

Maintaining your teenager's well-being

NUTRITION

A well-balanced diet

- In addition to consuming their recommended "five a day" (approximately one-third of the overall diet), everyone should incorporate starchy carbohydrates (another third), and allocate the remaining third between protein, dairy/milk, and a small portion of fat. Vegetarians and vegans should ensure they receive sufficient protein by incorporating protein-rich vegetables (like peas, sprouts, sweetcorn, asparagus, broccoli, and avocado), along with nuts, pulses, and beans. To enhance focus and concentration, consider incorporating green leafy vegetables, herbs, oily fish, and pulses into their regular diet - these choices benefit the entire family as well!

Teenagers eating habits

- To maintain stable energy levels, it's crucial for teenagers to eat regularly throughout the day. Encourage them to have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with nutritious snacks in between. Packing a lunch and snacks for their busy days can help ensure they consume the right kinds of food.
- Whenever possible, gather for a family meal at the end of the day (without mobile devices!). This practice not only establishes a healthy routine for them to carry into adulthood but also offers a break from screen time, allowing for conversations and the sharing of daily experiences.

Snacks

- Indulging in sugary and salty snacks to maintain energy levels isn't just detrimental to one's health; it can also hinder performance and focus. Encourage healthier choices to support them when they're pressed for time. For those who crave chocolate, consider switching from milk chocolate or chocolate bars to dark chocolate. While an occasional treat is fine, it's wise to limit the consumption of high-sugar and salty snacks.



Woolwich Polytechnic
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Cooking together

- Engaging in cooking sessions offers a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time and strengthen the bond with your teenager. It provides a relaxed environment for them to share any concerns they may have, allowing for meaningful conversations without pressure – you can also celebrate good news together. Moreover, it's a chance to teach them how to prepare nutritious meals and equip them with essential life skills for their future independence, whether it involves entering the workforce or pursuing higher education. Additionally, with practice, they will be capable of preparing family meals, easing the burden of meal preparation solely on you.

As your teenager grows more independent, they will begin preparing their own meals, making it challenging for you to monitor their food choices constantly. Keep in mind that they will consume what is available at home, so stocking your kitchen with healthy options will encourage them to make better choices when hungry. When they are away from home, like at school, consider providing food instead of money to deter them from buying unhealthy snacks. While fast food and treats are acceptable in moderation, they should not be the main components of their diet. Adolescents may be tempted by convenience foods for quick energy, so it's important to guide them towards healthier alternatives despite their inclination towards unhealthy options. The foods you keep in your home and consume will impact your teenager's decisions. Are you setting a positive example for them?

