

Talking About Nutrition With Your Teen

During teenage years, adolescents become more independent in their food choices, often influenced by peers, media, and growing autonomy. As a parent, your role in shaping their eating habits is still important. Even if it feels like they are not listening, they are still noticing what you say and paying attention to how you approach food and mealtimes. Every family is unique, and the best approach may vary for each teen. Here are a few tips to help with sometimes tricky conversations.

Use neutral language

"Different foods provide our body with different nutrients"

Instead of labelling food as good or bad, focus on what the food provides your body and how it makes you feel.

Respect their choices

"It's up to you how much you have on your plate, you know your appetite best"

Involve your teen in decisions about what and how much to eat, giving them space to make their own choices.

Listen first

"What have you seen online lately about food, or heard from peers at school?"

Listening to your teen's views on nutrition helps them feel heard and more open to your guidance.

Share the "why"

"Eating breakfast will help you to concentrate in class and have more energy for sport"

Connecting food to how it fuels their day is more motivating than focusing on long-term health effects.

All foods fit

"We can include all foods as part of a balanced diet"

Share that no single food makes or breaks their overall eating pattern, and all foods can be included in moderation.

Extending beyond conversations

- Sharing meals together helps create routine and encourages regular eating times.
- Providing a variety of healthy food options at home makes it easier for teens to make their own balanced choices.
- Being aware of their overall wellbeing as food concerns are often linked with situations at school, with friendships, or stress.