

# TEENS MATTER

## A PARENTING TEENS DIGEST

Boone County Step Ahead Council

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Chinese Proverb: To understand your parents' love you must raise children yourself.

### ***AN INCREASINGLY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN AMERICA: TEEN OBESITY***

The information in this article is not intended as a substitute for the expertise and judgment of qualified health-care professionals. You should consult with a health-care provider about all health-care issues.

With social engagements, fast food restaurants on every corner, the Internet, TV, a lack of healthy awareness and a host of distracting activities, it is no wonder that our children are fighting obesity. As much as we would like to blame the unhealthy dietary cuisine that today's teen prefer, national data from various government agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and researchers at the University of North Carolina compared trends in calorie intake, obesity and physical activity for students from 12-19 years of age over a 20 year period.<sup>1</sup> That study shows that the caloric intake of individuals has not deviated much at all but physical activity has dropped significantly. The statistics show that only 29% of young people today participate in at least 30 minutes of exercise compared to 42% in the 1980's.<sup>2</sup>

These figures are staggering and with the lack of enthusiasm from today's teens and the sedentary adult population, this number will only become increasingly more devastating. This ought to raise many concerns for the parents of these teens (and the teens themselves), which will hopefully have them take stock in the fact that their health needs to be addressed.

Here are some things to consider when someone you love is obese.

According to the National Institute of Health, 280,000 adult deaths each year in the U.S. are related to obesity. Remember, today's youth becomes tomorrow's adults and people who are overweight or obese have an increased health risk for chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease, stroke and heart disease. If that is not tangible enough for someone who is obese to be proactive, then consider the current emotional status of most obese teens.

They are generally less outgoing, feel intimidated or "less accepted" by their peers, generally their overall confidence is lower and can suffer from emotional diseases such as depression. This in turn can cause them to eat even more. It is time for us to make an effort to stop the vicious cycle of teen (and adult) obesity and encourage the future of our nation to take stock in themselves and their health. Those of you who are the guardians of these children must lead by example, encourage children (obese or not) to partake in daily physical activity, eat a healthy diet and make a pledge to each other to work together to succeed at your goal.

*Article written by Fred Fornicola-Premiere Personal Fitness.*

A fad diet, which severely limits or completely eliminates a food group, is not a good idea for anyone. Fortunately schools are becoming involved by offering students more healthy choices for lunch and many fast food restaurants are offering grilled sandwiches, salads, milk, and fruit. **MODERATION** is the key word!!!

### **A RECIPE FOR BLACK GHOUL-AID HALLOWEEN DRINK**

This recipe makes black Halloween punch for your party. It is made with Kool-aid and is inexpensive. Tip – Serve the drink in a large black bowl to simulate a cauldron.

- 1 envelope of orange Kool-Aid – unsweetened
- 1 envelope of grape Kool-Aid – unsweetened
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 quart (bottle) chilled Sprite, 7-up or ginger ale
- 3 quarts of cold water

Mix the Kool-Aid packets together with the sugar and water in a large pitcher(s). Before serving, add the Sprite. Serve over ice cubes.

### **HAPPY HALLOWEEN**



The following articles were taken from the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service Web Site. # NCR-118. ***Living with your teenager: Understanding Physical Changes***

<sup>1</sup> IDEA Health & Fitness Source 9/2003

<sup>2</sup> IDEA Health & Fitness Source 9/2003

*There's No Set  
Timetable for  
Change*

When your child was quite small, you were constantly reminded not to compare him or her to the child next door. Babies begin to walk

and talk at different ages and, unless a child is seriously "off schedule" or has noticeable problems, the parent need not worry if the child develops certain skills sooner or later than other children. The same advice holds true for teenagers. As people mature, there is even greater variability in their abilities and their size. For example, tall and short fourth graders may differ by only a few inches, while tall and short men may differ by a foot or more. The age, which young people begin to mature, varies greatly although the growth spurt begins earlier, the rate of growth is faster, and maximum growth is reached about 2 years earlier than it was 2 or 3 generations ago. The variability among individuals may cause great concern to teen, especially those who are maturing much earlier or much later than most of their friends. The teens that are waiting for that more mature look may suffer a great lack of self-confidence and worry about "lateness." On the other hand, the early maturing boy or girl also stands out and may be additionally burdened by expectations that since he or she looks like an adult his or her behavior will also be adult-like. The informed, concerned parent can do a great deal-through sympathy and reassurance- to help the young teen get through this difficult time until he or she begins to look more like everyone else. Your teen is now or will soon be going through one of the most exciting and frightening periods of life. Your support and concern at this time can do a great deal to cement happy relationships, which will continue through the years of growth and change ahead.

**PHYSICAL CHANGE  
CAN CAUSE  
EMOTIONAL UPSET**

The physical growth of the child is triggered by the appearance in the

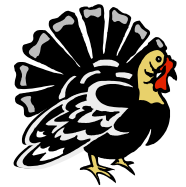
body of certain hormones, which stimulate the body to grow and change. It is useful for both you and your child to know and remember that these hormones are known to affect moods as well as physical growth. It is quite common for young teens to be very worried about their feelings. One girl said, "Some days I'm way up and other days I'm way down, and the way I feel doesn't seem to have much to do with what's going on around me. It really scares me that I have feelings that come from nowhere." Once the effects of hormones on moods were explained to her, she was much less frightened of her feelings. It may be important to your child to have this information.

The sudden and extreme growth that the child goes through often can cause problems with coordination. It

is not uncommon to hear a parent complain of a child who suddenly becomes so clumsy that he or she "trips over the linoleum." This problem is caused partly by the general change in the body, which takes getting used to, and partly by the fact that different parts of the body grow at different rates. Hands and feet, for example, grow much faster than legs and arms. Consider the problems you would have if your feet grew from their present size 6 to size 9 in the next six months. Features of the face also grow at different rates, so that a young teen who is convinced that his/her nose is too big may be quite right for a time. Soon, however, the rest of his or her facial features will grow in proportion and that nose won't seem so large. Just as knowing these facts may help you to be more tolerant of your awkward child, it may also help your child be less concerned about temporary physical "problems."

## The History of *Thanksgiving*

A Meal Without Forks-Mayflower Myths and Pilgrim Interviews



Ever wonder what the pilgrims and their Native American guests *really* ate at the first feast? The truth may surprise you. Contrary to popular belief, they didn't sit down to a meal featuring turkey, corn, cranberries, and pumpkin pie (in fact, they didn't even have forks!). Nor did the pilgrims dress exclusively in black and white and show up wearing shoes and hats adorned with buckles. So what did they eat and wear? Travel back to Plymouth and hear from some pilgrims to find out what the original celebration was actually like!

Tune in to The History Channel on Tuesday, November 25, for Home for the Holidays: The History of Thanksgiving at 7pm ET/PT and learn about the origins of our holiday traditions and rituals.

## Roasted Pumpkins Seeds

After retrieving your pumpkin seeds you may or may not decide to wash them before roasting. Keep in mind that if you do decide to wash them first, this will remove some of the natural flavor. It's just a preference.

Spray a cookie sheet with no-stick cooking spray and spread seeds evenly on sheet. Very lightly spray the seeds with cooking spray. Put them in the oven and bake at 300 degrees for about 35 minutes, until they are a toasted, golden brown. Salt the seed to your preference and consider adding additional seasoning and spices such as garlic salt, Worcestershire, Cajun or accent seasoning.

Allow the roasted pumpkin seeds to cool before eating. Store in an airtight container or bag for up to a week to retain flavor and freshness.