

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Proper nutrition is especially crucial during the teen years, yet studies show that young adults are consuming more empty calories than ever before. Teens today eat about 150 more calories each day in snacks than they did twenty years ago. In fact, a typical teen consumes about 25 percent of their daily caloric allowance between meals! With obesity rates over two times what they were two decades ago, it is important that teens are knowledgeable about the foods they eat. Nutrition and healthful eating is the current focus of your teen's health class. Students will learn the six basic nutrients needed for growth and maintaining health and the foods from which they may be derived. They will examine the effects of healthful eating on body systems and the benefits of proper nutrition. In addition, your teen will learn to select healthful meals and snacks as part of a balanced diet.

Some of the questions your teen will explore as we study this chapter include: *What are the essential nutrients and how do they help the body function? How can I be sure that I'm receiving adequate nutrients? How can I develop a personal healthful eating plan? How do family, friends, and peers influence food choices? How are packaged and prepared foods labeled, and how can I use that information to make nutritional choices? What are foodborne illnesses and how can they be avoided?*

Your involvement and participation in your teen's health education is important. To extend our classroom work, please complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Discuss the value of proper nutrition. Ask your teen to examine his or her daily diet. Help your teen chart his or her food intake over a few days and analyze the results. Consider alternatives and encourage your teen to implement changes, adopting choices that create a more balanced and healthful diet.
- Ask your teen to explain factors that influence food choice. Discuss methods by which nutritional considerations can be included.
- Ask your teen to accompany you to the grocery store. Have him or her recommend the types of food necessary for proper nutrition. Let your teen use food labels to evaluate contents. Ask your teen to explain his or her selections.

Please plan other activities you think will help your son or daughter develop and maintain healthful habits and attitudes. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher