



Nutrition - Grades K-2

Objective: The objective of this activity is to teach students how science is used to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Materials:

- Measuring Sugar
 - Sugar
 - Plastic cups
 - Spoons
 - Cookie sheets
 - Paper food items
- Paper plate meal
 - Paper plates
 - Crayons, markers, etc (elementary students will provide)

Discussion:

- How does science help us stay healthy?
 - Medicine, bacteria, illnesses, etc.
- What are different things we can do to stay healthy?
 - Wash our hands, eat healthy foods...
- Why is it important to maintain a healthy lifestyle?
 - Live a long life, avoid getting sick...
- The importance of a nutritious diet?
 - We eat to feed our bodies. The healthier food the healthier we are.
- How much sugar is in the food we that eat?
 - 27g in a Snickers bar
 - 43 g in a bag of Skittles
 - 10 g in one Nestle chocolate chip cookie
- Ways to incorporate each food group into our diets:
- Eating healthy snacks, having a colorful plate

Activity Description:

Students will take turns measuring the amount of sugar in various food items. Then they will create a healthy meal by drawing foods on a paper plate.

Measuring Sugar

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate, and carbohydrates give us energy. However, there are two different

types of sugar. There is natural sugar and artificial/added sugar. Foods with natural sugars are the types of food that are considered healthy. For example, fruits and vegetables have natural sugar, but they are healthy sugars and give us good, long-lasting energy. Healthy foods may have sugar in them, as seen on the nutrition label, but under “ingredients” it will not list sugar. Another way to tell if foods have healthy sugars is to ask yourself, *does this food grow outside?* Foods with artificial/added sugars are not considered healthy for us. They will still give you energy, but only for a brief amount of time. Eventually, you will become tired if you eat too much.

Things to remember: You will notice that the chicken nuggets and hot dogs do not have sugar in them. In the students’ minds they will consider these sources of protein to be healthy. We know that although they provide some nutrition, they are not the best choices of protein. Explain to the students that although they do not have sugar, they will have a high concentration of fat. Fat is also an indication of how healthy a food item is.

Procedure:

1. Divide the students into groups.
 1. Each group should have one scale, a plastic cup with sugar, a spoon, paper food items, a cookie sheet, and paper plates.
2. Put the cup of sugar on the cookie sheet to avoid spills.
3. One volunteer can lead the class while the other volunteers assist the groups.
 1. The leading volunteer can go through each food group (fruit, veggie, grains, protein, dairy, and desserts) in front of the class, asking the students which foods belong to which food groups, and how much sugar is in that item.
4. One student at each group will measure one food group item.
 1. For example, there are two options for fruit. The student can either chose to measure the amount of sugar in the apple or the banana, but not both items because of time constraints.
5. Then the next student in the group will measure the amount of sugar in the veggies and so forth.
6. Put the labels under the plastic cups and save them until the end.

Once the students have completed the six food groups, have them observe which items have the most and least amount of sugar. Be sure to remind them of the difference between healthy and unhealthy sugars as well as fats.

Paper Plate Meal:

Students will now have the chance to create a “healthy meal plate”.

Procedure:

1. Have the students follow along on their paper plates as you guide them on the whiteboard.
2. Draw a big circle on the whiteboard representing the plate.
3. Next, both you and the students will divide the plate into quarters.
4. Write "Fruit" in one of the quadrants, leaving room for a drawing.
 1. Do the same in the remaining three quadrants for vegetables, grains, and protein.
5. Then divide the back of the plate in half. One side for dairy and the other for sweets.
6. Let the students draw food items in the appropriate spots