

# Healthy Teens

January 2018 Parent Newsletter



## Promote Positive Mental Health with Nutrition

Did you know there may be a link between what teens eat and their mental health? Teenagers need nutritious food to grow healthy bodies and healthy brains. Your brain uses natural chemicals called neurotransmitters as signals, affecting how you think, feel and act. The foods teenagers eat can impact the release of neurotransmitters in the brain. To support positive mental health encourage your teen to eat vegetables and fruit every day, and limit processed foods that are high in sugar, salt and fat. Encourage water when they are thirsty and limit drinks

with added sugar and caffeine. There are simple ways you can help your teen eat a healthy diet:

- Encourage your teenager to eat breakfast and lunch every day and not skip meals: eat regularly for all-day energy!
- Eat meals together: this allows you to serve nutritious food, role model healthy eating and enjoy social time as a family.
- At meal times plan a healthy plate by making half of your plate vegetables and fruit.

➤ For more ideas visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page12598.aspx>

## Articles

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The Toothpaste Truth

Bacteria are becoming more resistant to the drugs we treat the disease with (antibiotics). Vaccination decreases the impact of this by preventing people from becoming infected with those resistant germs. Vaccination also means we don't have to treat people as often with antibiotics. For more information visit

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-040089/en/>



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## The Toothpaste Truth

It may be difficult to believe, but toothpaste doesn't actually clean your teeth! It's the motion of the toothbrush that removes the sticky film on our teeth, called 'plaque'. Similar to cleaning peanut butter off a spoon, no matter how much water or soap you use, only a brushing motion will successfully remove that sticky peanut butter. Test it out yourself! Use a dry toothbrush to clean your teeth and then use your tongue to feel your teeth. Were you able to make your teeth feel smooth without using toothpaste?

So why do we use toothpaste? Let's start with the most important reason.

### Fluoride

The most essential component added to toothpaste is fluoride. Fluoride strengthens teeth and repairs damage caused by tooth decay acids. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice a day is an effective and low cost way to prevent tooth decay.



### Freshens breath

Toothpaste contains mint or often some other flavoring. This flavoring makes toothpaste taste good and also helps to freshen your breath.

### Addresses Special Needs

Specialty toothpastes contain specific ingredients to address needs like sensitive teeth.

So although toothpaste may not clean your teeth, it is important because it will keep your teeth strong and decay free.



For more information about oral health, visit

[www.ahs.ca/oralhealth](http://www.ahs.ca/oralhealth)