

THRIVE NUTRITION GUIDE FOR TEENS

Fuel Your Body, Fuel Your Life



WHY NUTRITION MATTERS FOR TEENS:

Your body and brain are still **growing** and **changing** — and the foods you eat give you the power to do everything you love.

Good nutrition helps you:

- 🌱 Have more energy for sports, activities, and school.
- 🌱 Focus better and stay calmer during stress.
- 🌱 Build strong muscles and bones for a lifetime of health.
- 🌱 Balance your moods and feel better mentally.

Nutrition isn't about being "perfect" — it's about giving your body the support it needs to THRIVE!

HOW DIFFERENT FOODS AFFECT YOUR BODY:

FOOD GROUP:

Proteins

(chicken, beans, tofu, eggs)



WHAT IT DOES:

Build muscles, help your brain send messages, keep your immune system strong.

Fruits & Veggies

(berries, spinach, carrots)



Pack your body with vitamins and antioxidants to protect cells and boost mood.

Healthy Fats

(avocados, olive oil, nuts)



Fuel your brain and nervous system, important for focus and memory.

Whole Grains

(brown rice, oats, quinoa)



Provide steady energy so you don't crash or feel sluggish.

Water



Keeps your brain sharp, your skin healthy, and your body moving smoothly.

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SPECIAL FOCUS: NUTRITION, ADHD, AND ANXIETY:

Did you know that nutrition can **directly** impact ADHD symptoms and anxiety levels?

ADHD AND NUTRITION:

Research shows that:

- Steady blood sugar (eating regular meals with protein and fiber) helps reduce impulsivity and focus challenges.
- Omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish like salmon, or supplements) can improve attention and emotional regulation.
- Artificial colors and processed sugars may worsen hyperactivity in some people.

TIPS FOR TEENS WITH ADHD:

- Eat small meals/snacks every 2-3 hours to avoid crashes.
- Include a protein (like nuts or yogurt) with every snack.
- Try adding more omega-3s through foods or supplements (ask a doctor first!).

ANXIETY AND NUTRITION:

Research shows that:

- Low blood sugar can trigger panic-like symptoms (shakiness, irritability, fast heartbeat).
- Magnesium-rich foods (like leafy greens, almonds) and probiotics (like yogurt and kefir) can help calm the nervous system.
- Caffeine and highly processed foods can worsen anxiety symptoms.

TIPS FOR TEENS WITH ANXIETY:

- Start your day with a balanced breakfast (protein + whole grain).
- Keep hydrated (dehydration can mimic anxiety symptoms!).
- Limit energy drinks, soda, and coffee.

A WORD OF CAUTION - TRACKING APPS & CALORIE COUNTING:

Apps like MyFitnessPal can sometimes cause **more harm than good**, especially for teens!

Research shows that:

- Tracking calories closely can increase risk for disordered eating behaviors like binge eating, food obsession, or restrictive eating.
- Teens who use calorie-tracking apps are more likely to report body dissatisfaction and anxiety about eating.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Your body needs enough calories to grow, think clearly, and feel happy.
- It's better to focus on how you feel after eating — strong, energetic, clear-headed — than on counting numbers.
- Working with a dietitian or doctor is the safest way to set goals if you're concerned about nutrition.
- Food is fuel. Food is joy. Food is self-respect. Learning what your body needs is one of the best skills you can have for a lifetime of health and happiness.
- You don't have to be perfect — just stay curious, stay kind to yourself, and stay balanced.