

Importance of Food and Nutrition for Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

A short review of importance of food and nutrition for adolescents is described. Adolescent food habits frequently run counter to the special nutritional needs of this age group. Importance and effect of nutrient supplements on physical and mental health is discussed.

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Introduction

A healthy diet¹ requires eating various foods and consuming less salt, carbohydrates, and saturated and industrially-produced trans fats. It consists of a variety of foods, including cereals, starchy tubers, roots, legumes, fruits and veggies, and foods derived from animals. Read on to learn about the importance of food and nutrition for teenager. Adolescence is a period of rapid physiological, sexual, neurological, and behavioral changes, and it lays the foundation for adopting adult roles and responsibilities, including the transition to employment and financial independence, as well as the formation of life partnerships. Since it is a period of rapid growth, adequate nutrition is crucial for achieving full growth potential, and failure to achieve optimal nutrition may lead to delayed and stunted linear growth and impaired organ remodeling

The growth in adolescence requires rapid tissue expansion with special nutrient requirements, including amino acids for growth of striated muscle, as well as calcium and vitamin D to accommodate bone growth. Energy and nutrition requirements must match the needs of the adolescents as they typically engage in physical work or recreational exercise, which benefits striated muscle mass enlargement. Appetite increases during adolescence, and sedentary individuals are more likely to accumulate fat if they have access to high-energy food. Thus, low activity levels among adolescents are a key factor that underlies increases in adolescent obesity across the globe

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In addition to the physical changes that occur during adolescence, children's eating habits also shift. It is advisable to

consult with a healthcare physician before making major dietary adjustments or going on a special diet to ensure health and safety.



Figure 1.

Here are some reasons why ensuring healthy eating practices and nutrition throughout adolescence is crucial.

Improved Health: A balanced nutritious diet is necessary for optimal health and nutrition. A healthy lifestyle and appropriate nutrition can help prevent numerous chronic non-communicable diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Need of the Growing Body: During adolescence, a person's nutritional and dietary requirements alter due to physiological changes. Many adolescents undergo a growth spurt and an increase in appetite, necessitating the consumption of nutritious foods to meet their nutritional demands.

Improved Quality of Sleep: Sleep apnea is just one of many sleep disorders that can cause interruptions in one's regular sleep schedule. Factors like obesity² and alcohol consumption are other causes for concern that can lead to restless sleep³. Whether or not you suffer from sleep apnea, cutting back on your alcohol and caffeine use may help you get a better night's sleep.

Enhanced Mood: Research suggests that nutrition and mood are closely related. Researchers discovered in 2016 that meals⁴ with a high glycemic load might enhance symptoms of depression and fatigue in obese but otherwise healthy individuals. These foods include refined carbs, such as those found in white bread, cakes, and soft drinks⁵.

Improved Mental Health: The study also discovered a possible connection between healthier diets, such as the Mediterranean diet, and improved mental health. However, the opposite is true for diets rich in red meat, processed meals, and foods high in fat⁶.

Conclusion

Teenagers typically consume more meals away from home than younger children. In addition, they are greatly impacted by their classmates. Many adolescents value meal convenience, so they may consume an unhealthy amount of soft beverages, fast food, and processed foods.

Dieting is another major worry among teens as they may feel peer pressure to be slim and restrict their food intake. For all these reasons, it is important to understand that eating well is a crucial component of a healthy lifestyle and should be taught early.

Encourage your children to learn about the importance of food and nutrition and adopt healthy eating practices as they prepare to enter adulthood. Provide teen-oriented periodicals or books with food-related content and encourage and support their interest in health, cooking, or nutrition so that adolescents can learn about nutrition on their own.

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Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest to note.

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