

Fruits and Veggies Matter



Main Objective

Consume more servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and regularly aim for a variety of colors.

Background

Fruits and vegetables provide the body with a variety of different nutrients. These nutrients help the body stay healthy, resist infections, and ensure proper growth and development. Different fruits and vegetables provide the body with different nutrients, so it is important to consume a variety every day. The more colors you and your students eat, the better! Fruits and vegetables are also high in fiber (which is good for the digestive tract) and generally low in fat (which is good for the heart). People who eat a lot of fruits and vegetables daily are also less likely to eat excess sweets.

When possible, look for fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season – check the local farmers' markets. Otherwise, look for frozen, dried, or even canned options. If you or your students consume fruit or vegetable juice, be sure it is 100% juice (listed right above the Nutrition Facts food label).

Throughout the month, younger students can learn to classify fruits and vegetables and begin to appreciate that they are grown on farms and do not “magically” appear on the grocery store shelves. Older students can start to look more globally at fruit and vegetable production and learn from where in California, the U.S. or the world different fruits and vegetables come. Regardless of their age, barriers will arise as students work toward increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables. Addressing those challenges is beneficial for students of all ages, as well as for their teachers.

Take Home Activities

- 1) Do a fruit and vegetable inventory at home. Do you have enough for everyone to increase their usual daily servings? For fruit juice to count as a serving, it must be “100% fruit juice” (see the top of the Nutrition Facts label).
- 2) Discuss ways to increase the quantity and variety of fruits and vegetables in the home. Increase variety by increasing color!
- 3) Let children choose which fruit or vegetable is served for dinner each night.
- 4) Encourage everyone to try at least one new fruit or vegetable this month.
- 5) Pack a piece of fruit in everyone's lunch.
- 6) Visit a local farmers' market to see what is available this time of year.
- 7) Visit a local multi-ethnic grocery/produce market and try something new.
- 8) Ask someone in the produce section at your local grocery store for a new fruit or vegetable to try.

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School Activities

- 1) Have students kick off the month with a fruit and vegetable taste-testing party in the cafeteria.
- 2) Create a student food service advisory committee to promote new fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria. This committee could continue throughout the school year.
- 3) Highlight fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and find ways to increase the quantity and variety available.

Classroom Reward Ideas

Use fruit and vegetable snacks, pens, pencils, erasers or stickers as class rewards instead of candy (see <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html> for materials to purchase or see the American Cancer Society for free materials). You can also ask a local grocery store or farm to sponsor a fruit and vegetable taste-testing party!

Resources

Dole

<http://www.dole5aday.com>

This is a great site with lots of fun facts about fruits and vegetables as well as free activities to download and print (tracking materials, parent information sheets, newsletters, and many activity sheets). A Scope and Sequence Chart is available to help you see how the activities fulfill national academic standards. There are separate sections for kids (including online activities), teachers, parents, and food service workers to get appropriate information. They also have an entire section devoted to information and materials in Spanish.

California Department of Health Services

P.O. Box 942732, MS 7204

Sacramento, CA 94234-7320

Phone: 1-888-EAT-FIVE (1-888-328-3483)

Fax: (916) 449-5414

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/ca5aday>

This is California's 5-A-Day website. The information provided is designed to empower low-income individuals and families to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption. 5-A-Day Power Play materials can be used in 4th and 5th grade classrooms and are available in English and Spanish.

MyPyramid.gov

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/sp-index.html> (site in Spanish)

This is the main website of the MyPyramid.gov food guidance system which will be discussed more thoroughly in November. However, this site does provide a lot of information about fruit and vegetable consumption – why it is important and tips to reach consumption goals.

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Resources

California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets

P.O. Box 1813

Davis, CA 95617

Phone: (530) 753-9999

<http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com>

Locate farmers' markets in Santa Clara County and learn about California commodities.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Photo Cards

California Department of Education Press Office

Phone: 1-800-995-4099

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc>

(Item: 001365; 142 Photo Cards; 8 7/8" x 9 1/2"; Price: \$45.00; 1997)

This set of beautiful photo cards teaches students about 142 different fruits and vegetables. The front of each card displays a fruit or vegetable with its name in English and in Spanish (when available). On the reverse side is a bar graph displaying a nutritional analysis, suggested serving size and other information.

American Cancer Society

Santa Clara County Unit

747 Camden Ave, Ste. B

Campbell, CA 95008

Phone: (408) 871-1062; Fax: (408) 871-2993

<http://www.cancer.org> (National Website)

Call the local office for a FREE copy of their *Healthy Me (K-3)* or *Spring into Health (4-6)* curricula. Both offer several lesson plans devoted to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and making healthier life choices. Additional materials are offered to schools free of charge – bookmarks, posters, folders, etc.

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>

Link to basic tips on increasing fruit and vegetable intake, energizing the family, washing fruits and vegetables and more. Each month a fruit and vegetable are featured with nutritional information, tips on how to prepare them and great tasting recipes. Information is also available in Spanish – nutrition information, recipes and advice. Great detailed information on the colors of fruits and vegetables (some information may be more appropriate for older students in a science class).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov> (individual organizations' links are on the bottom of the web page)

Most of the information is for educators. It has some good details and facts on colors and phytonutrients for older students. Several lists of curricula and activities are available for purchase from different states (free and at-cost resources).

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Resources

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<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/> or <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.gov/>

This website supports the “Fruits and Veggies – More Matters™” initiative, which encourages the consumption of fruits and vegetables for improved public health. CDC developed and maintains the site in partnership with federal agencies and other organizations.

Produce for Better Health Foundation – in partnership with **CDC, DHHS**

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html>

<http://www.pbhfoundation.org/educators>

PBH, a partner with the CDC in the health initiative Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™, has designed educational kits (e.g. *Color Way Creative Pockets Kit, 2: Nutrition, Fitness & Play*) and other teaching tools for classroom use. Download a set of activity sheets or an entire curriculum from PBH (Educators Section).

Harvest of the Month

California Department of Public Health Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section

P.O. Box 997413, MS 7204

Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

Phone: (916) 449-5400

<http://www.harvestofthemonth.com>

Harvest of the Month is a comprehensive nutrition education intervention designed to give students, their parents and surrounding communities hands-on opportunities to explore, taste and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. Monthly materials are comprised of educator newsletters, parent newsletters in English and Spanish and menu slicks. Posters are also used to promote the health benefits of fruits and vegetables.

For additional resources related to starting a school garden, please see the Dear Teacher letter at the front of this Resource Guide.

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Activities Linked to 5th Grade Content Standards & Framework

Writing 2.4

- Students can write a letter or a persuasive story to encourage students in lower grades to eat fruits and vegetables every day.

Written & Oral English Language Conventions 1.5

- Include grade-appropriate fruit and vegetable names on students' spelling list.

Statistics, Data Analysis, & Probability 1.0 & 1.2

- Have students keep track of their fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the month. Set a goal to increase variety and quantity of fruit and vegetable intake and create a chart using an appropriate graph demonstrating progress.

Life Sciences 2.e, 2.f & 2.g

- When teaching how plants transport nutrients, discuss the concepts in relation to specific fruits and vegetables consumed by students in the class instead of generic plants or flowers.

Social Science 5.1.1

- Describe how geography and climate influenced the way various nations obtained their fruits and vegetables.

Health Framework Expectation 1

- Discuss some of the barriers to increasing fruit and vegetable intake. As a class, can you come up with some ways to overcome these barriers?

Health Framework Expectation 1

- Walk to a nearby farmers' market to see what fruits and vegetables are available this time of year.

Selected Reading List

Apples to Oregon: Being the (Slightly) True Narrative of How a Brave Pioneer Father Brought Apples, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Grapes, and Cherries (and Children) Across the Plains, by Deborah Hopkinson - Language Arts, Social Science

The Amazing Potato, by Milton Meltzer – Language Arts, Social Science

Shape Up! Fun with Triangles and Other Polygons, by David Adler – Mathematics

Buried Treasure: Roots and Tubers, by Meredith and Tom Hughes – Science