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It was the fall of 1978 when my fourteen-year-old friend and I decided to join America's new-found fitness craze. We devised a plan during sixth period lunch. We would bike clear across town without stopping.

Here was the problem: fast food restaurants galore along the way. My memory tells me we stopped at McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, and a hot dog joint before landing at the Caldor parking lot.

generated oils and shortenings," Shapiro suggests that teens include some "good fat" in their diets: olives, avocado, nuts, seeds, and olive or canola oil.

Healthy eating also includes plenty of fruits and vegetables, and soy foods help to reduce the risk of heart disease. Shapiro says, "Include a couple of servings a day of any of the following: tofu, soy milk, soy cheese, or soy yogurt." Soy protein powder can be added to shakes or

of sour cream and onion chips is handy? Furthermore, if both parents are working outside the home and teens have evening activities, it's hard to abide by healthy eating schedules and choices.

Graf instructs parents to limit the amount of processed foods on hand. She suggests, "Stock up on frozen fruits. These won't go bad, and teens can use them as toppings on frozen yogurt, for instance." She continues, "Parents should

• Whole grain crackers and peanut butter — instead of a bagel with cream cheese

• Roasted pumpkin seeds — instead of a bag of milk chocolate pretzels.

Graf says teens will be pleased to hear, "Dark chocolate is actually good for the heart. It provides antioxidants and doesn't have the levels of sugar and fat found in milk or white chocolate." Graf also suggests slathering hummus or mustard on sandwiches in lieu of mayonnaise.

## Tips & Recipes

"I only keep healthy snacks at home. My daughter learned to like celery and peanut butter. She'll also sprinkle cinnamon on apple slices," says Susan Cerulli, school nurse at Haviland Middle School, Hyde Park, NY.

"My daughter loves heart-healthy breakfast sandwiches: egg whites, mushrooms, and low fat cheese on wheat bread. Use olive oil cooking spray for frying. Sometimes we add turkey sausage. This sandwich is a great source of protein and energy without the fat," shares Maria Hoskins, also from Hyde Park, NY.

## Strawberry Milk Smoothie:

(Presented by Haviland Middle School "Life and Workforce Skills" class)

1 cup low fat cold milk  
1 cup strawberries (fresh or frozen)  
1 tbsp. sugar  
1/3 cup low fat vanilla yogurt  
1 tsp lemon juice  
1/2 cup crushed ice (more for fresh berries)

Blend all ingredients in a blender for 2 minutes.

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, columnist and author of "LIONS and TIGERS and TEENS: Expert advice and support for the conscientious parent just like you" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012.) For details visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com). Also available at: [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).



After twelve miles, a large order of fries, two Bavarian cream donuts, and an overstuffed chili dog, we gave each other a high five to celebrate our accomplishment. I get indigestion just thinking about it!

For decades, teens have been devouring fast food and salty snacks as part of their daily diets. Let's be honest. How many fourteen-year-olds do you know who opt for carrot sticks over a handful of salty fries? Is it hopeless, or can parents suggest healthy options that their teens will actually enjoy?

## General Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Howard M. Shapiro, MD, a Manhattan-based weight loss specialist and New York Times best-selling author of the *Picture Perfect Weight Loss* series, urges teens to avoid certain foods. "Limit foods high in cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans-fat, such as fatty meats, egg yolks, and foods prepared with hydro-

smoothies as well — an added health benefit for these popular teen drinks. Teens might also try veggie or turkey burgers (instead of beef) and veggie sausages (instead of pork).

Healthy eating habits also have to do with eating schedules. Lauren Graf, RD, CDN, a nutritionist for the Department of Pediatric Nephrology and the Pediatric Heart Healthy Program at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, advises, "Teenagers should eat multiple, small meals throughout the day. They should also eat a good breakfast because it will help them do better on exams." Graf also warns about eating heavy meals too close to bedtime, a problem for many teens who are involved in activities and return home late. Eating heavy meals late at night can lead to disrupted sleep and an inability to "work off" the calories.

## Encourage the Good Stuff

This all sounds reasonable, but how do parents actually get their teens to buy into all of this healthy eating when a bag

be committed to having a healthy lifestyle themselves and should model healthy eating. Believe it or not, this will eventually click with your teenagers."

## Quick tips:

- If strapped for time, prepare healthy casseroles on weekends then freeze for later in the week.
- Pack a snack. Don't drive through and take out.
- Opt for fresh or frozen foods over packaged and canned.

## Quick Snacks for Active Teens

The food has to look and taste good or your teen won't eat it. Since many teens are constantly on the run, healthy snacks play an important role, and easy preparation is a must.

Healthy snack alternatives suggested by Dr. Shapiro:

- Soy chips with guacamole or hummus — instead of potato chips and sour cream dip