

The Wellness Teen

Dr. Roller Keeps You Informed

A Teen Spring

It's spring and the weather is turning warm and the last thing you can think about is school work but what do you want to do instead? It may seem like a silly question but it's definitely worth considering since Dr. Roller cares about so much more than just your spine.

Average Activity

Research has proven you, as an average teenager, will probably spend little or no time in activities outdoors. In fact, your average day is probably spent as follows:

- 7-8 hours sleeping
- 6-7 hours in school
- 2-5 hours watching TV
- 2-6 hours of other sedentary activities
- 1-2 hours on the computer
- 1.5 hours doing homework
- 0-1 hour playing video games

This is not to say that this is every teenager but it is *average*. Let's consider for a moment what this kind of lifestyle can mean for your developing body and your health.

Your body is a machine that takes in fuel, burns that fuel during activity and then requires additional fuel just like a car. But we're not talking just any car, if your body were a car it'd be a high-performance machine like a Nascar; and just like a car, if your body is given fuel and it's not used, that fuel will eventually degrade sitting in the tank. It's a crude analogy but the fact is that food not put to use turns to fat. So, what do you do?

Remember that activity is not synonymous with work; it can be, but it's not necessarily. The fact is that if you are not moving your body in some form of physical activity for at least an hour a day you run the risk of health problems like obesity and diabetes.

There are several activities that when done for an hour a day can be fun and healthy!

- Walking – invite a parent along surprise them with the request for their company.
- Bicycling – this is one of the best cardiovascular activities available.
- Swimming – definitely a favorite in summer but still fun in spring.
- And cleaning – washing the car, moving the lawn, and vacuuming are all extremely healthy, cardiovascular activities (they don't fall under the fun category but they're definitely healthy).



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Good Fuel for the Body

Yes, diet is also vital as you consider your usual activities. The fact is that no matter how much time you spend outdoors or in physical activity you'll spending at least a few hours of your week in front of a television, video or computer screen. With this in mind, let's consider what you'll be doing.

Remember the analogy of the Nascar? Well, here we go again. Your body is a machine and, just like a high-performance race car, if it's given low grade, watered down or just plain wrong fuel it's not going to run properly. You may be able to get it moving but it won't move efficiently and it's not going to burn that rotten fuel efficiently either.

Consider this in terms of your own body. If you are eating healthy foods in healthy quantities then your

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Page 1** A Teen Spring
Page 2 Teen Spring Checklist

body will burn those foods efficiently and you will remain healthy. With this in mind let's consider a few eating do's and don'ts.

- Don't eat in front of a TV, computer or with a book – do eat sitting at a table with no distractions. If you eat distracted then you will not be monitoring how much you've eaten or whether or not your body's hunger has been satisfied.
- Don't eat a half an hour or an hour before a designated mealtime. Your family wants to see your face at the dinner table. Crab a handful of nuts and then wait for dinner.
- Don't live on trans-fats, carbs and sugars. Do work on maintaining a healthy diet. While it's not necessary to never ever have a single item of junk food remember that it's called *junk food* for a reason and don't make it the major portion of your diet. A good rule of thumb is, "if it's wrapped it's probably bad!" Fresh and living foods will always provide you with the vitamins and minerals your body needs to stay healthy.

- Don't assume that because your stomach is grumbling you must be hungry. Do drink a glass of water first. The early stages of dehydration are often mistaken for hunger and this can lead to overeating.
- Don't drink an overabundance of sports drinks, juices and sodas. Do drink a minimum of 8 glasses of water a day. It's not necessary to never have a sports drink, juice or a soft drink but remember that these are mostly sugars and will not satiate your thirst but will usually make you thirstier. Also, don't forget, these items will usually cause weight gain, even diet soda.

In Summary

Your body is continuously moving, growing and developing; and it can't do any of these things efficiently if it doesn't have the right fuel. Dr. Roller cares about how you develop and, while he/she certainly understands that your life is busy and it's easier to just stick with the quid pro quo, he/she knows that a few healthy changes can last a lifetime.

Teen Spring Checklist

- Clean your room – take a large box and fill it up with all the stuff you haven't used in three months and then donate it to your local women's or homeless shelter.
- Offer to help you mom or dad with the yard work or gardening – it's great exercise and the weather's just right.
- Community Cleanup – grab a large trash bag and walk up and down your street picking up trash.
- Go unplugged – pick one day a week when you will not use anything electronic as entertainment.
- Have a movie or game night – pick one night a week for family fun.



Dear Parent - Dr. Roller is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So, take a moment today to ask him/her about any concerns you may have regarding your child or your family's health.