lean meat.	Medium potato with 30g low fat cheese/ 3 Tbsp ricotta or cottage cheese 1 cup salad
Afternoon Tea	1 orange 1 cup skim or low fat milk/soy milk	Low fat fruit smoothie	½ bagel with ricotta cheese and fruit spread	200g low fat yoghurt 1 small glass fruit juice	1 cup popcorn 1 cup skim or low fat milk / soy milk
Dinner	1 cups vegetable stir fry with 60g lean meat strips ½ cup noodles	1cups baked mixed vegies 1 medium sweet potato 1 chicken breast/thigh	1-2 cups vegetable soup with legumes 1 slice wholegrain bread	Pasta with mushroom and tomato sauce 1 Tbsp parmesan	Tuna vegetable lasagne 1 cup salad
Supper	2 cups diced melon	200g low fat yoghurt	2 cups diced strawberries	1 low fat custard	¾ cup fruit salad

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Vegetarian teenagers:

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Mid-morning	2 ryvita 1 slice low fat cheese (30 g)	200g Low fat yoghurt ½ cup cereal	30g mixed nuts 2 Tbsp sultanas	1 apple ½ cup cottage cheese (125g)	'Up & Go' or low fat smoothie
Lunch	Whole-grain/ wheat sandwich/ roll with 3 Tbsp hummus or fallafel 1 cup cherry tomatoes and cucumber	1 cup Pasta salad with ¾ cup chickpeas 1 cup carrot and celery sticks	Wrap with ½ cup assorted vegies and 3 tbsps cup hummus	1 tabouleh salad with ¾ cup lentils 1 wholegrain bread roll	Medium potato with 30g low fat cheese/ 3 tbsps ricotta or cottage cheese 1 cup salad
Afternoon Tea	1 orange 1 cup skim or low fat milk / soy milk	Low fat fruit smoothie	½ bagel with ricotta cheese and fruit spread	200g low fat yoghurt 1 small glass fruit juice	1 cup popcorn 1 cup skim or low fat milk / soy milk
Dinner	1 cups vegetable stir fry with 150g tofu ½ cup noodles	1 cup baked mixed vegies 1 medium sweet potato 100g tempeh	1-2 cups vegetable soup with legumes 1 slice wholegrain bread	Pasta with mushroom and tomato sauce 1 Tbsp parmesan	TVP vegetable lasagne 1 cup salad
Supper	2 cups diced melon	200g low fat yoghurt	2 cups diced strawberries	1 low fat custard	¾ cup fruit salad



Further Information:

Our outpatient Dietitian is located within the hospital and can also help maintaining a healthy weight (increasing or decreasing), diabetes and a full dietary analysis to measure dietary adequacy. Please call to make an appointment on (02) 9487 9581.

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