



# ADOLESCENCE

## WHAT IS IT?

Adolescence is the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood that generally occurs between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Adolescents will experience rapid growth and development, including significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes.

## GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

follow as you are able to

- Trust in your child's ability to self-regulate their feeding by recognizing their own hunger and satiety cues. Adolescents' appetites may increase as their bodies rapidly grow, and it is normal for some adolescents to 'jump' channels on the growth chart during this time.
- As your child gains independence, it can still be supportive to make family meals a priority and use mealtimes for connecting. Some find it helpful to create a schedule for sit-down family meal and snack times.
- Iron and calcium are two nutrients that are important as adolescents grow and develop. Food sources of iron include dark leafy greens, beans and legumes, fortified grains, and meat. High calcium sources include dairy, dark green vegetables, tofu, and beans. Talk with your dietitian if you would like to learn more about food sources of these nutrients.
- Allow your teen access to all types of foods. Regularly providing an unrestricted variety of food at meals and snacks can help your child develop a relaxed and competent attitude about all foods.
- Adolescents may become more preoccupied with body image during this time as their body rapidly changes. You can help your child develop a healthy relationship with their body by listening to their concerns, focusing on them as a whole person, and being a positive role model.

*\*If any of these suggestions are harmful to other aspects of you or your child's health, then do not engage in them.*

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Help your teen explore movement options that they enjoy. Movement can help strengthen bones, support mood, and boost confidence.
- The Ellyn Satter Institute (<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org>) has additional information for parents, families, and teens on building healthy relationships with food and movement through the Division of Responsibility.

## Remember

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others.

Be gentle with yourself.

## Goal

Self compassion and kindness towards your body

## Every body is different

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions

If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.



# TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors.  
Not all factors are within your control.  
It is important to consider all of these factors, not just food and movement choices, when exploring ways to improve your health.



## Psst..

Adolescence is a key time to support your child's connection to and respect for the wonder of their body. Practicing this yourself can make it easier to pass this down to your children as well.

#### References

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