

Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits

Grade Level: 4

Approximate Length of Activity: 45-60 minutes

Objectives

Students

1. Learn more about the nutritional qualities of fruits and vegetables.
2. Brainstorm about ways they can increase their intake of fruits and vegetables.
3. Set a goal of eating more fruits and vegetables and develop specific steps to reach their goal.

Michigan Content Standards: (Health) 1.1; 1.2; 1.9

Introduction

For a 2,000-calorie diet, you need the following amounts from each food group: a) grains – eat 6 oz. every day, b) vegetables – eat 2 ½ cups every day, c) fruits – eat 2 cups every day, d) milk – get 3 cups every day and e) meats and beans – eat 5 ½ oz. every day. Find your balance between food and physical activity. Be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs and be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. About 60 minutes a day of physical activity may be needed to prevent weight gain. Know the limits on fats, sugars and salt (sodium). Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these. Choose food and beverages low in added sugars. Added sugars contribute calories with few, if any nutrients. Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a nutritious diet and trying new things in your diet is encouraged.

Materials Needed

- 'Steps to a Healthier You' worksheet for each student

Activity Outline

1. Ask students if they eat fruits and vegetables every day. Discuss the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.
2. Explain: French fries, which make up one-fourth of all vegetables eaten by elementary school students, are an exception. They are high in fat and calories. A medium order of fries has 460 calories, more than one-fourth the total daily calorie intake appropriate for most eight and nine year olds. A medium bake potato, however, has only about 100 calories.
3. Pass out the worksheet, 'Steps to a Healthier You.'
4. Have students review the goal of trying a new fruit and vegetable.
5. Ask students what vegetables and fruits they already enjoy. Remember that dried, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables count, too.
6. Have students complete the worksheet.

7. Next, have students brainstorm some other ways they can eat more fruits and vegetables. Add these to their worksheet.
8. Complete the 'Where and How' box. Ask students to look at the worksheet to see which of the steps they could take to meet their goal of increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables. Have students circle on the worksheet the steps they plan to take. Point out that small changes really add up. Once they try a new food and like it, they can add it to the foods they eat regularly. That's how they can meet their goal. Students may add additional ideas on the back of their worksheet.
9. As students learn about goal-setting, here are more points to remember:
 - Success breeds success. Encourage children to set goals they can accomplish. A child who usually chooses only corn and apple juice might set a goal of trying one new fruit this week.
 - Take one step at a time. Children do not need to change overnight what they eat. They can start with one new, good thing, and add a new one every day.
10. Have students create an ad campaign for a vegetable. Working in groups, research a dark green or orange vegetable. (They can find information at MyPyramid.gov) Why is it a nutritious choice? Have students use their creativity to create a poster and perhaps a TV ad – a jingle, a skit – that they can perform for the class.

Discussion Questions

1. Ask them to name the fruits and vegetables they usually eat.
2. Talk to students about the importance of fruits and vegetables. Eating fruits and vegetables can help them be healthy.
 - Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of many nutrients, including vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber.
 - Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and do not contain cholesterol.
 - Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
 - Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
 - Fiber keeps food moving through the digestive tract.
3. Dark green and orange vegetables are important to eat. See if students can name some.

Related Activities

1. The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service – Team Nutrition has a variety of lesson plans, student activities and resources related to MyPyramid. The resources can be accessed at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.
2. MyPyramid for Kids Classroom Materials can be ordered from Team Nutrition. Visit <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/mypyramidclassroom.html> for ordering information.
3. The lesson "Buy, Sell, Trade or Starve" located in the Health section of this curriculum guide.

Acknowledgment

This lesson was adapted from Team Nutrition – United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.

Steps to a Healthier You

My Fruit and Vegetable Goals

Fruits

Circle the names of the fruits you have eaten:

mango papaya kiwifruit cantaloupe

star fruit pineapple strawberry

blueberry

Other fruits I have eaten:

Write the name of a fruit you would like to try:

How will you eat that fruit? (Perhaps on cereal, as a snack, for dessert, with dinner or on pancakes.)

Vegetables

Circle the names of the fruits you have eaten:

spinach collard greens sweet potato

broccoli cauliflower zucchini

squash

Other vegetables I have eaten:

Write the name if a vegetable you would like to try:

How will you eat that vegetable? (Perhaps for a snack, as a salad, with dip or for lunch.)

Where and How

I will try these foods by: asking my parents to purchase them, helping my parents prepare these foods, choosing them for a restaurant menu, eating them from the school lunch menu, or eating them at a friend's house.

Signature

Date

