



Paint Your Plate Lesson Plan

Grade 6 – Exploring the Influences on Vegetable and Fruit Intake

Minds on

Initiate a classroom discussion to get students thinking about what influences their decision to eat vegetables and fruit (e.g. allergies and sensitivities, taste, feelings of stress, availability, media influences, cultural influences, influence of family and friends, school food and beverage policies, environmental impact, cost, etc.).

Note to teachers

The goal of this lesson is to have students identify what influences their food choices (in particular related to vegetables and fruit), to brainstorm strategies to overcome potential barriers to eating vegetables and fruit and to enhance and build on existing strengths.

Students may already use strategies to help them include vegetables and fruit in their meals and snacks. What are ways to further enhance this?

Key messages to share with students

- There are many different factors that can influence if, when, and where we eat vegetables and fruit (e.g. cost, availability, accessibility)
- There are different ways that we can overcome barriers that prevent us from eating vegetables and fruit (e.g. bring cut up vegetables and fruit from home).
- Eating a variety of different vegetables and fruit helps us get the variety of

nutrients our bodies need.

- Settings (e.g. home, school, recreation settings, etc.) vary with respect to availability of vegetables and fruit. Students may or may not be able to eat vegetables and fruit related to availability/access.

Dig deeper

How our surroundings influence what we eat

www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-causes/food-environment-and-obesity/

The effect of food environments on vegetable and fruit intake

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4458641/

The food environment and its effect on dietary consumption

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12571-015-0455-8>

Teacher prompts

“Think of situations where it was easier for you to eat vegetables and fruit. What makes it easier for you to access them? (e.g. when my school offers vegetables and fruit as a snack or for breakfast, when I bring vegetables and fruit in my lunch, when I am at home and there are vegetables and fruit there for a snack, when a restaurant I am at offers a salad or other vegetable as a side to my meal)”

“Think of situations where it was more challenging for you to eat vegetables and fruit. What makes it more difficult for you to access them? (e.g. when I am at a

sports practice and there are only vending machines to get snacks from, when I am at the movie theatre, when I am at a birthday party and there are no vegetables or fruit available)”.

“Who or what influences your eating habits the most (e.g. friends, family, teachers, coaches, etc.)?”

“What would make it easier for you to choose fruit and vegetables as a snack or as part of a meal (e.g. ask my parent/caregiver if we can have vegetables as a snack or at mealtime, talk to my teacher about ways for vegetables and fruit to be more available at school, have a school garden that we can eat the vegetables and fruit from)?”

“Are there situations where food is offered or sold at school? Are vegetables and fruit included? If they are included, do you choose to have them? Why or why not?”

Activities

Option 1: Think – pair – share

- Write the ideas and answers that come from the discussion of the teacher prompts on a chalkboard, smartboard or flipchart
- Handout the activity sheet “Where in our school are veggies and fruit?”
- Have students discuss the answers to the questions in the teacher prompts in pairs or small groups and complete the activity sheet.

Option 2: School tour

- Write the ideas and answers that come from the discussion of the teacher prompts on a chalkboard, smartboard or flipchart.
- Take students on a tour around the school (and surrounding area if possible) and have them identify where they may be able to access vegetables and fruit

(e.g. school kitchen, vending machine, garden, nearby grocery store, snack or meal program, etc.).

- Have students make note of their findings.

Consolidation

Regroup as a whole class to discuss and share ideas about what influences students and their food choices.

Ask students what is working well in their school to help them access vegetables and fruit and where there is room for improvement.

Tip: consider creating an anchor chart to outline the ideas. Encourage the students to follow along and to copy the anchor chart into their own workbooks. Keep your anchor chart hanging up in your classroom to remind students about this lesson plan.

Curriculum connections

Grade 6, D2. Making Healthy Choices D2.1 Influences on healthy eating

Apply their knowledge of medical, emotional, practical, and societal factors that influence eating habits and food choices (e.g., allergies and sensitivities, likes and dislikes, feelings of stress, dental health, food availability, media influence, cultural influence of family and friends, school food and beverage policies, environmental impact, cost) to develop personal guidelines for healthier eating.

Reference: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Health and Physical Education, 2019

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