

The information below may be used as a lesson plan to educate your child(ren). This program is designed for younger children. The purpose of this information is to educate and instill habits that lead to increased physical activity levels and teach valuable nutritional lessons that your child can use throughout their lives.

Fruit & Vegetable Experiment

How many children out of ten eat the recommended servings of **vegetables** each day?

- Only 1 out of every 10 eats enough vegetables.
- That means most children (90%) do not eat enough vegetables!

How many children out of ten eat the recommended servings of **fruit**?

- 2.5 out of 10, or only about 25%
- That means 75% don't eat enough fruit!

How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you think you should have each day?

- We need at least 5 servings a day.
- A serving equals about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. (Show $\frac{1}{2}$ cup container if available.)

If you look at the [MyPlate](#) that means half of your plate should be fruit and vegetables.

Knowing the number of servings is important, but you also need to know how much is in a serving.

How many grapes do you think equals a serving of fruit? (If available, have your child choose how many grapes they believe is a serving.)

- One serving of fruit equals about 16 grapes.

One serving also equals:

- a medium orange
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit
- a snack container of applesauce.

How many baby carrots do you think equals a serving of vegetables? (If available, have your child choose how many carrots they believe is a serving.)

- One serving of vegetables equals about 10 baby carrots.

One serving also equals:

- a small green pepper
- 1 cup of leafy vegetables like spinach
- a 12" piece of celery.



Ask your child what he/she thinks happens if you do not eat enough vegetables and fruit every day?

Answers:

- It may make your weight unhealthy.
- It may make it hard for you to learn in school and concentrate.

If you try to eat more vegetables and fruit, you will probably be full won't you? You won't even have room for the candy, chips and soda that are not good for you.

Do you know what is in fruits and vegetables that make them good for us to eat?

- They provide lots of vitamins and minerals that our body needs to grow, play, learn and stay healthy.
- They keep your heart healthy and help reduce the risk of some cancers.
- They are high in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, fiber and potassium, but low in calories, fat and sodium.

Colors of Fruits and Vegetables:

It is also important to eat a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables.

Red means they are heart healthy, protect us from some cancers, and improve our memory so we can do better in school.

- Have your child name some red fruits and vegetables? (*Ex. Strawberries, cherries, beets, rhubarb, watermelon, cranberries, red peppers, radishes.*)

Orange means they are high in Vitamin C. That helps us fight a cold and are good for our immune system. They also have Vitamin A and beta-carotene, which helps us see in the dark and keeps our skin healthy.

- Have your child name some orange fruits and vegetables. (*Ex. Oranges, squash, pumpkin, carrots, mango, peach, tangerine, sweet potato.*)

Green fruits and vegetables help our entire body: they keep our nails strong, help us see better, keep us from getting sick and give us strong bones and teeth.

- Have your child name some green fruits and vegetables. (*Ex. Broccoli, asparagus, beans, peas, brussel sprouts, green peppers, spinach, cucumbers, celery, avocados.*)

Purple/Blue is a color that is excellent for our brains! They help us think and also keep some cancers away.

- Have our child name some purple fruits and vegetables. (*Ex. grapes, cabbage, plums, prunes, eggplant, figs, blueberries and blackberries.*)

Juice vs. Whole Fruit Activity

Here is an activity you may do with your child. This activity shows why eating whole fruit is different from drinking juice.

Cut an orange into sections and seal in a baggie. Have the child squeeze the sections to show them the juice & fiber in the fruit.

Let your child know that juice is still good for you, but there are advantages to eating the whole fruit.

Whole fruit contains **fiber**. The benefits of fiber include:

- Keeps you fuller longer.
- Is good for your heart.
- Helps when you go to the bathroom.

Now that you know more about fruits and vegetables, I hope you have an idea why it is so important to eat them every day!