

# **FOOD FACTS FOR TEENAGERS**



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Second Edition

# FOOD FACTS FOR TEENAGERS

A Guide to Good Nutrition for  
Teens and Preteens

*By*

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*Dedicated to teenagers around the world.*

## FOREWORD

**H**aving healthy children is a wish of all parents. However, teenagers generally fail to realize the extent to which the food they eat will affect the health of their own future children.

As a psychologist, I am pleased to see a book which speaks to the adolescent population in a way that addresses both their current interests and their future needs. In a clear and engaging style, Margaret Belais Salmon explains how a proper diet can help the teenager to look and feel better, and at the same time offers compelling information that can impact the rest of their lives as well as the lives of their children.

Donald R. Salmon, M.M., Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist

## PREFACE

This book has information which helps fill the gap between modern food technology and nutrition, and the use of this knowledge by teenagers. Boys and girls are very much aware of the wonders of present day technology. They want accurate scientific information to help them in various space age ventures. Many know that vital nutrients in the foods they eat affect their appearance, strength, endurance and resistance to disease. Many do *not* know that foods affect their personalities, mental performance and the health of their future children. Teenage girls often have not been told that those who are poorly nourished during the teen years will have babies with more congenital abnormalities, lower pediatric ratings, and more stillborn and premature births than girls who are well-fed *regardless* of how carefully they eat during pregnancy. They will have more complications before, during and after pregnancy.

The field of nutrition and food chemistry has become so complex that it is difficult for teenagers to take advantage of information now available. Many popular beliefs about foods are based on superstitions rather than scientific truths and many are too complicated to be useful. In this book only the most important food facts are presented. Simple, quick methods for calculating vitamin, mineral and calorie content of foods are described. Suggestions for economical eating are given, as well as inexpensive low calorie recipes. Medical checkups by a physician rather than self-medication are stressed.

Since a student's physical appearance and his or her performance in sports and school work are affected by food intake over *long* periods of time, the prime goal of this book is to encourage *consistently* good food habits. Crash diets commonly practiced before weighing in for sports or beauty contests are a stress on the body and never need to be resorted to if eating patterns are brought up-to-date.

Although the teenage period is only one-tenth of a person's life, during this time there is a fifty percent increase in weight, a thirty-three percent increase in surface area and a twenty percent increase in height. Teenagers not only grow rapidly, but they are often extremely active, so their need for many essential nutrients is greater throughout the teen years than in any other stage of life.

The author is grateful to Betty L. Wilk, editorial consultant and designer of the cover and graphic illustrations.

M.B.S



## INTRODUCTION

### ARE YOU WHAT YOU EAT?

*If you are what you eat,  
When you dine be discreet!*

**W**hat can foods do for *you*? Is it true that “you are what you eat?” Can the foods you eat affect your ability to think, see, and hear? Your appearance? Your height and weight? Even your disposition and attitudes? They can and they do. In the pages that follow, you will discover that your ability to win a race, succeed on an examination, or qualify for a beauty contest depends, in part, not only on your meal immediately before the big event, but also on your eating habits for days and even years before. You will find out that every time you eat, you are literally building your future for better or for worse. *Most important of all*, you will be surprised to see that the most delicious foods are often the least expensive and the most nourishing.

All over the world, teenagers are pursuing the marvels of science—its effect on people and on their manner of living. In Sussex County, New Jersey, teenagers conducted a careful study of the food habits of high school students.<sup>1</sup> When they found how poor food habits were, they started a nutrition club called **THE NUTRITION COUNCIL**. Here they accumulated accurate, scientific information about nutrition. Many teenagers became members, and **THE NUTRITION COUNCIL** soon was the latest *fad*. In the Council, the boys and girls learned about the importance of starting their day with a hearty breakfast which many students had been skipping. They became aware of the effect of present food habits on their future. They served nourishing breakfasts at school to students unable to eat at home. Most exciting of all, they were amazed to discover that eight out of eleven of the boys who made the football team were active members of **THE NUTRITION COUNCIL**! Boys on the wrestling team had more pep

and endurance. Many of the students in the club achieved normal weight—many maintained it! The students felt better, and they looked better too.

Knowledge about foods is accumulating with breathtaking speed. As many as one-third to one-half of the items you see in the supermarkets today were not there five years ago. How do the new products compare with foods of the nineteenth century? Which have the most vitamins? Minerals? Is there any one *wonder food*? These and other scientific mysteries are slowly being unraveled and solved. With each discovery it becomes more apparent that modern nutrition can benefit us in many ways. Clearly, a person who is well nourished *throughout life* has a great advantage over one who is not.

## ENDNOTES

1. Data presented at Horace Mann Auditorium, Columbia University, May 8, 1963, by two teenage boys and two teenage girls, under the guidance of Rosemary Milby, District Consultant, Public Health Nutritionist, State Nutrition Department, New Jersey.

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