

**bioteen**<sup>™</sup>  
Teen Health



THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLNESS

**WELLNESS**





## THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLNESS

When we are healthy, our bodies feel great and we are able to do all of the things that we want to do, plus more. Basically, when you are healthy, you can live your life to its fullest. Part of being healthy is knowing about all the right things to do, and at Bioteen we know that education is as important as anything else. That's why we place so much emphasis on getting you the right information, from the right professionals in an easy-to-understand format, so that you and your teen can make informed decisions about your health.

Through rigorous market research (and some personal experiences) we have identified a number of issues caused by poor nutrition that teen's regularly face. That's why the cornerstone of our approach to improving your teens' health is nutrition, because you genuinely are what you eat and at Bioteen we recognize that.

### **Which diet is the best diet?**

With all the fad diets in the media, nobody blames you for feeling confused. While many diets are supported by research for specific purposes (usually weight loss), it is very important to know the difference between a 'diet' and healthy eating. Let's give you an example, many years ago low-fat diets were all the rage. Consumers were flocking to the shops to buy low-fat products, thinking that low fat automatically meant that it was 'healthy'. Unfortunately, instead of choosing naturally low fat, whole foods, like fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains people were buying low fat cookies, puddings and even jelly sweets. With time, many people ended up gaining more weight and being more unhealthy due to these food choices. While many will argue that it's the 'low fat' message that was wrong, the truth is that the focus was placed on the wrong foods. Instead of worrying if foods are low (or high) in fats, carbs or protein, we should rather be choosing whole foods over their ultra-processed counterparts. Before you think that all processing is bad, let's have a look at the differences between the processing methods.

### **Understanding food processing**

To do this, think about the kinds of foods you eat regularly. What does the food look like? Does it look the same when you eat it, as it did when it was harvested? If your answer is yes, then the food you are thinking about is probably a whole or unprocessed food. Good examples include whole fruits and vegetables.

The next step is when food has been minimally processed. Minimally processed foods have literally been minimally processed, usually to make the food item safer (like pasteurized milk) or easier to cook (like rolled oats). These foods look slightly different from their whole form, but are still quite recognizable.

Occasionally minimally processed foods may also contain some oil, salt or sugar. These ingredients are usually added to improve the taste of the product or to increase its shelf life. A good example of this is canned beans or tomatoes. Because minimally processed foods (with or without oil, salt and sugar) have been altered so little, they still retain most of their nutrients and because of this form part of a healthy diet. If we avoided all these processing methods, we would either eliminate a variety of foods from our diet (because they would just be too tedious to prepare) or we would literally be spending our lives in the kitchen.



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The foods we need to steer clear of are ultra-processed foods. These types of foods are hardly even food anymore, they are food-like products. Often these food ingredients are combined in ways that don't occur naturally to produce a highly palatable and even addictive food-like product. Foods like corn, wheat, soy, cane, and beet, or even ground-up animal carcasses are broken down into single ingredients like sugar, starches, fiber, oil/fats, and protein. Some of these substances are chemically modified through a variety of processes like hydrolysis or hydrogenation and 'cosmetic additives' are added to make the final product very tasty to eat (these are additives that make the final product more appealing and hyper-palatable). These ingredients are then assembled into their food-like form through processes like extrusion, molding and pre-frying. These so-called foods are then packaged using sophisticated methods to keep these ingredients fresh and then sold to the consumer. Some good examples include soft drinks (sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened), hot dogs and cold cuts, fast food, packaged cookies, cakes, and salty snacks. These are the foods you should be limiting in your diet.

### What should your diet look like?

To make sure that you are getting a good mix of all the necessary nutrients, you should follow the following guidelines:

- Eat plenty of whole fruits and vegetables of all types (aim for more vegetables than fruit)
- Eat high fiber starches and choose mainly whole grains
- Eat protein-containing foods daily from a variety of sources (mixed, vegetarian or vegan are all perfectly healthy)
- Choose minimally processed fats and oils from plant sources

### The plate model

Use the plate model to help you decide how much of each food group should go on your plate for each meal:



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As you can see,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the plate is fruits and vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate is protein foods and the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  is whole grain foods.

**The bottom line**

When you focus your attention on eating a variety of whole and minimally processed foods (using the plate model to guide your food proportions), your body will be getting the right amounts and types of macro and micronutrients. All without having to count calories or macros, which let's face it, no one should be doing, especially not teen's. Having a healthy, varied diet not only makes us feel energized but it can also improve health and reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases. A healthy diet should be seen as the foundation, with nutraceutical and supplements being the final touches that help us with certain problems and setbacks due to age, activity or lifestyle.



**YOU'RE ALL CAUGHT UP**

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