

Fruits and Vegetables

Main objectives: To describe the difference between fruits and vegetables and highlight their nutritional benefits, discuss the vast array of options and expose students to new and unique flavors to get them excited about eating their fruits and veggies.

Essential Discussion Topics:

- *What is a fruit?* A fruit is a structure of a plant that contains seeds. Biologically, fruit are the means by which many plants disseminate seeds. Where are the seeds of a fruit usually located? In the middle! Do you know any fruits that have their seeds on the outside? Strawberry! Where are the seeds of a banana? They are really tiny—in the middle of the fruit again. We can also see these in oranges!
- *What is a vegetable?* A vegetable is a part of a plant that we eat that is not a fruit – a non-seed containing part of a plant. In culinary terms, a vegetable is generally something that does not taste sweet. Vegetables can be flower buds (broccoli, cauliflower), leaves (spinach), leaf stems (celery), tubers (potatoes), roots (carrots), bulbs (onions)
- *Why is it important to eat fruits and vegetables?* They have high amounts of vitamins and minerals.
 - **Vitamin A:** What are some animals that have good eyesight in the night? Vitamin A helps you to have better eyesight especially at night and also helps to protect you from infection and getting sick. You can remember this by remembering that ‘A’ nimals have good eyesight!
 - Sweet potatoes, pumpkins, carrots, spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, collard greens, winter squash, cantaloupe, red peppers, Chinese cabbage are excellent sources of vitamin A
 - **Vitamin C:** Vitamin C will keep your skin and gums healthy and will help all those scrapes and cuts that we get to heal faster! Pirates used to have gums that would bleed and they would lose all of their teeth because they didn’t get enough vitamin C.
 - Red and green peppers, kiwi, strawberries, sweet potatoes, kale, cantaloupe, broccoli, pineapple, Brussels sprouts, oranges, mangoes, tomato juice, cauliflower
 - **Potassium:** Potassium helps our nerves to work. Nerves are big long wires that connect from our brains down to our toes. Can everyone wiggle your toes? That’s because your brain is passing a message along to your toes and telling them to move. Potassium helps this message to get there.
 - Sweet potatoes, tomato paste, tomato puree, beet greens, white potatoes, white beans, lima beans, cooked greens, carrot juice, prune juice
 - **Fiber** Fiber helps to keep things moving through your digestive tract. It also keep you feeling fuller longer.
 - Navy beans, kidney beans, black beans, pinto beans, lima beans, white beans, soybeans, split peas, chick peas, black eyed peas, lentils, artichokes

- **Iron** Iron helps red blood cells carry oxygen to all parts of the body. Without enough iron, you may feel weak and fatigued, lightheaded or short of breath.
 - Green leafy vegetables, raisins, dried fruit, beans, pumpkin seeds
- **Calcium** Calcium is vital for building strong bones and teeth. The time to build strong bones is during childhood and the teen years, so it's very important to get enough calcium now to fight against bone loss later in life.
 - Broccoli and dark green, leafy vegetables, oranges
- *How many fruits and vegetables should we eat per day?* We want to try to have five servings a day of your fruits and vegetables. Serving sizes can be difficult to interpret, so don't lean too heavily on them. In general, the serving sizes are — 1 medium fresh fruit, ½ cup canned fruit, ¼ cup dried fruit, ¾ cup 100% fruit juice, ½ cup cooked veggies, 1 cup leafy or raw. The important thing is to get kids to try and incorporate fruits and vegetables into their meals and snacks.

Supplemental Discussion Topics:

- *Why is it important to wash fruits and vegetables before eating?* Sometimes vegetable and fruit plants are sprayed with chemicals to kill bugs. Also, we know that a lot of fruits and vegetables have to be picked by hand. Just think about how many hands will touch your fruits and vegetables before they get to you.
- *Who all do you think has touched your fruit or veggie?* The person who picks them, the person who loads them up, the person who unloads them, the person who puts them on the shelf at the store, the other shoppers when they are looking at the fruit and vegetables. So we want to be sure to wash off fruits and vegetables so less of the dirty things on others people's hands get into our bodies.

Activities:

- *Color Matching:* Have students break into small groups. Give each group a different colored sheet of paper. Have each group work together to list as many fruits and vegetables as they can think of that correspond to their color. Have groups present their lists to the class.
 - *Why is this important?* Different fruits and vegetables contain different vitamins and minerals. Often, the color indicates the different nutrients in that respective food. To make sure you get a lot of different types of nutrients, it's good to eat a lot of different colors.
- *Fruit and Vegetable Trivia Game:* Have the students stand in the middle of the room, and designate one side of the room as "Vegetable" and the other side of the room as "Fruit". Using a list of questions and produce items, have the students run to either side of the room depending on whether they think the answer is "fruit" or "vegetable"
 1. Which one is usually sweet tasting or has more sugar? Fruit
 2. Which one is the seeded part of the plant? Fruit
 3. What is an avocado? Fruit
 4. What is a cucumber? Fruit
 5. What is a banana? Fruit

6. What is a tomato? Fruit
7. What is a potato? Veggie
8. What is a pepper? Fruit
9. Carrot? Veggie
10. Broccoli? Veggie
11. Spinach? Veggie
12. Celery? Veggie
13. Apple? Fruit
14. Mango? Fruit

Snack Ideas:

- *Taste Test Activity:* Cut up different fruits and vegetables and let kids taste each one. If possible, try to bring exotic fruits and vegetables that students may not have seen or tried before. For discussion, ask students what they enjoy and don't enjoy, and ask them why. See if they can correctly categorize as a fruit or vegetable and name a vitamin or mineral found in each item. Also ask students to think of how they could incorporate the item into their diet – what would it pair well with?
- *Add Veggies to Your Smoothie:* Introduce the idea of adding vegetables to smoothies. Can demo a few different easy additions, such as a handful of spinach or a few baby carrots.