Science of Life Explorations

Healthy Eating Habits

Activity #1 Eat Well
Healthy eating is important for keeping our bodies healthy and strong. Our bodies use VITAMINS, MINERALS, and other NUTRIENTS to keep healthy. These nutrients are found in the foods we eat. To get the right amount of nutrients each day, we need to know what foods provide them.

Nutrition is the science of how an animal or plant eats and how their bodies use food to survive.

Did you ever wonder what the Nutrition Facts on the side of your cereal box meant? Or a poster of the Food Pyramid? These tools are for us to use when deciding what foods are healthy and what foods are not.
Where does our food come from?

The foods you eat everyday come, in some way, from agriculture. Fruits, vegetables, grains, meats and even things like mustard and sugar come from farms all over the country and the world.

When it comes to eating healthy, it is important that the foods we eat were grown in good soil or raised in healthy conditions. For healthier foods, good growing conditions are important.

Down and dirty with soil...

Soil is made up of small particles of minerals, decaying and living organisms, water, and air. A wide variety of these materials make good soil. Plants get the nutrients they need from the soil. Animals that are raised for meat and dairy use must also eat grains and other crops grown in healthy soil.

If soil hasn’t been cared for, it may be too packed down or lacking in nutrients to produce healthy plants. Farmers add organic matter (compost) to improve soil.

For farms that produce meat and other animal products, what should they do to produce healthy products? ________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

Why is it important for plants to grow in good soil?_______________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

What could you do to soil that didn’t have enough nutrients in it? __________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

Name a crop we eat that a farmer would grow. ________________________________
Why does what we eat matter?

Our bodies don’t run on batteries! We need the energy and nutrition that is in our foods. Good nutrition helps our bones, muscles, and our insides work right and stay strong. Our brains think better when we have had enough healthy foods to eat.

Think of your body as a machine. What do machines need to work? Fuel! Food is our bodies’ fuel for working right.

What is an example of a something else that needs fuel? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

If that machine does not receive the right fuel, what will happen? _________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Why is good nutrition important? _____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Did you know...

...that when you don’t get enough of the nutrients you need, you feel sleepy? And when you feel sleepy, you have a harder time remembering things?

What do you like to snack on during the day? ________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Is it a healthy snack? Why or why not? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
The Food Pyramid and You!

Everyone has different nutritional needs!

The Food Pyramid has five groups:
- Cereal and Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Dairy
- Meats & LEGUMES

Sweets/Fats/Oils are used SPARINGLY and should be from fish, nuts, or liquid oil. See www.mypyramid.gov to get more information!

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<th>Girls Ages 7 to 9</th>
<th>Exercise/Day</th>
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<td>30 min &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>4 to 5 oz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veggies</td>
<td>1.5 cups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>1 to 1.5 cups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
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<td>Meats/Legumes</td>
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The person running up the stairs means that you should exercise too. Exercise helps your body use the healthy foods you eat.

On the charts, the exercise columns are how much you exercise each day:
- 30 minutes or less
- 30 to 60 minutes
- 60 or more minutes.

Exercise can be anything from fast walking to yard work to sports.

Let’s look at what your servings should be:

I am a girl / boy and I am ___ years old. I exercise about ___ minutes each day. I should eat _____ ounces of grains, _____ cups of veggies, _____ cups of fruit, _____ cups of dairy, and _____ ounces of meats/legumes.
Can we eat too much or too little?

When eating healthy, it is important to keep a balance between too much food and too little food. We can even eat too much or too little of one type of food.

**Too much?**

You can have too much in different ways. One way is to eat more than you are hungry for. When you're born, your stomach has a natural sense for when it's full.

Eating more than you are hungry for changes your stomach's natural “full”-sense. You start feeling hungry for more and your body can't use it all. Extra “fuel” is stored as fat.

Too many fats, oils, salts and sugars in your food is not good for you. Potato chips and cookies are ok to have in small amounts but it is easy to eat too much.

You can also have too much of a good thing. OVERDOSING on vitamins and minerals can cause health problems too. Talk to your parents or guardians and your doctor before taking vitamin and mineral supplements.

**Too little?**

If you like to snack on unhealthy foods, you may not be getting the vitamins and minerals your body needs. You can't eat just any food to be healthy. Vitamin DEFICIENCIES (not getting enough) can cause problems in your body such as poor eyesight, sleepiness, a harder time thinking, digestion problems, and weaker muscles and bones. Also, some people who do not want to gain weight don’t eat enough healthy food, but with healthy eating and exercise, your body will be in good shape. You will look and feel your best.

Name two ways to eat too much. ___________________________________

___________________________________________________________

How is eating too little a bad thing? ________________________________

___________________________________________________________

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What if I don’t like vegetables?

Vegetables provide a lot of good-for-you vitamins and minerals that your body needs to be active and healthy. Think about the ways you have eaten vegetables...raw? Steamed? Stir-fried? With a sauce or dressing? Other times, some veggies have unique tastes and you just need to get used to them by trying them again.

Sometimes people might like a vegetable prepared only certain ways. Jane likes to eat her broccoli raw with some ranch dressing, but John likes his broccoli steamed. If there is a vegetable you haven’t liked, why not try eating it prepared a different way?

Your favorite foods...

Think of one that is unhealthy. Why shouldn’t you eat a lot of it? __________

___________________________________________________________

Think of one that is healthy. Why should you eat your daily portion of it? ____

___________________________________________________________

Imagine you’re hungry and you are digging through the “fridge” of unlimited choices! You decide to pick out one drink, a main dish (like a sandwich, pasta, casserole, soup), a side dish (maybe a salad), and one desert. You are concerned with eating healthy so draw what you are going to eat:
How do I know if I’m eating the right foods?

One way we can tell if we are eating the right foods is by how we feel. When we are eating the right foods in the right portions, our bodies will work at their best and we will feel good.

Another way to tell is by looking at the Food Pyramid charts earlier in this lesson. You can talk to your guardians about what you’re learning about healthy eating. You can also ask your doctor about what you should eat and if you have any allergies to certain foods.

Do you have any food allergies or foods you’re not allowed to eat? __________

___________________________________________________________

Talk about how you avoid using those foods in your eating habits. If you don’t have any allergies or foods you can’t eat, think of one to use as an example.

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Journaling your diet for a week with the “Udderly Cool, Happening Journal”

Use the journal page (or a separate sheet of paper) to keep track of the grains, veggies, fruits, and legumes you eat for seven days. As you record what you eat each day, write down how your body felt. Did some foods make you feel energized? Sick? Tired? Other?

Then use the chart and graph to find out how many servings of fruit and vegetables you ate.

If you eat dairy and meat products, track them too!
1. Harold the Horse should have five servings of vegetables a day. He has enough vegetables for fifteen servings. How many days will the vegetable supply last? __________

2. If you don’t eat enough healthy foods, what will happen? ____________________________

3. Where do you find vitamin D? ____________________________________

4. Good farming practices mean you will have:
   a. good soil
   b. healthy animal meat and products
   c. the farmer’s worst cooking
   d. healthy plants
   e. a, b and d

5. Sweets, Oils, and Fats is the most important food group. True or False? ____

6. Do the animals we get meat and other products from need to eat healthy too? Why?

   ________________________________________________________________

7. List something that could be included as one of your daily servings of vegetables (measurement and of what).

   ________________________________________________________________

8. The Food Pyramid says, in addition to healthy eating, you should:
   a. watch tv
   b. read a book
   c. exercise
   d. play video games

9. People who don’t eat meat or other animal products can get many of the protein and vitamins they need from legumes. True or False? _______________
Deficiency - lacking in something important
Legumes - another name for beans and nuts, an important source of protein
Minerals - the different types of rocks, crystals, and metals
Nutrient - something that helps the body be healthy
Nutrition - the science of eating healthy foods
Sparingly - using very small amounts of something
Supplement - extra helping of a vitamin or mineral to be healthy
Vitamins - organic nutrient

For Teachers and Parents:

The Food Pyramid activity can be done in a large group or individually by each student. Illustrate an example of the activity with a fictional character. The Serving Size Guide shows how a serving of grain could be one slice of bread. Additionally, you could provide different sizes of measuring cups to give them a visual about how much fruit is considered a 1/2 cup.

EX: Bobby is a boy and he is 8 years old. He exercises about 45 minutes each day. Bobby should eat 5 to 6 ounces of grains, 2 to 2 1/2 cups of veggies, 1 1/2 cups of fruit, 3 cups of dairy, and 5 ounces of meat and legumes.

Suggested answers to the worksheets follow on the next three pages.
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For farms that produce meat and other animal products, what should they do to produce healthy products? They should feed the animals healthy food, which comes from good soil.

Why is it important for plants to grow in good soil? Because we get our vitamins and minerals from healthy plants.

What could you do to soil that didn’t have enough nutrients in it? You can add compost to give back nutrients.

Name a crop we eat that a farmer would grow. Corn, Beans, Peas, etc
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Name two ways to eat too much. __________________________

Eating more food that you are hungry for and eating too much of a vitamin.

How is eating too little a bad thing? __________________________

Yes, because your body doesn't get the right amount of nutrients to work well.