

ACTIVITY & EATING

Linking Together
for Optimal
Fitness and Health

Teacher Instructions

Congratulations on your decision to provide this self-instructional nutrition and physical activity booklet to your students. A poll conducted in fall of 2003 by the California Endowment found that 96% of adults surveyed felt it important to teach about nutrition, physical activity and healthy weights in school. This booklet provides relevant information and fosters skill building in food and activity decisions.



Overview This booklet addresses healthy food and physical activity choices for optimum fitness and well-being.

It provides opportunities to develop personalized plans to increase students' physical activity and to plan healthier food options in their day-to-day routines.

The idea of healthy weight and general guidelines for weight maintenance is also addressed. This booklet does *not* provide a low calorie diet suitable for weight loss. Students who may need such counseling should be referred to a physician or a registered dietitian.

Objectives Students will examine and apply USDA's MyPyramid as a tool to help them plan healthier food choices each day.

Students will identify the number of servings of foods from the food groups they should aim for each day...and be able to illustrate reasonable portion sizes of those foods.

Students will paraphrase the benefits of physical activity and will design specific times and activities that they can include each day to get recommended amounts of exercise.

1 Conduct Assessment of Perceptions and Attitudes re: Healthy Eating Distribute the booklets. Have students read page 2 and complete the short assessment quiz. Discuss their answers as a class.

Optional: To further pursue the students' attitudes about their appearance and perceptions about food and activity choices, continue the discussion by administering this short quiz - verbally, or as a homework or daily journal assignment (students answer yes/no):

Behaviors/Beliefs Discussion Points

I am constantly thinking about my body size, shape, and weight - and working to improve it.	70% of our body weight and shape is inherited from our parents. You can improve the body you're born with...but only to a certain degree. Most of us will never look like models or celebrities, despite the media push to do so.
I frequently skip meals to lose weight.	Skipping meals invariably leads to overeating later in the day...or binging on less than healthy food choices when we do eat. It also signals our bodies that we are "starving"...so our bodies work even harder to store the few calories we do eat as fat. Severely restricting the amount or range of foods eaten at this age can have long term negative health consequences.
I completely exclude foods from one or more food groups, or I exclude complete macronutrients, like "carbohydrates" in order to manage my weight.	Your body cannot get the range of nutrients it needs by eating foods only from one or two food groups. And supplements don't make up the full difference. You need a wide range of food choices from all food groups.
I like to wear oversized clothes to hide "flaws" in my body.	
I believe there are "good" foods and "bad" foods.	There are no "good" foods or "bad" foods...just bad combinations of foods. All foods, even indulgent "favorites," can be part of a sensible eating plan - one just needs to pay attention to how much and how often.
I don't participate in sports or other physical activity because I'm embarrassed about how my body looks.	

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Review Key Sections of Booklet

Give students time to read through this self-instructional booklet. Have them complete the activity and eating plans on pages 4, 5 and 6. Students can do this work in class...or start in class and complete as a homework assignment.

Review plans with students. Emphasize the following in the three major sections of the booklet:

Physical activity (pages 3 and 4) Benefits of physical activity: helps keep body healthy - builds muscles and strengthens bones, works heart; fun; improves physical appearance and sense of well-being; burns more calories so you can enjoy a wider range of foods.

Barriers to being active: embarrassment about appearance; no time to exercise; no transportation; too expensive; individual feels they're "not good at sports." Talk through ways to handle each of these challenges.

Food choices (pages 3 and 5) Note the recommended portions on page 5 for each of the food groups. Conduct an informal poll of students to see how many ate the recommended servings of each food group yesterday.

Portion sizes are often a downfall for people. We've gotten used to "super-sized" portions in restaurants, at fast food venues, at convenience stores, and even at home. Share with your students some common household items that depict appropriate portion sizes...have them compare these to what they normally eat. Likely, several students will be surprised at how much extra food they are consuming because of skewed perceptions of portion size.

Appropriate Portions

5-1/2 oz. of meat	=	1 deck of cards
1/2 c. of cooked pasta	=	1/2 tennis ball
12 oz. of cheese	=	3 dice
2 c. of leafy greens	=	1 baseball

Healthy weight (pages 6 and 7) Confidence and satisfaction in our own appearance, including body size and shape, is difficult to achieve for most adolescents. A growing number struggle with "disordered eating," severely limiting food choices and adopting extremely restrictive eating behaviors in an attempt to achieve an "ideal" body shape.

Even more students struggle with overweight. This raises concerns as 50% of overweight adolescents will become overweight adults, complete with health consequences like diabetes or heart disease.

General messages for students struggling with overweight

Don't compensate by adopting fad diets, which usually don't provide the range of nutrients students need for growth and development. "Dieting" constantly or a fear of food won't yield good results. Eliminating entire food groups is not the answer! Eat sensibly and in moderation.

Keep active and moving...exercise burns calories!

Avoid constant snacking...mindless nibbling in front of the TV or computer... skipping breakfast but then overindulging later in the day.

Adding some foods to daily choices may, in fact, be a good idea. For example, research shows that consuming at least 3 servings of milk and dairy products each day, as part of a reduced-calorie weight loss plan, can help people lose more weight than just cutting calories alone.

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Conclude; Refer to Relevant Websites

Encourage students to "re-check" their activity levels and food choices in a few weeks. Some interactive tools on www.mealsmatter.org can help them evaluate their food choices - Personal Nutrition Planner, check their physical activity levels - Personal Fitness Planner, and check their calcium intake specifically - Calcium Quiz.

