

THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR NUTRITION MONTH TO GAIN EXCITEMENT AROUND HEALTHY EATING

Looking for something to do to help celebrate nutrition month (March)? Try some of these fun ideas!

1. Have a Daily/weekly challenge for students to try at home:

- Eat something for breakfast
- Eat a meal without distractions (TV, phone, computer, etc.)
- Eat a meal together with your family or friends.
- Help out making dinner
- Try a food you have never tried before
- Etc...

2. Celebrate Family Food Traditions – have students think about some of their favourite family food traditions and then get details from their parents or grandparents about how that tradition started and then share with the class (they can either write a poem about it, draw a picture, write a few paragraphs, bring in photos or recipes, etc.) Some examples might include: eating turkey on thanksgiving, having a certain type of cake on birthdays, frying up fresh caught fish on the fire on camping trips, smoking meat, berry picking in the summer, picking peas from the garden at the family farm and then shelling them with auntie, air popping popcorn together with your parents and then eating on movie night, etc.

3. Celebrate Foods from around the world

- Show pictures or bring in samples to taste of different foods and beverages from around the world. Could be prepared foods and beverages or single ingredients. Have students guess where in the world they are traditionally eaten (or drank), and then point it out on the map.
- Host a cultural food family potluck and have families bring their favourite cultural dishes.
- Have students research a cultural food or food practice, how it's made and where it is traditionally eaten and share with the class.

4. Name that vegetable or fruit

- Show pictures of vegetables or fruit growing in the garden or ground and get students to guess what it is. Discuss how it is grown, whether the edible 'fruit' is the root, leaf or stem portion of the plant, and where the seeds come from.

5. Have a feature vegetable/fruit/ingredient of the week – a different one each week – e.g. spinach, lentils, pears, flax seed, etc.

- This is about exposure to healthy (and maybe new) foods, as well as good and fun experiences with healthy foods.
- Coordinate with school admin to have students make announcement over the intercom, or include information in the school newsletter about where spinach, for example, is commonly grown, how it can be grown here, how to plant it, what the seeds look like, why it is good for us, how it is a dark green vegetable – something Canada's Food Guide recommends we eat every day, what healthy nutrients it contains, etc. Have spinach featured in several snacks and/or lunches throughout the week. (e.g. spinach, strawberry and

sunflower seed salad; spinach in a smoothie, spinach pureed in with scrambled eggs for *green eggs* – like Dr. Seuss!, etc.)

- Note: never force students to try something they do not want to. Encourage students to politely turn down food without negative comments if they are not interested.

6. Promote the all mighty pulses! (chickpeas, beans, lentils, dried peas, etc.). Some ideas for this theme:

- Make foods including these ingredients, see if students can guess which one was used in the recipe (have a picture of a variety of pulses and their name in front of each).
 - Could also get students *guessing the number of beans (not jelly beans!) in a jar*.
 - Have different varieties of pulses in clear jars and have students *try to match their names up correctly*.
 - Have pictures of the plants they come from and have students *guess which seed (pulse) comes from which plant*.
- ✓ Pulses can be used in chili, soup, stew, pasta sauce, muffins, cookies, tacos, burritos also try: www.pulsecanada.com/food-health/recipes AND **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**
 - ✓ Pulses are a more affordable source of protein than animal products and have many health and environmental benefits, many are also produced right here in Saskatchewan!
 - ✓ With the rising food costs this is a good option for schools and families trying to stretch their food dollar.
 - ✓ Teaching kids about how to cook with pulses and exposing them to these foods early on helps develop a liking and preference for these affordable and healthy foods.

7. Feature foods grown/produced in Saskatchewan – local foods! (leafy greens, carrots, turnips, onions, lentils, chickpeas, mustard, canola, wheat, flax).

8. Celebrate/incorporate foods and flavours from around the world (consider the cultural diversity in your school - ask for suggestions from students and families)

9. Start growing herbs in your nutrition room - Apply for Little Green Thumbs grant and they will set you up with everything you need to get started! www.littlegreenthumbs.org/Apply

10. Host a tasting party – try vegetables and fruits of all the different colours of the rainbow; try foods from around the world; try different foods made with pulses; get creative!

11. Get students to try growing a carrot from a carrot top (note: it will only produce more foliage and flowers not another carrot, but still fun to watch!) www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/children/grow-carrot-tops.htm **Try it with lettuce too!** <http://lifehacker.com/5992390/regrow-fresh-heads-of-romaine-lettuce-from-chopped-down-lettuce-hearts>

12. Nutrition Month Tasting Challenge! – each student gets a card and checks off/fills in items they have tasted in certain categories (e.g. something from every colour of the rainbow – not candy or drinks: green, blue, purple, red, orange, yellow, white; something sweet; something sour; something that is from the milk and alternatives food group; something you can grow in the garden; something that is an alternative to meat; favourite food; something new; something together with your family; something with beans in it, etc...)

See worksheet on next page...

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| Something GREEN <i>Example: peas</i> | Something BLUE | Something PURPLE | Something RED | Something ORANGE |
| Something YELLOW | Something WHITE | Something Sweet | Something Sour | Something Bitter |
| A seed (e.g. sunflower, pumpkin, flax, hemp, chia, etc.) | Something made from whole grains | Something for breakfast | Something you can grow in the garden | Your Favourite Food |
| Something you have never tried before | Something that you helped to make | Something sitting together with your family with no TV or phones | Something made with beans or lentils | Something from another culture |

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