"TeenSpeak...
About Getting Fit

The Real Truth from Real Teens

TeenSpeak was created by and for teens like you.
Hear about health...in your own words.

Are you worried about your weight or trying to get healthy?

You're not alone!

We're **TeenSpeak,** and we live in New York City. We know it's not always easy to make healthy choices.

We also know there's not a lot out there that's written with us in mind! That's why we helped put this booklet together. (By the way...those photos? That is really us!)

If you want to get fit here's how to do it – let us know how it goes!*

TeenSpeak About...

* E-mail: teenspeak@health.nyc.gov
Or write to us at the address on the back cover

Healthy weight is a balancing act between the calories you eat and drink and the calories you burn.

Overweight

Too much food/ too many calories

Little or no exercise

Healthy Weight

Healthy eating habits

At least one hour of physical activity a day

Underweight

Too little food/ too few calories

Excessive exercise

Physical Activity

"Being active gives me more energy, not less. When I spend too much time just sitting around, that's when I feel lazy and tired." *Carlos, 16*

"I used to run out of breath and look like an idiot compared to other guys. I hated gym class! Then I met this girl and we started playing tennis. Now I try to do some physical activity every day because the feeling at the end is worth it. All I did was take small steps and meet someone who could help and encourage me. The best reward is being able to keep up with those guys who once laughed at me." *Erick, 18*

"On my walk to school I usually pretend that I'm late and run so that I can use the muscles in my legs and get a small workout." *David, 18*

"It's not that hard to do an hour of physical activity a day. I just go out and play sports with my friends or with people I meet in the park." *Jessica, 15*
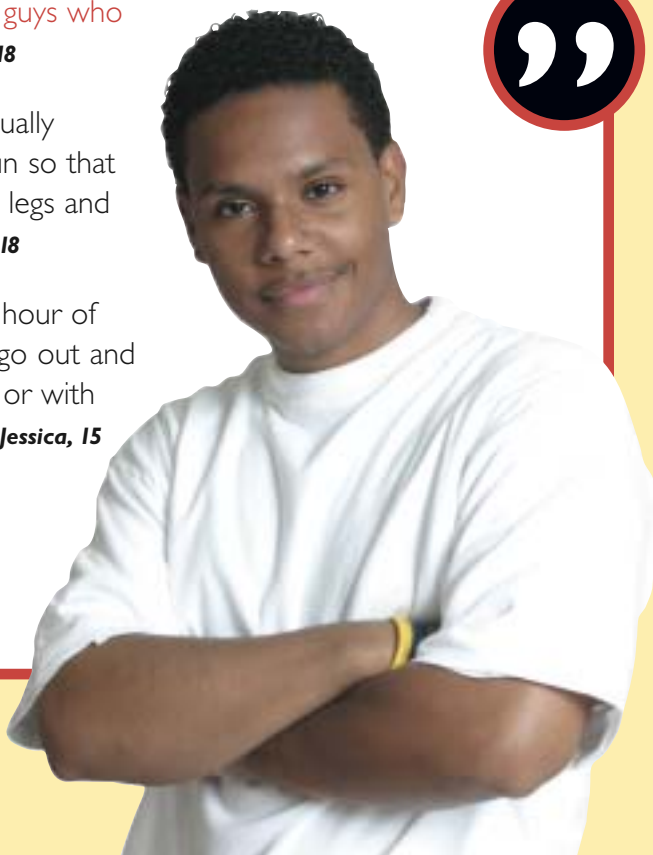
What You Can Do

- Get off the bus or subway one stop early and walk the rest of the way.

- Spend less time watching TV and playing computer and video games.

- Turn up your favorite music and DANCE!

- Get some friends together to play basketball, handball, baseball, soccer, or tennis in the park.

- Take advantage of gym class and free lunch periods. Put your heart into it.

- Join a sports team.

- Put down that cell phone! Grab a friend and talk while you walk.

- Walk the dog.

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

- Walk, run, swim, roller blade, or bike. Get a friend to join you!

New York City Takes the Lead...

- **More people in New York walk or bike than in any other U.S. city.**

- **Among all U.S. cities, New York has the 3rd highest amount of park land. Use some of it!**

TeenSpeak About...
Healthy Eating

"Most parents, like mine, fill up your plate with ridiculous amounts of food and don't let you get up from the table until it's all gone. Little by little, you get used to eating large portions. But more food isn't necessarily better. Smaller portions can be just as nutritious." *Elizabeth, 15*

"If I eat junk food, my body feels heavy and I have no energy. I found that eating good food can really help me feel energized." *Carlos, 16*

"People forget about having 5 servings of fruits or vegetables every day to get the vitamins and minerals that are essential for a healthy body." *Petry, 15*

"I stopped eating junk food and started eating Mom's healthier cooking. Now, I'm strong and fit and I'm looking like a model." *Shayanne, 17*

"I always felt weak. But just by increasing my calcium intake with low-fat dairy foods, I finally have the healthy body and beautiful nails I always wanted." *Jessica, 15*

What You Can Do

- **Eat smaller amounts.** Keeping portions small helps reduce calories. Cut down on fast food and non-diet soda and try healthier meals and water instead.

- **Eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.** Have a piece of fruit or some cut up veggies as a snack.

- **Switch to low-fat (1% or less) dairy products.** Try low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk and low-fat yogurt, cheese, and frozen yogurt.

Healthy Eating Tips

| For…	❌ Instead of…	✅ Try…
Breakfast	❌ Sugary cereals with whole milk	✅ Whole-grain cereals with low-fat (1%) or skim milk.
	❌ Sugar-packed fruit juices	✅ A piece of fresh fruit.
	❌ Fried eggs and sausage or bacon	✅ A small omelet with veggies or low-fat yogurt with fruit.
	❌ Donuts, muffins, or buttered white toast	✅ Whole-wheat toast or a bagel with jelly.
Snacks	❌ Chips, candy or cookies	✅ Pretzels, low-fat popcorn, baby carrots, fresh or dried fruit, and low-fat yogurt.
Meals	❌ Non-diet soda or other drinks with added sugar	✅ Water, low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice, or diet soda.
	❌ A lot of fast food	✅ Eating less fast food (no more than once a week). Avoid high fat toppings like mayo and sour cream. Try salad with light dressing, and order small portions.
	❌ Eating large portions	✅ Eating smaller amounts. Check serving sizes. Packaged foods often contain several servings, which means extra calories if you eat the whole thing. If you eat out, split a meal with a friend or set aside part of your meal to take home.

TeenSpeak About...
Soda

"I used to drink lots of soda and juice, and hardly any water. Now I have diabetes. I have to stop myself from eating sugar because I need to keep my blood sugar level under control." *Carlos, 16*

"Most people grab a soda instead of water when they are thirsty. With so many soda ads, it makes sense that we automatically pick soda over water, even though water is a better choice." *David, 18*

"I always ordered a soda with everything I ate. Recently, however, I began breaking out horribly. I was willing to try anything to clear my skin. To my surprise, after I quit soda and started drinking water, my pimples almost disappeared. I feel better than ever."
Chanely, 13
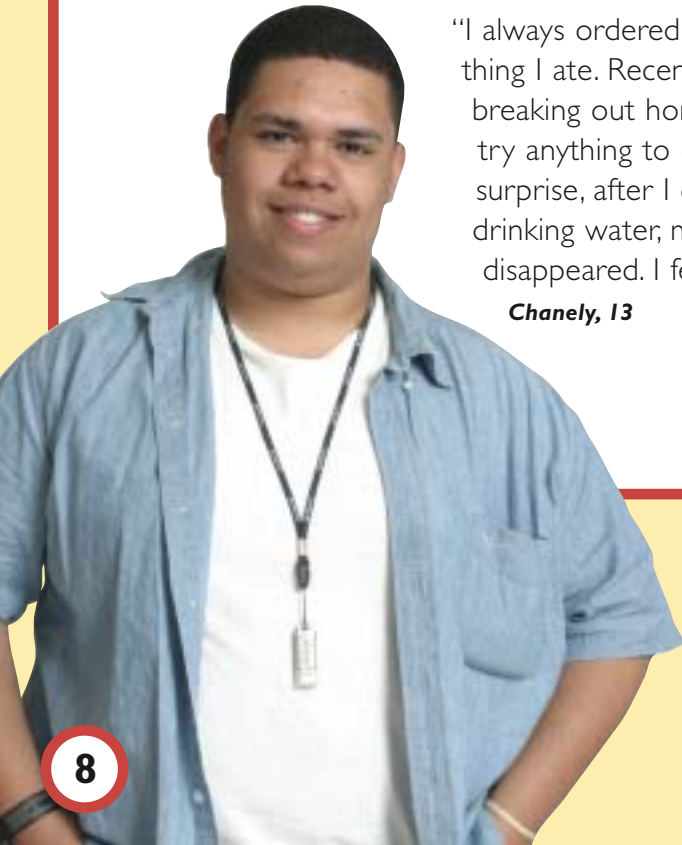
What You Can Do

- **Drink water instead of soda.** You can get used to drinking more water just the way you got used to drinking soda. Or switch to seltzer, diet soda, or diet drinks.

- Consider soda a treat. Cut down to one can a week.

- Drink low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk in place of soda.

People say NYC has the best tap water around. Every day the city supplies 1.2 billion gallons of free drinking water.

DON'T SELL OUT!

Soft-drink companies spend over $700 million a year trying to sell YOU on their products.

SUGAR LOAD

- The average teen soda-drinker consumes more than 750 cans or 70 gallons of soda a year.
- A can of non-diet soda has about 100 calories and 7 teaspoons of sugar. Over a year, that is equivalent to **20 pounds of body weight** from sugar calories.

Giving up non-diet soda is an easy way to lose extra pounds!

"Lately, I have not eaten fast food as often even though it is one of my favorite kinds of food! I used to eat it more than once a week. Then I saw a documentary on fast food. I saw the damage it can do to a person's body, and how eating too much fast food can make a person go from healthy to overweight. So teens should eat less fast food and maybe more vegetables." *Jessica, 15*

"Before, I just ate fried chicken and french fries. I felt like a pregnant lady. But now because I control my weight by eating vegetables and healthier foods like low-fat yogurt, cheese, and milk, I feel like a model." *Chanely, 13*

"I always used to skip the food at school and go home and eat junk food. I gained 20 pounds in 3 months. You don't want to make the same mistake I did." *Dede, 15*

What You Can Do

- Eat less fast food (no more than once a week).

- Order small or regular sizes instead of large and extra-large portions.

- Avoid high-fat, high-calorie toppings (like mayo and regular salad dressing) or order them on the side.

- Replace fries with a side salad and light dressing.

- Choose grilled foods over fried ones.

- Drink water, low-fat milk, or diet soda instead of non-diet soda.

NOT SO FAST...

A large fast food meal can have up to 1,500 calories. That is almost 75% of your calorie needs for the whole day! It only takes 5 minutes to eat, but it would take 4 hours of basketball or 3 hours of jogging to burn those calories!

PORTION DISTORTION

20 years ago, an average order of french fries had 210 calories; today it has 610 calories. The average cheese-burger went from 333 calories to 590 calories today.

Watch out for portion distortion: order small portions and eat smaller amounts.

20 years ago

Today

210 *calories*

VS.

610 *calories*

333 *calories*

VS.

590 *calories*

Recipes

You're hungry and want something fast.
Try these quick, easy and healthy recipes:

Chilled Strawberry-Banana Smoothie

Great for breakfast on the go, an after-school treat,
or as a refresher after exercise

- 1 banana
- 4 medium strawberries
- 1 cup low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla (optional)
- 1/2 cup ice cubes

Put the fruit, milk, and vanilla in a blender and blend until smooth.
Add ice cubes. Pour into a tall glass and enjoy!
Mix it up: Instead of banana and strawberries, try blueberries, mango, or
some other combination of fruits you like. Be creative!
NOTE: This can be made with 1 cup of low-fat vanilla yogurt instead of milk.

Fast Tuna Wrap

For a delicious and nutritious lunch

- 1 tortilla or wrap
- 1 can of tuna (6-oz.) packed in water, drained
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt or fat-free mayo
- Juice from 1/2 lemon
- 1 carrot, grated or finely chopped
- 1/4 cup bean sprouts
- 1 leaf of Romaine lettuce, washed

Combine tuna, yogurt, and juice of the lemon. Spread the mixture on the
tortilla. Sprinkle on grated carrot and bean sprouts and top with the lettuce
leaf. Fold 2 edges of the wrap into the middle and roll up lengthwise.
Wrap in foil or plastic wrap, and your lunch is ready to go!

Roasted Red Pepper Dip

Satisfy a snack-attack for you and some friends

> 1/2 cup roasted almonds
> 1 cup drained roasted red peppers from jar
> 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
> 1 large garlic clove, peeled
> Lots of veggies - baby carrots, celery sticks, cucumber slices, broccoli florets, bell peppers, etc.

Finely chop almonds in blender or food processor. Add roasted peppers, vinegar, and garlic, and puree mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Enjoy with your favorite cut-up vegetables. Store leftover dip in the refrigerator.

Santa-Fe Quesadilla

For a healthy dinner that goes beyond the microwave

> Vegetable oil cooking spray
> 1 tortilla or wrap
> 1/4 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
> 1/4 cup corn, drained
> 1/4 cup diced red bell pepper
> 1/4 cup black beans, drained
> 1 chopped green onion
> 2 tablespoons salsa (any kind you like)
> 2 tablespoons low-fat sour cream (optional)

Evenly coat the bottom of a non-stick frying pan with cooking spray. Place tortilla in the pan and heat over medium heat for about 30 seconds. Flip the tortilla and heat the other side. Spread the cheese over the entire surface of the tortilla. Top the cheese with corn, red bell pepper, black beans, and green onion. When the cheese is completely melted, carefully slide the tortilla from the pan onto a plate and fold the tortilla in half. Slice into wedges and serve warm with salsa and sour cream.

Mix it up: Customize the fillings with other veggies like chopped broccoli, spinach, or tomatoes. You're the chef!

NOTE: For added convenience, look for a combination of frozen veggies in the freezer section. Thaw and substitute 3/4 cup in this recipe.

TeenSpeak About...
TV

"I didn't tell anyone, but I was depressed. My confidence was in the garbage. I watched TV because the TV never laughed at me or made jokes. One day, I just broke down crying and wanted to get it all out. I started running fast nowhere in particular, and then realized running was far better than TV. The more I ran, the more social I became. In fact, running even helped me acknowledge my depression. Running saved me." *Kirvia, 14*

"You feel ten times better when you play basketball or baseball for an hour than when you watch TV for the same amount of time. We're so used to turning on the television when we're bored that we don't even think of going to the park."
Kavaughn, 16

"I used to watch around 5 hours of TV a day. But now that I limit it to one hour a day, I have time to spend with my friends and to do all my schoolwork."
Elizabeth, 15

What You Can Do

- Limit TV and video games to no more than 1 hour a day.

- Have fun in other ways: get a group together to play basketball or grab a friend and talk while you walk.

- Avoid channel-surfing and excessive TV time by selecting a few favorite programs each week.

- Instead of just sitting, do push-ups or sit-ups while watching TV.

- Don't eat while watching TV.

PRIME TIME

The average teen spends more than 3 hours a day watching TV or playing video and computer games. That adds up to almost 7 weeks a year. Being a couch potato keeps you from hanging out with friends and being active.
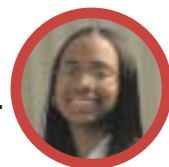
8 Habits of
Healthy Teens

1. Spend at least 1 hour a day being physically active.

2. Limit use of TV and video games to no more than 1 hour a day. Don't eat while watching TV.

3. Eat smaller amounts. Bigger is not always better!

4. Drink water instead of soda.

5. Eat a total of 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

6. Eat less fast food (no more than once a week).

7. Snack on healthy foods and eat less junk food and sweets.

8. Switch to low-fat (1% or less) dairy products.