



WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP

- ✓ **Resist your parental desire to nag.** All children need to feel unconditional love and acceptance. Overweight kids need to know that your love is not conditional on their weight loss. Nagging teens about weight often has the opposite of its desired effect. Respect your teen's desire to be healthy – and find them the resources they want.
- ✓ **Be the role model that your kids need.** Research shows that children really do as they see, not as they hear. To help your teen move toward a healthy weight, avoid fad diets and weight loss schemes; enjoy balanced choices from the Food Guide Pyramid; and make physical activity one of your family's most important values.
- ✓ **Offer regular family meals and make nutrition-to-go available.** Today's teens lead busy lives and they may not always be around at mealtime. Stock up on grab-and-go options, like string cheese, low-fat yogurt, bananas, and bagels. Make family meals as convenient, tasty, and stress-free as possible – so teens will want to be there.
- ✓ **For more information:** Check out books by Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, CICSW, *Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family* (1999) and *How to Get Your Kid to Eat* (1987), esp. the chapter 12 on “The Individualistic Teenager.” Available @ www.ellynsatter.com

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TO HELP

- ✓ **Expand access to power foods.** Most schools offer students limited choices in cafeterias, beverage machines, and other food sales. Innovative programs in many school districts have demonstrated that teens will make positive choices – when healthful options are tasty, convenient, competitively priced, and “cool.”
- ✓ **Expand opportunities for physical activity.** Studies show that physical activity declines dramatically as children get older. The availability of traditional PE classes is also declining. Since regular, moderate physical activity is essential to maintain a healthy weight, teens need fun activities for all sizes, shapes, and abilities.
- ✓ **Expand effective, real-life nutrition education.** Adolescents need nutrition advice that works for the 24/7, fast lane lifestyles. Positive, practical, simple, and consistent nutrition messages can be integrated into all areas of middle and high schools, including athletic coaching, classroom teaching, and food service offerings.
- ✓ **For more information:** Check out an exciting kit from the US Department of Agriculture's Team Nutrition program: **Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment** available @ www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/changing.html



EAT RIGHT MONTANA

A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles