



## Health & Adolescents

By

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When we are young, we thought we were indestructible. If we inherited good genes, our bodies were able to put up with many of the detrimental things we put them through. If not so lucky, we paid the consequences – and will continue to pay throughout life. Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease (CVD), and obesity, for example, are plaguing today's youth. Now is the time to make changes, both for a healthy retirement and to ensure we continue to lead a productive life! If we cannot undo our wrongs, at least we can prevent further damage.

Our society sets bad examples. The media constantly hypes body-image through commercials touting diets, exercise, and drugs that promote weight loss. We are barraged by ads featuring tasty snack foods. Putting soda in our school was a great blunder, for the sugar it contains can lead to diabetes and obesity, while the phosphoric acid content hastens the onset of osteoporosis.

Our mantra should be "prevention". Pharmaceuticals and surgical procedures can only deal with the aftermath. For weight loss, the focus should be on proper nutritional guidance. (Personally, I hate the term diet.) Believe it or not, we can eat to lose! A few basic tips and strict compliance can give you the results you desire – and you won't even feel deprived:

1. No eating after 9 PM.
2. Don't take the whole bag of snacks, just dole out a measured amount. ("Miniatures" are a great selling ploy but are otherwise terrible; you never realize how much you're eating until your hand dips into an empty bag.)
3. Never mix carbohydrates and fat.
4. Read labels! Low fat means high carbohydrates. ("Carbs" should never exceed 6 grams/serving.)
5. No desserts immediately after a meal; wait an hour or two.
6. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. When eating salad, watch the dressings! Vinegar and olive oil is preferable.
7. Exercise! (You do not need a gym membership. Simply, move around. You are made to be mobile – and immobility leads to joint problems.)

A ratio of protein to fat to carbohydrates per day is 40g:35g:25g for weight loss. Watch out for the empty calories (chips, French fries and the like).

Our youth faces challenges with drugs, alcohol and steroids. In fact, alcohol and steroid abuse is rising at an alarming rate. Just watch the news! It is up to parents, educators, sports and movie stars, and the media to act as role models and to educate kids about the ruin that attends the misuse of drugs and alcohol. A few nutritional aids, such as multivitamins, Brewer's yeast, herbs and teas, can go a long way to a happier and healthier life. Moderation is really the key; too much of anything can be bad.

Also, have you ever noticed how significantly book bags weigh students down? Our kids are not combat marines. What do they need for class? Working at a computer, playing video games, and sitting improperly in class can lead to poor posture and can result in a myriad of problems. Ergonomics must be stressed during all activities.

Exercise must be performed with proper form. The amount of weight used during weight training should be sufficient to yield strength and muscle mass, yet not so much that it leads to injury. If you abuse your body and wear it out, what else are you going to use?