OVERVIEW

Increasing your consumption of fruits and veggies is one key to lifelong heart health.

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is always more beneficial than eating the same foods over and over again.

All fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that may help prevent heart disease, cancer and other illnesses.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the AHA recommendations for fruits and vegetable consumption.

Explain the connection between increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and heart health.

• Give five specific examples of fruits or vegetables and how they help your health.

FACTS

The pigments forming colors in fruits and vegetables are made of phytonutrients. These also carry the nutrients we need. (1)

Fruits and vegetables provide many beneficial nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, protein, calcium, fiber, antioxidants and phytonutrients. Fruits and vegetables in any snack or meals create a nutritional power boost. (2)

Fruits and vegetables typically contain no trans fat, low saturated fat and very little or no sodium. The natural sugars they contain don’t affect your health the same way added sugars do, especially if you eat the whole fruit or vegetable and not just the juice. (3)

The proportion of youth meeting guidelines of ≥2 cups of fruit per day is low and decreases with age: 3% to 8% in those 10 to 14 years of age, and 5% to 6% in those 15 to 19 years of age. (4)

For non-starchy vegetable <1.5% of children and youth meet guidelines of ≥2.5 cups/day. (4)

A few of the beneficial nutrients found in fruits and vegetable include fiber, potassium, folate, and vitamin A and C. (5)

AHA daily recommendation for fruit and vegetable consumption in age 9-13 is 1.5 cups of fruit and 2-2.5 cups of vegetables and in age 14-18 is 1.5-2 cups of fruit and 2-3 cups of vegetables. (6)
OPENING QUESTIONS
TO ASK YOUR CLASS

How many students can name a fruit or vegetable for each of these colors? (green, red/pink, blue/purple, yellow, white/brown). Have student record a few examples per color.

Optional follow up questions

As a class, how many colors have you eaten this week? Chart the responses.

Can anyone explain what benefits come from any of the colors in fruits and vegetables?

TEACHING LESSON

Being healthy and feeling good does not just happen on its own. The water you drink, the exercise you get, the information you learn, and the food you eat all play a role in helping you stay healthy and feeling good.

Your body needs the right fuel to sustain movement, create strength, and to help you maintain a heart healthy lifestyle. If you don’t do this, the consequences can include always feeling tired, getting sick more easily, and lead to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and stroke.

When it comes to exercise and fitness goals, you can’t plan for, train, and then run a mile (or longer) and just eat fast foods and/or the empty calories in a bag of chips. To see real progress without hurting yourself you need to include a variety of foods including fruits and vegetables.

How will increased consumption of fruits and vegetables help?

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables will help you stay healthier and more active by keeping your arteries and veins clear of plaque buildup and allowing them to stay elastic and smooth, meaning blood can flow more freely through your body.

If our heart is pumping blood efficiently, it is easier to be more active and keep our heart muscle in shape. Eating an increased variety of fruit and vegetables will also help you balance your emotions, aid your concentration, and boost your immune system.

The dietary fiber from fruits and vegetables also slows the rate of sugar absorption, meaning less sugar “highs and lows”. When you stay more balanced you can have more focus.

STUDENT ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Students use the weekly log to chart how many fruits and vegetables and which colors they are eating each day in a week.

Students share a new fruit or vegetable they will try each week from each color utilizing SMART goal setting.

Have a Rainbow Potluck celebration of fruit and vegetable snacks.

Students use social media to post a picture a week highlighting a specific color of fruits and vegetables.

Create a one-week snack plan to support your physical activity/sports goals and have it incorporate all 5 color groups over that week.
Every time you add more color to your plate this week put a check mark in each box associated with that food’s color. How many checks can you build up in a week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color of Food</th>
<th>Red &amp; Pink</th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Orange &amp; Yellow</th>
<th>White &amp; Brown</th>
<th>Blue &amp; Purple</th>
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Each day record what you eat and drink. Are you drinking water each day?
Are you eating three meals and healthy snack each day?

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<th>Watch what you eat!</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Snack</th>
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<th>Snack</th>
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Appendix

PRINT AND DIGITAL

1 - Applying Science to Changing Dietary Patterns (link)

2 - Fruits and Vegetables are the very definition of good for you (link)

3 - Five Reasons to Eat More Color Poster (link)

4 - 2019 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistical Update Fact Sheet (link)

5 - How to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables (link)

6 - Dietary Recommendations for Healthy Children (link)

Color Log Template (Print only)

Eat More Color Poster (link)

Fruits and Vegetables Serving Sizes Infographic (link)

Greater Frequency of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Is Associated With Lower Prevalence of Peripheral Artery Disease (link)

Produce Storage Infographic (link)

Season of Eating Infographic (link)

Snack Plan Template (Print only)