

Appendix 6

Food fantastic – eating for healthy adolescents

Eat many different kinds of food each day

Life as a teenager can be fast, furious and fun – and so can your food. Include from these four groups to get the nutrients you need to stay healthy, active and alert:

- fruits and vegetables
- breads and cereals
- milks and milk products
- lean meats, chicken, seafood, eggs, dried peas, beans and lentils.

Fruit and vegetables

- Provide carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals and are low in fat.
- Choose fresh if you can.
- Have with most meals – every day.
- Enjoy raw or lightly cooked.
- Ideal snack food.

Choose at least three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit every day.

Serving size samples:

- 1 medium potato, kumara or similar-sized root vegetable (135 g)
- half a cup cooked vegetables, for example, puha, watercress or corn (50–80 g)
- half a cup salad (60 g)
- 1 tomato (80 g)
- 1 apple, pear, banana or orange (130 g)
- 2 small apricots or plums (100 g)
- half a cup of fresh fruit salad (120 g)
- half a cup stewed fruit (135 g)
- 1 cup fruit juice (250 ml).

Breads and cereals

- More than just bread and breakfast cereals, this also includes rice and pastas.
- Provides carbohydrates, fibre and other nutrients.
- Satisfies your hunger longer than sweet biscuits, cakes or sweets.
- A great source of energy for growth, sport and fitness.
- Ideal to meet the demands of intense physical activity.
- Try some wholegrain varieties.

Fill up on breads and cereals when hungry. They are great choice for meals and snacks.

Choose at least six servings each day, including some wholegrain. Most adolescents will need more than this – especially for young men who need even more to meet their needs for extra energy (calories).

Serving size samples:

- 1 roll (50 g)
- 1 muffin (80 g)
- 1 medium slice of bread (26 g)
- 1 cup cornflakes (30 g)
- half a cup muesli (55 g)
- half a cup cooked cereal (130 g)
- 1 cup cooked pasta (150 g)
- 1 cup cooked rice (150 g)
- 2 plain sweet biscuits (14 g).

Milks and milk products

- Includes milk, cheese, yoghurt and ice cream.
- Valuable sources of calcium and protein.
- Choose low fat milk for extra calcium.
- You need high-calcium foods to build strong bones during teenage years.
- Try milk, cheese and yoghurt as snacks.
- Keep active – regular exercise keeps bones strong in later life.

Choose at least three servings each day, preferably low fat.

Serving size samples:

- milk (250 ml)

- 1 pottle yoghurt (150 g)
- 2 slices cheese (40 g)
- 2 scoops ice cream (140 g).

Lean meats, chicken, seafood, eggs, dried beans, peas and lentils

- Valuable sources of protein, iron and other nutrients.
- Your body needs lots for growth, mental and physical activity and sports.

Iron needs for women increase when periods begin.

The iron from meat, chicken and seafood is used more easily by the body. Iron from other foods is better able to be used if eaten at the same time as foods rich in vitamin C (eg, fresh fruits and vegetables, especially oranges, kiwifruit and peppers).

Choose 1–2 servings each day.

Serving size samples

- 2 slices cooked meat (approx 100 g)
- three-quarters of a cup mince or casserole (195 g)
- 1 egg (50 g)
- 1 medium fillet of fish – cooked (100 g)
- 1 medium steak (120 g)
- three-quarters of a cup dried cooked beans (135 g)
- 2 drumsticks or 1 chicken leg (110 g)
- 1 medium paua (120 g)
- 3 medium mussels (30 g)
- 1 kina (100 g)

Vegetarians

If you are a vegetarian it is important to understand your body's needs and plan your meals and snacks carefully.

By not eating meat, vegetarians need foods with lots of iron, such as wholegrain cereals, dried peas, beans and lentils, dried fruits and dark green leafy vegetables. Eat vitamin C rich foods with these meals to help absorb iron.

For vegetarians who don't eat cheese, milk or eggs, mixed meal and cereals, tofu, dried peas, beans and lentils will also give protein.

Eat enough for growth and physical activity

- You need more energy (calories) now than ever before. During rapid growth, energy and nutrient needs are high, so you must eat enough food to get all the nutrients your body needs.
- Choose from the four food groups first to meet this need for extra energy.
- Snacks are needed, but limit high-fat, high-sugar foods.
- There is no exact or ideal body weight or shape. Body shapes change naturally when you are growing as proportions of fat and muscle change. If you get little exercise and choose high-calorie foods too often you may gain unneeded weight.

Physical activity

- Everyone benefits from regular physical activity.
- Try and be physically active on most if not all days of the week.
- Activity includes biking, walking, swimming, dancing and playing sport.

If you are very active you will need more to eat than most. If you are involved in heavy physical training and endurance sports events you will have special food needs. It's best to get ideas and advice from a dietitian or a sports medicine specialist.

Choose foods low in fat, sugar and salt

Establish good eating habits while young and promote good health in your adult life.

Achieve this by:

- eating foods low in fat, sugar and salt
- keeping fit by exercising often
- watching your weight
- choosing not to smoke.

Many fast foods, takeaways and snacks are high in fat, salt and/or sugar. For example, chocolate bars, muesli bars, potato chips, French fries, doughnuts, pies, sweets, fruit leathers and soft drinks.

Instead of eating these high-calorie foods every day, eat them only now and then. If you eat them too often, you may gain weight.

- Eat more bread, cereals, fruits and vegetables.
- Choose low fat varieties of milk, cheese and yoghurt.

- Spread margarine and butter thinly.
- Eat less saturated fat, eg, butter, meat fats, dripping, sausage and cream.
- Choose lean meats, trim off the fat, skim fat off stews, remove skin from chicken and eat more frilled or steamed fish.
- Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes to protect your teeth from decay.
- Grill, steam, microwave, boil or bake meals without adding fat.
- Eat meals without adding extra salt.
- When shopping, read labels and look for pre-prepared foods that are lower in fat, salt and sugar.

Choose snacks well

Active teenagers need snacks. Snacks help provide the extra calories you need for growth and physical activity and will satisfy large appetites. Snacks should be low in fat, salt and sugar, for example, fruit, bread, yoghurt and low fat milk. They should provide plenty of energy as well as nutrients.

Snack ideas

- Bread, bread rolls, bagels, Māori and pita bread, French sticks. Try some wholegrain varieties.
- Muffins, crackers, fruit buns, scones, fruit bread, pancakes, popcorn – pop your own.
- Pasta and rice.
- Snack filling ideas: egg, lean meat, seafood, cheese, lots of salad, peanut butter, jam, spaghetti, baked beans, vegemite, banana or cottage cheese.
- Breakfast cereals low in fat and sugar served with low fat milk.
- Yoghurt, plain or flavoured milk and ice cream.
- Fresh fruit eaten whole or served with yoghurt, blended into a milkshake or served with a slice of cheese.
- Fresh vegetables, eaten raw, like carrots, tomatoes or coconut.
- Leftovers reheated, for example, stews, soups, vegetables such as potato, taro, pumpkin or kumara.

Drink plenty every day

- Drink at least six to eight glasses every day.

You need to drink plenty of fluid every day. Even more during hot weather and when you are very active (especially before, during and after sports events).

Great Drinks

- Water is best. It is cool, refreshing, easy to get and FREE. Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge.
- Milk is a cool drink, it's rich in calcium and makes a good snack. Low fat milks are recommended.
- Dilute fruit juice with plenty of water. Add lots of ice. Limit to meal times only because the natural sugar present can cause tooth decay.

Soft drinks are popular, but don't drink too much. They can be a source of unneeded calories.

Coffee and tea should be limited. Tea should not be drunk with meals because the tannins in tea mean you will not absorb the iron as well as you could.

Alcohol is not recommended

Alcohol is not recommended because it is a drug that affects every part of your body. If you decide to drink, limit your intake – keep it to a minimum. Alcohol supplies unnecessary calories and almost no other nutrients, so can contribute towards obesity.

If you do decide to drink alcohol:

- *be responsible*
- eat some food when you drink alcohol
- dilute alcoholic drinks with plenty of water or mixers and lots of ice
- do not binge drink
- do not drive
- if you are having a party, make sure you provide plenty of fruit juice, soft drinks and water, low alcohol drinks and plenty of food throughout.

Smoking

- Being smokefree is recommended.
- Smoking shortens your lifespan, makes you broke and doesn't help to make friends.
- Some people think smoking is an easy way to lose weight. This is not true.

For more information contact:

Dietitian at your local hospital.

Local dietitian – try the *Yellow Pages*.

Registered nutritionist.

School counsellor or health education co-ordinator.

Community health centre.

National Heart Foundation.

Doctor, doctor's nurse (practice nurse).

Nutrition Foundation, PO Box 33-1409, Takapuna, Auckland.

Cancer Society, PO Box 12 145, Wellington