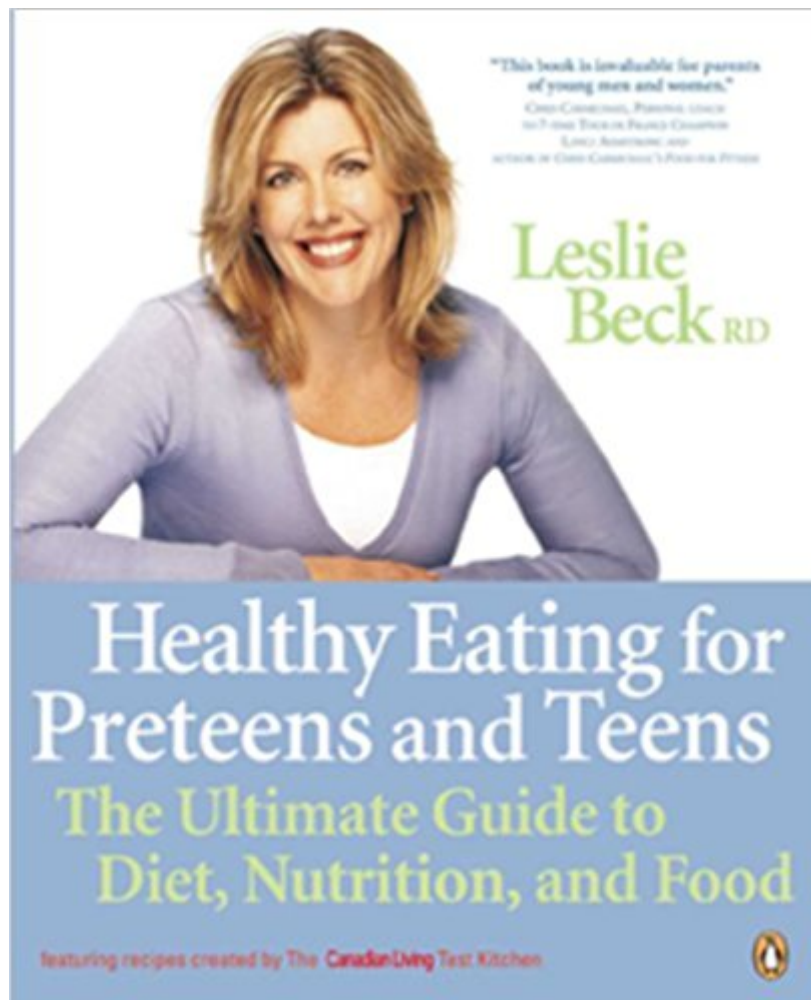




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# Healthy Eating For Pre Teens And Teens: The Ultimate Guide To Diet Nutrition And Food



## Synopsis

Healthy Eating for Preteens and Teens is a practical family guide that covers every aspect of essential nutrition to help raise healthy teens. In a super-size-me world, Leslie Beck provides strategies for making healthy food choices and establishing good eating habits for life. Healthy Eating for Preteens and Teens includes: How to determine a healthy body weight All the facts on carbohydrates, protein, fat, water, and other fluids Making healthy food choices when eating at home and school, and in restaurants and food courts Nutrition advice for vegetarian teens Weight control strategies for teens Nutrition advice for sports Understanding and dealing with eating disorders Over 60 healthy recipes for breakfasts, school lunches, dinners on the fly, and snacks

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## Customer Reviews

Leslie Beck, RD, a registered dietician, is a leading Canadian nutritionist and the bestselling author of eleven nutrition books. She is the national director of nutrition at Body Science Centers.

Introduction Adolescence is one of the greatest periods of change during our lifetime. Changes occur in all realms of human development—physical, emotional, intellectual, even spiritual. Body shapes are changing, independent thinking begins, and teenagers take on the social values and roles of adulthood. It's a time of new discoveries and opportunities, but also of anxiety

and stress. On the physical level, adolescence brings on rapid growth and hormonal change. The onset of adolescence is typically associated with the start of puberty and ends when an adult identity and adult behaviours are accepted. The World Health Organization and the Canadian Paediatric Society define adolescence as the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years, and for the purposes of this book, I have adopted this definition. In the chapters that follow I provide nutrient recommendations for preteens and teens aged 9 to 13 years, and older teenagers, those aged 14 to 19 years. Wherever I refer to “teens,” I mean to include preteens, unless I specify otherwise. Most girls begin their growth spurts between the ages of 10 and 13 years, while most boys grow more between the ages of 12 and 15 years. Nearly every organ in the body develops during these times of faster growth, including bones, muscles, and sex organs. That’s why the teenage body demands more energy, iron, zinc, and calcium than at any other age. Fortunately, once the growth spurt begins, teenagers’ appetites rev up and they begin to eat more food. And if you have teenage boys, I’m sure you find that keeping the fridge and cupboards full is almost a full-time job. If teenagers make nutritious food choices, they can satisfy both their increased hunger and higher nutrient needs. Yet, living in the teenage world makes adolescents particularly vulnerable to poor eating habits. As teens assert themselves and become more independent from parents and teachers, their food habits change. Teenagers have more control over their eating habits and more access to foods outside the home, compared to younger children. Lifestyle changes such as having a part-time job, getting a driver’s licence, and dating mean that teenagers will spend more time away from home and from the healthy meals you prepare. Pressure from friends, coaches, and the media can also affect a teenager’s food choices. Many of my clients know that what’s good for them is also good for their children. As is the case for adults, teenagers’ eating habits can affect their energy level, physical fitness, mental performance, and health. Sure, teenagers are growing and need more calories, but there’s no good reason for those calories to come from foods high in fat and sugar. Over the past 15 years, I have counselled many teenagers about nutrition. I’ve helped overweight teens slim down and navigate the fat and sugar traps on cafeteria and camp menus. I’ve educated teenagers about healthy vegetarian diets, and I’ve advised others about sport-specific nutrition. There’s never been as much demand for nutrition information as there is today. Teenagers and adults are more aware of nutrition than they were even a decade ago. My clients come to me looking for sound, credible, and relevant information about how their food choices affect their well-being. It’s a confusing world out there, sometimes even for a nutritionist like me. Conflicting news stories about nutrition, fad diets, and a growing number of

“magic bullet” supplements can make even the most nutrition-savvy person’s head spin. Given today’s overwhelming amount of health information, it can be a tough task to make sense of the foods you eat. Growing Up Overfed and Undernourished and at Risk of Heart Disease Only recently have researchers, health professionals, and, subsequently, the media taken an interest in the nutritional health of our children. It’s unfortunate that it’s taken an epidemic of obesity and type 2 diabetes to get our attention. Perhaps we ought to call it the North American Paradox—the fact that we live in an affluent society with access to medical care, nutritious foods, and plenty of open green space, yet so many of our youth are growing up overweight, undernourished, and sedentary. What’s more, today we’re witnessing in teenagers the health problems that accompany both over- and under-nutrition. Risk factors for heart disease, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes, as well as iron deficiency anemia and rickets, a bone disease caused by a lack of vitamin D, are becoming more prevalent among adolescents. If there is any time in a person’s life when he or she is expected to be in the best health, it is during youth. Yet, consider the fact that almost one-third of Canadian adolescents rate their health as no better than “good.”<sup>1</sup> Adolescents who are obese, physically inactive, or who eat a poor diet are more likely to convey negative views of their health. Overweight and obesity is a major concern among Canadian youth. Over the past two decades, rates of obesity have quadrupled among children. In 2001, 5% of kids aged 12 to 19 were considered obese, with the prevalence among boys almost double that of girls. And it seems that many more teens are on their way to obesity: 17% of boys and 10% of girls are now classified as overweight.<sup>2</sup> Statistics for younger children are even more alarming. These numbers are frightening for a few reasons. For starters, obese adolescents are more likely to become obese adults than are their normal-weight peers. It’s estimated that 70% of obese teenagers will remain obese in adulthood. Obese teenagers are also more likely to suffer physical and psychological problems such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, back and knee problems, low self-esteem, and depression. And finally, adolescent weight problems (along with physical inactivity and poor eating habits) have long-term implications for health in adulthood. It’s well documented that obesity increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory illness, and certain cancers. What’s truly worrisome is that so many of these so-called adult diseases are now affecting young people. We are learning that adolescents are not immune to obesity, diabetes, high blood cholesterol, or high blood pressure, conditions that weren’t even on the radar screen when it came to adolescent health in the early 1990s because they were considered adult health

problems. Indeed, what was only recently called “adult onset diabetes” is now referred to as “type 2 diabetes” because of its diagnosis in children as young as nine years old. It’s been said that children growing up in North America today are at risk of becoming the first generation in modern memory that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. The reason: an epidemic of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Physical inactivity, poor eating habits, and parental influences all have a role to play in youth obesity (not to mention nutrient deficiencies in iron, calcium, and vitamin D). Today, only 4 out of 10 teens aged 12 to 19 are physically active, with boys being more active than girls.<sup>3</sup> (Kids considered inactive accumulated less than one hour of walking per day.) Our schools certainly aren’t helping our children be physically active. According to a 2002 study, one-half of Canadian schools have a policy of daily physical education, yet only 16% of schools comply. And the number of gym classes offered each week declines with increasing grade.<sup>4</sup> If kids aren’t spending their time being active, what are they doing? Most are sedentary after school, doing homework, reading, surfing the internet, watching television, or playing video games. Research suggests that teens who spend more than two hours each day in front of the television have a significantly lower chance of becoming and remaining active. There’s a well-documented link between screen time and body weight. Studies show that watching the tube and playing video or computer games increase the likelihood of being overweight or obese by as much as 61%. On the other hand, participating in sports and other physical activity lowers the odds by 10% to 43%. When it comes to nutrition, it’s hard to get a handle on how Canadian adolescents are eating because so little research has been done. That’s why I conducted the What’s on Your Plate? High School Nutrition Survey in the spring of 2004. With the help of the dietitians at Chartwells School Dining Services, a member of Compass Group Canada, and the Research Services Unit in the Department of Public Health at the University of Toronto, I asked 1046 Canadian high school students, grades 8 through 12, about their food and exercise habits, as well as about their nutrition concerns. It seems that teenagers are quite interested in nutrition. Of the students surveyed, 78% rank nutrition as somewhat or very important when deciding what to eat. A survey conducted in 2002 revealed that 69% of Canadian youth were “slightly” to “far more concerned” with the quality of food they were eating than they were two years earlier. So many teens are aware of nutrition and food issues. So far, so good. But when I asked high school students about their diets, many came up short in the fruit, vegetable, dairy, and whole-grain departments. Four out of 10 teenagers eat fewer than two vegetable servings per day, and one-half of those surveyed consume no more than two servings of milk. Whole grains aren’t that popular, either. One-quarter of the teens say they

never opt for 100% whole-wheat or multigrain breads, while 3 out of 10 say they always do. So why the disconnect? An overwhelming majority of teenagers say nutrition is important, and yet so many have diets that lack nutrient-dense foods. And an increasing number are becoming overweight. It's challenging for teenagers to eat well in our modern world. We live in a toxic food environment, an environment in which we have easy access to a huge variety of highly processed and inexpensive foods, all served up in super-sized portions. What's more, these high-fat and sugary foods are marketed directly to teenagers and young children. Have you ever checked out the menu at your son or daughter's school cafeteria? At summer camp? I encourage you to do so. When I review these menus for my teenage clients, I am usually mortified at what we are feeding our younger generation. Menus geared to teens are often heavy on the white bread, white rice, white potatoes, and sugar, and light on the vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and vegetarian protein options. (Spaghetti and meatless tomato sauce does not cut it—where are the beans and tofu?) Ask your teenager and she'll tell you that healthy food items are hard to find in the cafeteria lineup. And the few choices that do exist—ham sandwiches on brown bread or bruised fruit—are usually hidden among the fries and soft drinks. Shouldn't we, as adults, know better in this age of skyrocketing obesity rates, trans fats, and high glycemic starches? The good news is that we are starting to smarten up. High school cafeterias are changing their menus, prompted by pressure from parents and school boards. Chartwells Dining Services, a member of Compass Group Canada, which holds the market share in contracted high school food service, is committed to bringing healthy foods to the forefront. Students are now seeing more healthy options: whole-grain wrap sandwiches, salads made to order, stir-fries, and grab-and-go veggies. The company is also promoting water and milk in their combo meals rather than sugary pop. And it is piloting healthy eating messages on vending machines. And there are more signs of change. Provincial governments are cracking down on school boards, mandating the ban of junk foods in vending machines on school premises. The premier of Ontario has even talked about enforcing daily physical education in schools. Fast food joints have added grilled chicken, entree salads, and fresh fruit to their menus. That's a smart move, since adolescents are eating more meals at fast food outlets and restaurants than ever before. Large food manufacturers also seem to be making moves to stem childhood obesity. Kraft Foods announced in January 2004 that it would stop television advertisements for the likes of Kool-Aid, Oreo, and Chips Ahoy! cookies during programming targeted to kids aged 6 to 11 years. Although it's becoming easier for our teenagers to choose healthy foods when they eat away from home, healthy eating habits begin at home. Parents play an important role in shaping

their teenager's health and nutrition habits. We know that overweight among parents is a major factor in excess weight for adolescent boys and girls. Among girls aged 12 to 19 who lived with an obese parent, 18% are overweight and 10% are obese. The situation is similar for boys: 22% of boys with an obese parent are overweight, and 12% are obese.<sup>5</sup> Aside from weight, other parental habits influence those of their children. These include physical activity, smoking, and eating habits. Canadian teenagers who report a parent who is inactive during leisure time are more likely to be inactive themselves. And if the parent smokes or eats fruits and vegetables infrequently, the teenager is likely to mirror these behaviours. Clearly, many factors influence the eating habits of teenagers. Another worth mentioning is the lack of knowledge about nutrition. Healthy eating receives little attention in secondary schools. While some teenagers spend a few classes discussing Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, others don't receive any nutrition education at all. It's time we start educating our youth about the importance of good nutrition. Nutrition topics need to be added to the school curriculum. We need to start teaching our kids important life skills such as grocery shopping, label reading, and meal planning. By becoming knowledgeable about nutrition and health, adolescents will be much more likely to take an interest in the foods they eat and make wiser choices when they eat away from home, be it the school cafeteria, the fast food restaurant, or the university dorm. And who knows, maybe as parents you'll be offered more enthusiastic help in the kitchen! That's where my book comes in to help educate parents and adolescents about healthy eating in today's fast-paced world. There isn't a book about nutrition out there that is specifically geared to adolescents. Sure, there are weight loss books for teens. But there's a whole lot more to teen nutrition than weight control strategies.

### Why This Book Is for All Parents of Preteens and Teenagers

To help determine what topics I needed to include in this book, I asked teenagers about their eating habits, their nutrition and food concerns, and their exercise habits. In this book, you'll find information that's relevant for all teenagers. In Part 1, Nutrition Basics, I include essential nutrition information for everyone. You'll learn all about vitamins and minerals (including supplements), carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. You'll also find a chapter on daily water requirements, which includes sections on caffeine and alcohol consumption. But that's just the start. In Part 2, Making Healthy Food Choices, I give you plenty of practical nutrition advice on helping your teen translate the nutrition basics into healthy food choices at the grocery store, at the school cafeteria, and the campus dining hall, in ethnic restaurants, and at fast food outlets. You'll even find kitchen tips to help busy teenagers prepare their own healthy meals and snacks.

### Part 3, Nutrition for Health and Fitness,

offers strategies for kids who need a little more personal nutrition coaching. You'll learn which nutrients need to be paid close attention to if your teenage son or daughter is a lacto-ovo vegetarian or a vegan. I also include a vegetarian food guide to help teens plan a nutritionally adequate diet. There's a chapter dedicated to helping overweight teens make better choices to achieve a healthy weight. And, of course, I've included a chapter on eating disorders, which are far more likely to affect adolescents than adults. And for those kids who are into sports in a big way, I've included a chapter on sports nutrition. It provides information that will help your child get the fuel he or she needs for the sport of choice, be it basketball, hockey, track and field, swimming, tennis, or dance. Over 65 Recipes to Keep Busy Teens and Parents Healthy Every recipe in this book comes from the Canadian Living Test Kitchen. That means they taste great, they're easy to prepare, and of course, they're good for you. Each recipe is accompanied by a nutrient analysis: a breakdown of its calories, fat, protein, fibre, and so on. You'll find recipes for great-tasting breakfasts on the go, bagged lunches, quick dinners on the fly, and plenty of snacks. There's no question that adopting a healthy lifestyle—even making small changes—can protect a teenager's future health. But healthy eating and becoming physically active (and not smoking) also have immediate benefits for teenagers. A healthy diet and active lifestyle can help teenagers to:

- Increase energy levels
- Improve mental performance
- Boost self-esteem
- Cope with stress and anxiety
- Prevent colds and flu
- Speed recovery from injuries and illness

Eating habits established during adolescence are often carried forward into adulthood. There's no question that a teenager's diet shapes his or her diet later in life. When it comes to getting teenagers, who are striving for independence, to eat healthfully, there's only so much that parents can do. The more we badger our kids about the eating habits they're not implementing, the more our kids will go the other way. Good nutrition is a shared responsibility between parent and child. As parents, we must try to understand our children's food choices and show respect for their ability to make independent decisions. It's critical that we educate our kids about healthy eating and exercise in a constructive manner. We must encourage and support healthy behaviours in our children by making healthy foods accessible at home and being good role models. Doing so will enable teenagers to make their own food choices with awareness and knowledge. As parents, that's the best we can do for our children. I truly hope this book helps you and your family adopt and follow a healthy diet. Once you read it, I encourage you to pass this book along to your son or daughter.

Leslie Beck, RD  
Toronto, 2005



I wanted this book to read with my son so he can understand and make better choices. However, this book refers to Canadian food recommendations, but facts are facts and it does have a lot of good info, especially of adults. But my 11 year old is a little over his head to understand and relate too. For a parent this book is a great reference, just ignore the reference to Canada. But not in the content for a kid to understand.

My preteen is able to read it and enjoying the information.

I bought it for my aunt and she has been reading it and it's been helpful for helping her daughter with her eating issues.

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