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Vegetables: 1 serve = a medium potato (or sweet potato or corn); or cup cooked vegies (like broccoli, spinach, carrots, pumpkin); or 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegies; or cup cooked, dried or canned beans, legumes or lentils. Offer 5-5 serves a day. Cereal and grains: 1 serve = 1 slice of bread; or cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, quinoa or polenta; or cup porridge; or cup wheat cereal flakes; or cup muesli; or 1 crumpet or small English muffin. Wholegrain is best. Offer 7 serves a day. Dairy: 1 serve = 1 cup (250 ml) pasteurised cows milk; or 1 cup dairy alternative like soy or rice milk with at least 100 mg of added calcium per 100 ml; or 2 slices cheese; or cup (200 gm) yoghurt; or cup ricotta cheese. Choose mostly reduced-fat dairy. Offer 3 serves a day. Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes: 1 serve = 65 gm cooked lean beef, lamb, veal or pork (weekly max. 455 gm); 80 gm cooked lean chicken or turkey; or 100 gm cooked fish fillet; or 170 gm cooked tofu; or 2 large eggs; or 1 cup cooked lentils, chickpeas or canned beans; or 30 gm (1 tablespoon) peanuts, cashews, sunflower seeds or sesame seeds. Offer 2 serves a day. Healthy fats: you can include 2 serves of unsaturated fat in cooking, baking, pastes or dressings. 1 serve = 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 gm) of oil like olive, canola and rice bran oil or margarine made from these oils; 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 gm) of nut or seed pastes; or 1 tablespoon (20 gm) of avocado. Avoid foods like cakes, biscuits, chips, lollies, processed meats, and fried or takeaway foods. They're high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. Skip to main content Eating healthy food is important at any age, but it's especially important for teenagers. As your body is still growing, it's vital that you eat enough good quality food and the right kinds to meet your energy and nutrition needs. Being a teenager can be fun, but it can also be difficult as your body shape changes. These physical changes can be hard to deal with if they're not what you're expecting. There can be pressure from friends to be or look a certain way, and this might affect the foods you eat. It's not a good time to crash diet, as you won't get enough nutrients, and you may not reach your full potential. Following a sensible, well-balanced diet is a much better option, both for now and in the long term. As a teenager, you'll start to become more independent and make your own food choices. You'll hang out with your friends or get a part-time job so you can buy the things you like. Because you're still growing, you need to take extra care to get enough of some important vitamins and minerals to feel better and be healthy. What should I eat? Eating three regular meals a day with some snacks will help you meet your nutrition needs. Skipping meals means you will miss out on vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates, which can leave you lacking energy or finding it hard to concentrate. Here's a guide to help you understand the value of what you eat. Breads, grains and cereals are carbohydrates that provide energy for your brain and muscles. They're also an excellent source of fibre and B vitamins. Without enough carbohydrates you may feel tired and run down. Try to include some carbohydrates at each mealtime. Fruit and vegetables have lots of vitamins and minerals which help boost your immune system and keep you from getting sick. They're also very important for healthy skin and eyes. It's recommended you eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day. Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes (e.g. beans and lentils) are good sources of iron and protein. Iron is needed to make red blood cells, which carry oxygen around your body. If you're menstruating or have your period, this leads to loss of iron. If you don't get enough iron, you can develop anaemia, a condition that can make you feel tired and light-headed and short of breath. Protein is needed for growth and to keep your muscles healthy. Not eating enough protein when you're still growing, or going through puberty, can lead to delayed or stunted height and weight. Not enough protein is common when you go on strict diets. Include meat, chicken, fish or eggs in your diet at least twice a day. Fish is important for your brain, eyes and skin. Try to eat fish 2 to 3 times a week. If you're vegetarian or vegan and don't eat meat, there are other ways to meet your iron needs, for example, with foods like baked beans, pulses, lentils, nuts and seeds. Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yoghurt help to build bones and teeth and keep your heart, muscles and nerves working properly. You'll need three and a half serves of dairy food a day to meet your needs. Eating too much fat and oil can result in you putting on weight. Try to use oils in small amounts for cooking or salad dressings. Other high-fat foods like chocolate, chips, cakes and fried foods can increase your weight without giving your body many nutrients. Fluids are also an important part of your diet. Drink water to keep hydrated, so you won't feel so tired or thirsty. It can also help to prevent constipation. It's better not to drink flavoured waters or sports drinks because they can lead to more weight gain. Following is a sample meal plan for 12 to 18-year-olds: Breakfast: 1 bowl of flake-based cereal with milk and banana Water: Recess or morning tea 200 g tub yoghurt and 1 cup air-popped popcorn Water: Lunch: Ham, cheese and tomato sandwich and 1 cup fruit salad Water: After-school snack or afternoon tea: cup hummus dip and 3 crispbreads and 40g dried fruit and nuts Dinner: Chicken and vegetable stir-fry with Rice Water: Supper (if hungry) 1-2 slices fruit bread with ricotta and 1 glass milk Why should I eat breakfast? Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It can help with memory and concentration at school, and give you energy to study and play. Regular breakfast eaters tend to have a healthier weight than those who skip breakfast. Look for breakfast cereals that are high fibre and low fat and with not too much added sugar or salt. Here are some healthy breakfast options: porridge with honey and cinnamon muesli with yoghurt fresh fruit and yoghurt higher-fibre cereals like Weet-Bix, Vita Brits, Mini-Wheats, Just Right, Fibre Plus, Sustain or similar multigrain toast with a boiled or poached egg baked beans on toast raisin toast pita bread with olives and feta melted cheese and vegemite on toast or an English muffin crumpets with jam banana milkshake or fruit smoothie pancakes with yoghurt and fruit. What's a healthy school lunch? If you don't look forward to your school lunch, then change what you're preparing. School lunches don't have to be boring. Does a parent carelessly make your school lunch? If you don't like what they make for you, talk to them about what you would like instead. Tell them what sandwich fillings you like, or what your favourite healthy snacks are. Here are some suggestions: Chicken, grated carrot, cucumber and cream cheese pita bread Turkey, cheese and salad on multigrain bread with cranberry sauce Vegetable and lentil soup in a thermos with a bread roll Smoked salmon, salad and cream cheese bagel Leftover pasta with lots of cooked vegetables Quiche and salad Cheese and salad sandwich Boiled egg and salad on multigrain with a smear of mayonnaise Ham, cheese and spinach wrap Cold cooked cheese, salad and lean meat quesadillas Chicken with avocado and salad in a grainy bread roll Beef, tomato and lettuce sandwich with tomato chutney or salsa Eating for when you're at school or studying, your brain needs extra energy. Eating healthy foods is also linked to better concentration. Here are some tips for eating healthier when studying and during exams. Eat small frequent meals. 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Tell them what sandwich fillings you like, or what your favourite healthy snacks are. Here are some suggestions: Chicken, grated carrot, cucumber and cream cheese pita bread Turkey, cheese and salad on multigrain bread with cranberry sauce Vegetable and lentil soup in a thermos with a bread roll Smoked salmon, salad and cream cheese bagel Leftover pasta with lots of cooked vegetables Quiche and salad Cheese and salad sandwich Boiled egg and salad on multigrain with a smear of mayonnaise Ham, cheese and spinach wrap Cold cooked cheese, salad and lean meat quesadillas Chicken with avocado and salad in a grainy bread roll Beef, tomato and lettuce sandwich with tomato chutney or salsa Eating for when you're at school or studying, your brain needs extra energy. Eating healthy foods is also linked to better concentration. Here are some tips for eating healthier when studying and during exams. Eat small frequent meals. 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Achieving a healthy weight It is easy to grab biscuits, potato chips, cakes, sausage rolls, pies, doughnuts or chocolate bars when you're hungry, but regularly choosing these foods will make it easier to put on excess weight. Enjoy these kinds of convenience foods, takeaways and fried foods occasionally only. Other things you eat or drink with lots of sugar, for example, fruit juice, cordial, soft drinks and energy drinks. 250 ml drink No. of teaspoon sugar * orange juice 4 coke cola 5 low fat milk 3 diluted cordial 4 sports drink 3 iced tea 4 energy drink 5 * Note: 1 teaspoon = 5g sugar Here are some healthy alternatives to your usual snack foods. 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As a general rule to prevent acne, try to eat fewer processed foods, and eat and drink healthily. The Womens does not accept any liability to any person for the information or advice (or use of such information or advice) which is provided on the Website or incorporated into it by reference. The Womens provide this information on the understanding that all persons accessing it take responsibility for assessing its relevance and accuracy. Women are encouraged to discuss their health needs with a health practitioner. If you have concerns about your health, you should seek advice from your health care provider or if you require urgent care you should go to the nearest Emergency Dept. Teenagers need a wide variety of healthy foods from the 5 food groups. How much food teenagers need depends on body size and activity levels. Teenagers aged 14-18 years should aim for 2 serves of fruit; 5-5 serves of vegies; 3 serves of dairy; 7 serves of grains; and 2 serves of lean meats, eggs, nuts, seeds or legumes. Teens need 6-8 cups (1.6-1.9 L) of fluid a day and extra on hot or humid days or if they sweat a lot. Water is the best drink for teens. They can also have milk. Teens should avoid soft drinks, fruit juices, flavoured milk or water, sports drinks, energy drinks, tea and coffee. Teens aged under 18 years should not drink alcohol. Fruit: 1 serve = 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear; or 2 small plums, kiwi fruits or apricots; or 1 cup diced or canned fruit (no added sugar). Offer 2 serves a day. Vegetables: 1 serve = a medium potato (or sweet potato or corn); or cup cooked vegies (like broccoli, spinach, carrots, pumpkin); or 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegies; or cup cooked, dried or canned beans, legumes or lentils. Offer 5-5 serves a day. Cereal and grains: 1 serve = 1 slice of bread; or cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, quinoa or polenta; or cup porridge; or cup wheat cereal flakes; or cup muesli; or 1 crumpet or small English muffin. Wholegrain is best. Offer 7 serves a day. Dairy: 1 serve = 1 cup (250 ml) pasteurised cows milk; or 1 cup dairy alternative like soy or rice milk with at least 100 mg of added calcium per 100 ml; or 2 slices cheese; or cup (200 gm) yoghurt; or cup ricotta cheese. Choose mostly reduced-fat dairy. Offer 3 serves a day. Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes: 1 serve = 65 gm cooked lean beef, lamb, veal or pork (weekly max. 455 gm); 80 gm cooked lean chicken or turkey; or 100 gm cooked fish fillet; or 170 gm cooked tofu; or 2 large eggs; or 1 cup cooked lentils, chickpeas or canned beans; or 30 gm (1 tablespoon) peanuts, cashews, sunflower seeds or sesame seeds. Offer 2 serves a day. Healthy fats: you can include 2 serves of unsaturated fat in cooking, baking, pastes or dressings. 1 serve = 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 gm) of oil like olive, canola and rice bran oil or margarine made from these oils; 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 gm) of nut or seed pastes; or 1 tablespoon (20 gm) of avocado. Avoid foods like cakes, biscuits, chips, lollies, processed meats, and fried or takeaway foods. They're high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. Skip to main content Eating healthy food is important at any age, but it's especially important for teenagers. As your body is still growing, it's vital that you eat enough good quality food and the right kinds to meet your energy and nutrition needs. Being a teenager can be fun, but it can also be difficult as your body shape changes. These physical changes can be hard to deal with if they're not what you're expecting. There can be pressure from friends to be or look a certain way, and this might affect the foods you eat. It's not a good time to crash diet, as you won't get enough nutrients, and you may not reach your full potential. Following a sensible, well-balanced diet is a much better option, both for now and in the long term. As a teenager, you'll start to become more independent and make your own food choices. You'll hang out with your friends or get a part-time job so you can buy the things you like. Because you're still growing, you need to take extra care to get enough of some important vitamins and minerals to feel better and be healthy. What should I eat? Eating three regular meals a day with some snacks will help you meet your nutrition needs. Skipping meals means you will miss out on vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates, which can leave you lacking energy or finding it hard to concentrate. Here's a guide to help you understand the value of what you eat. Breads, grains and cereals are carbohydrates that provide energy for your brain and muscles. They're also an excellent source of fibre and B vitamins. Without enough carbohydrates you may feel tired and run down. Try to include some carbohydrates at each mealtime. Fruit and vegetables have lots of vitamins and minerals which help boost your immune system and keep you from getting sick. They're also very important for healthy skin and eyes. It's recommended you eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day. Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes (e.g. beans and lentils) are good sources of iron and protein. Iron is needed to make red blood cells, which carry oxygen around your body. If you're menstruating or have your period, this leads to loss of iron. If you don't get enough iron, you can develop anaemia, a condition that can make you feel tired and light-headed and short of breath. Protein is needed for growth and to keep your muscles healthy. Not eating enough protein when you're still growing, or going through puberty, can lead to delayed or stunted height and weight. Not enough protein is common when you go on strict diets. Include meat, chicken, fish or eggs in your diet at least twice a day. Fish is important for your brain, eyes and skin. Try to eat fish 2 to 3 times a week. If you're vegetarian or vegan and don't eat meat, there are other ways to meet your iron needs, for example, with foods like baked beans, pulses, lentils, nuts and seeds. Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yoghurt help to build bones and teeth and keep your heart, muscles and nerves working properly. You'll need three and a half serves of dairy food a day to meet your needs. Eating too much fat and oil can result in you putting on weight. Try to use oils in small amounts for cooking or salad dressings. Other high-fat foods like chocolate, chips, cakes and fried foods can increase your weight without giving your body many nutrients. 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