

# Teens First

March 2018



A publication of **Texas Children's Health Plan CHIP and STAR Members** ages 13-18 and their parents.

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MK-0318-281



Be Active!  
Stay Healthy!  
Keep Fit!



Do you want to learn fun, easy ways to stay active and make smart food choices? Then Texas Children's Health Plan's Keep Fit Program is for you!

The Keep Fit Program offers:

- Four health and fitness sessions
- Health coaching
- At home workout materials
- A quarterly newsletter
- All at no cost to your family!

The Keep Fit Program is available to Texas Children's Health Plan members ages 10-18 with a BMI of 20+.

Sign up: [TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/KeepFit](http://TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/KeepFit)

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# Get up and go!

When it comes to making healthy choices, regular exercise and movement is just as important as eating healthy foods. You should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. That might sound like a lot, but are three types of physical activity that can add up to one hour: aerobic, moderate, and routine.



## Aerobic activity

means any exercise that makes you breathe harder and speeds up your heart rate, like jogging, biking, dancing, swimming, or playing basketball. Try and include aerobic activities into your day at least three times per week.



## Moderate activity

is exercise that doesn't get your heart rate up as much as aerobic activity, but still gets you up and moving in a healthy way. You can walk your dog, climb up and down stairs, bike on flat streets or paths, or hit a tennis ball back and forth with a friend.



## Routine activity

can include household chores like cleaning your room, taking out the trash, or walking to get the mail. You can also try parking in a far spot at the grocery store or the mall so that you have a longer walk to the front entrance. Routine activities won't get you breathing hard like aerobic or moderate ones, but they are great ways to stay active on a regular basis.

## March is National Nutrition Month!

This month is dedicated to health awareness, which means making positive changes to your eating choices and your physical activity. Making healthy choices in your teens will help you live a happier, healthier life in the future!

Source: NIDDK.NIH.gov

# 5 Healthy Snack Hacks

Eating healthy doesn't mean giving up delicious snacks! Follow these easy tips to give your snacking style a healthy makeover.

- **PLAN AHEAD** – Portion your snacks into containers or baggies so they're ready to grab when you're on the go.
- **BUILD YOUR OWN** – Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts and add-ins like dried fruit, popcorn, seeds, or a small handful of chocolate chips.
- **EAT VIBRANT VEGGIES** – Add spice to your favorite raw vegetables with fun and tasty dips. Try pairing cucumbers, bell peppers, or carrots with hummus, guacamole, non-fat dressing, or tzatziki.
- **MAKE IT A COMBO** – Combine food groups for a satisfying snack. Think apple slices with peanut butter, whole-grain crackers with sliced turkey and avocado, or non-fat yogurt with fresh berries.
- **SNACK ON THE GO** – Bring ready-to-eat snacks along with you when you're away from home. Baby carrots, a banana, or yogurt (in a small cooler or insulated bag) are a few perfectly portable options.

Source: ChooseMyPlate.gov



*Remember – your activities add up!*

You don't have to fit your 60 minutes a day in all at once to feel the benefits of getting and staying active. Choose several activities to do throughout the day and don't be afraid to change it up!

# 4 secrets to sleeping smarter

Getting enough sleep is just as important to your overall well-being as healthy eating and exercise. Doctors agree that teenagers should get at least 9 hours of sleep each night. Often, teens don't get the sleep they need because of school, work, social, and family demands. To succeed in school, drive safely, and fight off being sick, you should always try and get the sleep your mind and body need.



Follow these simple tips and you'll be sleeping smarter in no time!



## Get regular exercise

60 minutes of physical activity each day will help you fall asleep more easily and stay asleep.



## Limit your caffeine

Caffeine can disrupt your sleep, so avoid eating or drinking anything with caffeine in the evening. Sodas, coffee-based drinks, iced tea, energy drinks, and chocolate all contain caffeine.



## Don't smoke or drink alcohol

Teenagers should avoid smoking and drinking alcohol for many health-related reasons, but you may not know that these substances can also affect your sleep. Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is a stimulant and can keep you awake at night. Alcohol, sleeping pills, or other sleeping aids can also disrupt your sleep.



## Give yourself daily winding-down time

Spend up to one hour before bedtime listening to quiet music, reading, or relaxing to prep your mind and body for sleep. Try to avoid watching TV, using the computer, scrolling through your phone, or studying during your quiet time.

Source: [My.ClevelandClinic.org](http://My.ClevelandClinic.org)

### Did you know?

Driving when you haven't gotten enough sleep can be as dangerous as driving after drinking. Sleep deprivation has a similar effect on your body to drinking alcohol - one more reason why sleep is important to your health and safety.

Source: [SleepFoundation.org](http://SleepFoundation.org)

# Acne myths

Acne is a normal part of being a teenager and it can be tempting to try anything to cure it. There are a lot of myths about acne treatment and prevention out there, and some of them can hurt your skin instead of helping it.

Here are some common acne myths and why they're more fiction than fact.

## Myth #1

### Tanning clears up skin.

A tan might hide acne for a little while, but the sun can dry and irritate the skin, leading to more breakouts later. There is no link between sun exposure and acne prevention, but too much sun can cause early aging and skin cancer. Protect your skin by wearing a noncomedogenic/nonacnegenic (won't clog your pores) sunscreen of at least SPF 15.

If you're still struggling with acne, talk to your primary care doctor or ask your parent or guardian to take you to see a dermatologist to find a solution to your skin problems.

Source: KidsHealth.org

## Myth #2

### The more you wash your face, the less you'll break out.

Washing your face too much can dry and irritate your skin, leading to more breakouts. Scrubbing your skin can also cause more breakouts. Wash your face twice a day with a mild cleanser and water in a circular motion, then gently pat dry with a clean towel.

## Myth #3

### Popping pimples will help them go away faster.

Popping a pimple can actually keep it around longer, because squeezing pimples and zits can push bacteria, dead skin cells, and oil further into the skin. All of this causes more redness and swelling, and can even cause a red or brown mark or scar to form.



# Blueberry banana breakfast smoothie

## What you need:

- ½ cup frozen unsweetened blueberries
- ½ medium banana, sliced
- ¾ cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- ¾ cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk (you can also use dairy milk or soy milk)
- 2 cups ice

## What you do:

1. Place blueberries, banana slices, Greek yogurt, and almond milk in a blender and pulse until smooth.
2. Add ice and pulse until smooth. You can adjust the amount of ice you use, depending on how thick you like your smoothies.
3. Enjoy!

Source: AmysHealthyBaking.com



The Texas Children's Health Plan T-shirt Design Contest is officially closed - we're working hard to choose the winning designs that will appear on a Texas Children's Health Plan t-shirt! The winners will be announced in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. If you didn't get a chance to enter your drawing this year, be on the lookout for next year's contest!