

Tasting Parties

Action Schools! BC

Vegetable & Fruit Extension Activity

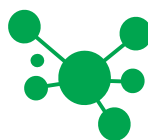


K-7

VEGETABLE AND FRUIT

Increasing students' exposure to a variety of vegetables and fruit is essential in enhancing their preference for vegetables and fruit. Tasting parties and activities provide students with the opportunity to prepare and taste a variety of vegetables and fruit.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



This extension activity can be on its own and in conjunction with any of the following Action Schools! BC learning activities:

- Grade 2: Edible Plant Parts
- Grade 3: 5 a Day the Colour Way
- Grade 5: BC Grown
- Grade 7: Food Customs

These and other learning activities can be found at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources.

PREPARATION

- Review the *Vegetables and Fruit* section of the *Healthy Eating Overview*, the *Food Safety Considerations* and the *Teacher Backgrounder*, all included with this extension activity.
- Purchase or ask students to provide the vegetables and fruits for the particular tasting activity. Check Healthy Schools BC for programs and supports that may be available to your school to support healthy eating, including providing grants or fruits and vegetables directly (<http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/category/20/healthy-eating>).
- Gather the necessary vegetable and fruit preparation supplies, which may include a cutting board, measuring cups, peeler, and scrub brush.
- Photocopy one *Memo Home – Action Schools! BC Healthy Eating* per student (included).

Implementation Ideas

- Distribute *Memo Home* before doing a Tasting Party.
- Students play the role of food tasters and describe the flavours of the vegetables and fruit. Encourage them to use descriptive words such as *sweet*, *tangy*, or *spicy* rather than *yucky*, *okay*, or *awesome*. Forcing children to try new foods may only make them resistant to tasting anything new or unusual.
- Instruct students to say “no thank you” if they are not interested in trying a food, rather than saying negative comments about the food. If they do not like the taste, they may place it in the garbage.
- If possible, provide students with water to drink between trying foods during this activity.
- The *My Vegetables and Fruit Journal* can be used by students in Grades K to 3 to keep track of the vegetables and fruit they try. They can draw a happy face by the foods they enjoyed (www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).
- Older students can try brainstorming descriptive words as a class before doing the tasting. See the *Food Tasting Chart Handout* for students in Grades 4 to 7 (www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).

Tasting Party Ideas

- **Celebrations:** Add vegetables and fruit tasting parties to classroom and school celebrations (e.g., multicultural, First Nations traditional foods, or holiday tastings).
- **BC Grown:** Prepare a tasting party with locally grown vegetables and fruit. Refer to BC Grown Vegetables and Fruit (www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).
- **Varieties:** Prepare a tasting party with different varieties of apples, squash, berries, etc.
- **Mystery Food Game:** Place a vegetable or fruit in a paper or cloth bag. Have students reach into the bag to feel it without looking, keeping their guesses to themselves.

Ask students questions while the bag is being passed around to help guess what is in the bag. For example, “what colour do you think it is?”, “does it grow above or below the ground?” After everyone has had a turn, ask the students to guess what it is. Next, have students draw what they think it is. Remove it from the bag. Provide samples of the vegetable or fruit for students to try.

In pairs or by themselves, students could also write out several facts on a card about a fruit or vegetable and read clues out loud to classmates and see if they can guess what the fruit or veggie is. Make sure student information is correct before beginning this game. Remind students of the format to follow in this activity so it doesn’t become a shouting match.

- **Eat Your Colours:** Prepare a tasting party trying vegetables and fruit of one colour or incorporating as many different colours as you can. You can use a glass bowl and layer vegetables and/or fruit in the colours of the rainbow. Use *Action Schools! BC Colourful Choices Poster*.
- **Friendship Fruit Salad:** Ask students to bring a fruit to class. Cut up the fruit and prepare a fruit salad for everyone to share.
- **Fruit Smoothies:** Use a blender to prepare smoothies. Try different fruit combinations. Inquire about food allergies and provide non-dairy options as well.

Fruit Smoothie

INGREDIENTS

125 ml (1/2 cup) plain yogurt
 (1/3 cup) ice
 125 ml (1/2 cup) frozen or fresh fruit
 1/2 medium banana

MATERIALS

Cutting board 75 ml
 Knife
 Blender
 Measuring cups
 Spoon

PREPARATION

- Wash hands
- Wash and cut fruit into pieces (if required)
- Place ingredients in blender
- Blend until smooth

This recipe fits the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools*.

Tips and Recipes for Quantity Cooking: Nourishing Minds and Bodies

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php>)
- *Health Canada's Eat Well Plate* (<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/tips-conseils/interactive-tools-outils-interactifs/eat-well-bien-manger-eng.php>)
- Tips and Recipes for Quantity Cooking: Nourishing Minds and Bodies (<http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/392/tips-and-recipes-for-quantity-cooking-2014-nourishing-minds-and-bodies>)
- Eat Smart Celebrations (<http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/380/eat-smart-celebrations>)
- Fruits et Légumes (available in French only) (Healthy Living Booklist, available at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

This section explains why it is important to eat vegetables and fruit.

Information relating to conducting tasting activities with students, food safety considerations, messaging relating to variety and information on produce grown in BC can be found in this section.

Recommended guidelines:

- Make a healthy choice. Fill half your plate with fruits and veggies.
- Children aged 4 to 8 should eat a minimum of 5 food guide servings of vegetables and fruit each day.
- Children and youth aged 9 to 13 should eat a minimum of 6 food guide servings of vegetables and fruit each day.
- Eat one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- Drink water – it's always a great choice.

Why Are They Important?

The Vegetables and Fruit food group is the largest arc in the rainbow on *Canada's Food Guide*, emphasizing the key role these foods play in a healthy eating pattern.

Vegetables and fruit include important nutrients such as carbohydrates (including fibre), vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Choosing a wide variety of colourful vegetables and fruit helps to ensure we get all of the nutrients we need.

A diet that includes a wide variety of vegetables and fruit helps children to grow, learn and play. Additionally, this may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular or heart disease and some types of cancer, as well as help to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

The recommended number of servings is different for people at different stages of life and is different for males and females after age 14. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends a minimum of 5 servings a day of vegetables and fruit for children aged 4 to 8 years and a minimum of 6 per day for children aged 9 to 13 years.

Canada's Food Guide - Eat Well Plate is another resource that helps build healthy meals and encourages making half your plate vegetables and fruit at each meal (<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/alt/pdf/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/tips-conseils/interactive-tools-outils-interactifs/eat-well-bien-manger-eng.pdf>).

Canada's Food Guide has been translated into 12 languages. Visit Health Canada's website to download translated copies. In addition to the translated Food Guides, Canada also has a *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Food Guide*. The "My Food Guide" tool on the Health Canada website allows individuals to create a personalized food guide using the foods that are part of their eating pattern. You can choose to print this tool in either English or French.

References:

- *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>)
- *Health Canada's The Eat Well Plate* (<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/tips-conseils/interactive-tools-outils-interactifs/eat-well-bien-manger-eng.php>)
- Canadian Paediatric Society (<http://www.cps.ca>)
- Dietitians of Canada (<http://www.dietitians.ca/>)

What Is a Vegetable?

Vegetable is not a botanical term, but rather a culinary term which generally refers to any edible part of a plant that is not regarded as a fruit, nut, herb, spice, or grain. Vegetables can include leaves (lettuce), stems (asparagus), roots (carrots), tubers (potatoes), flowers (broccoli), bulbs (garlic), and seeds (peas and beans). Some botanical fruit such as cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, and sweet peppers are usually referred to as vegetables.

What Is a Fruit?

In botany, a fruit is the ripened seed-bearing part of a flowering plant. In cuisine when discussing fruit as food, the term usually refers to just those plant fruits that are sweet and fleshy (e.g., plums, apples, and oranges). Many foods are botanically fruit but are treated as vegetables in cooking. These include cucurbits (e.g., squash, pumpkins, and cucumbers), tomatoes, peas, beans, corn, eggplants, and peppers.

Vegetable and Fruit Tasting

Repeated exposure to food, including seeing, smelling, and touching new food, and preparation and tasting, is the most effective way to influence a child's eating behaviours. See the *Action Schools! BC Extension Activities*, available at www.actionschoolsbc.ca for great ways to conduct tasting activities with students.

- The objective of a tasting party is to have students sample a vegetable or fruit – not to provide a full serving to each student.
- Children may be more willing to try new types of food with their peers. Providing a relaxed setting without forcing them to try new foods helps to build a healthy relationship with food.
- Fresh vegetables and fruit work best for tasting activities. Choose local vegetables and fruit that are in season when possible. If fresh vegetables and fruit are not available, try dried fruit with no added sugar; frozen vegetables and fruit with no added salt or sugar; or canned vegetables and fruit in water, juice, or light syrup (has added sugar).

Name of vegetable or fruit: _____

I've tried this vegetable or fruit _____ times.

Description		😊	😐	😞
Taste				
Texture				
Appearance				

- See the *Food Safety Considerations* information for important reminders about food safety when conducting tasting activities with students.
- Visit Healthy Schools BC for programs and supports that may be available to your school to support healthy eating, including providing grants or fruits and vegetables directly (www.healthyschoolsbc.ca).
- Using *Food Tasting Chart* (available at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources) allows students to reflect on what they are tasting, use their senses, and develop their vocabulary.

Buying Locally Grown Food Has Many Advantages

Whether it is purchasing the produce for your Tasting Party or teaching students about the food system, it is important to highlight the benefits of growing and/or purchasing local food.

Buying Locally Is Good for the Economy

Dollars spent on locally grown food are reinvested back into the community, which contributes to the growth of small businesses, generates local jobs, raises property values, and leads to strong health care, education, and recreation sectors.

Buying Locally Is Good for the Environment

Food produced and consumed locally has a smaller carbon footprint. It uses less fossil fuel for transportation and requires less material for packaging compared to mainstream food production.

References

- *Fighting Global Warming at the Farmer's Market: A FoodShare Research in Action Report*, Second Edition, April 2005 (http://foodshare.net/custom/uploads/2015/11/Fighting_Global_Warming_at_the_Farmers_Market.pdf)
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom (www.aitc.ca/bc/)

Recommended Resources

- Healthy Families BC (www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/eating)
- HealthLink BC – Healthy Eating (www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating)
- Health Canada
 - *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (available in 12 languages and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis; free class sets available) (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>)
 - *Canada's Food Guide: A Resource for Educators and Communicators* (F) (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/educ-comm/resource-ressource-eng.php>)
 - *Eat Well and Be Active Educational Toolkit* (F) (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/educ-comm/toolkit-trousse/index-eng.php>)
 - *Eat Well Plate* (<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/tips-conseils/interactive-tools-outils-interactifs/eat-well-bien-manger-eng.php>)
- HealthLink BC: Call 811 and speak with a registered dietitian (www.healthlinkbc.ca)
- Canadian Paediatric Society – Caring for Kids (www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

BC Grown Vegetables and Fruit

An abundance of produce grows right here in BC. With a wide variety of climates and growing conditions, availability throughout the province varies.

spring

apples • Asian vegetables* • asparagus
cabbage • celery • chard • cucumbers
garlic • kale • leeks • lettuce
mustard greens • onions • parsnips
peas • potatoes • radishes
rhubarb • salad greens • spinach
tomatoes • turnips

summer

apples • apricots • artichokes
Asian vegetables* • asparagus
beans • beets • blackberries
blueberries • broccoli • Brussels
sprouts • cabbage • carrots
cauliflower • celery • chard • cherries
corn • cucumbers • currents • eggplant
fennel • garlic • gooseberries • grapes
huckleberries • kale • leeks • lettuce
melons • mustard greens • nectarines • onions
parsnips • peaches • pear • peas • peppers
plums • potatoes • prunes • pumpkins
quince • radishes • raspberries • rhubarb
rutabagas • salad greens
Saskatoon berries • shallots
spinach • strawberries
summer squash
tomatoes • turnip
winter squash
zucchini

fall

apples • Asian vegetables*
artichokes • beets • beans
blueberries • broccoli
Brussels sprouts • cabbage
carrots • cauliflower • celery
chard • corn • cranberries
cucumber • eggplant • fennel
garlic • grapes • huckleberries • kale
kiwi • leeks • lettuce • melons
mustard greens • onions • parsnips
pears • peppers • plums • potatoes
prunes • pumpkin • quince • radishes
rutabaga • salad greens • spinach
strawberries • tomatoes • turnips
winter squash • zucchini

winter

apples • beets
Brussels sprouts
cabbage • carrots
cucumbers • kale
kiwi • leeks • onions
parsnips • pears
potatoes • pumpkin
rutabagas • turnips
winter squash

* (e.g. bok choy, choy sum, gai chong, sui choy, gai lan, daikon, lotus root)

Check out what's grown in your region at
www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca

FOOD SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

There are steps to take to prevent illness and make fresh vegetables and fruit safe to eat.

- When buying and storing vegetables and fruit, always keep them separate from raw foods such as meat, poultry and seafood. Juices from raw foods can be contaminated with germs that cause illness.
- Always wash hands with soap and warm running water before preparing any food, including vegetables and fruit.
- Any person who is sick and has symptoms of diarrhea or vomiting, or who has infected cuts or sores, should not be allowed to handle food in any way.
- Always wash and sanitize* surfaces where foods are prepared and placed.
- Dishcloths must be washed well and sanitized regularly.
- Take extra care to thoroughly clean vegetables and fruit, especially dirty produce. Wash them in a diluted dish soap solution and then rinse in clean running water.
- When washing vegetables and fruit, cut away any damaged or bruised areas since harmful germs can grow there. Compost or throw away any rotten vegetables and fruit.
- Wash and scrub vegetables and fruit that have a firm, rough surface such as potatoes, using a clean scrub brush for produce.
- Always wash vegetables and fruit that have a rind, before peeling or preparing them, such as pineapples, cantaloupe, oranges, melon and squash. Although the skin and outer surfaces protect them, germs can grow if the surface gets broken, pierced or cut, especially in melons and tomatoes.
- Always discard the outer leaves of leafy vegetables grown in or near the ground, such as lettuce and cabbage. The outer leaves are more likely to be contaminated with germs.
- Raw sprouted seed products, such as bean sprouts, radish sprouts, alfalfa sprouts, mung beans and others, may carry germs that cause illness. Always cook these before eating because it is difficult to wash sprouted seeds.
- Contaminated foods may not look or smell bad so if in doubt, throw it out!
- Be cognizant of any food allergies that your students may have prior to activities that involve food.
- You can make a sanitizing solution:
 - Mix 15 ml (1 tablespoon) of household bleach into 4 L (1 gallon) of water; or,
 - Mix 5 ml (1 teaspoon) of household bleach into 1 litre (4 cups) of water.

Adapted from: *Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Ten Easy Steps to Make Food Safe*, HealthLink BC

Recommended Resources

- *Do Bugs Need Drugs?* (www.dobugsneeddrugs.org)
- HealthLink BC: Call 811 and speak with a registered dietitian (www.healthlinkbc.ca)



Action Schools! BC

To: Parent/Caregiver
Re: Action Schools! BC Healthy Eating

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Our school is involved in a school-based healthy living initiative called Action Schools! BC. The program is designed to assist schools in promoting healthy living while achieving academic outcomes.

The goals of Action Schools! BC include increasing students' knowledge of healthy eating and encouraging healthy eating behaviours such as increasing consumption of vegetables and fruit, and limiting sodium (salt) and sugary drink intake.

Throughout the year students will have the opportunity to be involved in classroom and school- wide food and healthy eating activities. We invite you to support your child to participate in the activities by asking them to share with you what they have learned and how you can help them.

More information about Action Schools! BC and ideas for healthy snacks can be found at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources.

Food Allergies

Some activities related to this initiative may include food sampling (primarily vegetables and fruit). To ensure every child's health and safety during tasting activities, please fill in the bottom half of this form and return it to your child's classroom teacher.

Thank you

Child's Name: _____

Does your child have any food allergies and/or sensitivities?

- NO**, my child does not have any food allergies and/or sensitivities that would prevent him/her from participating in classroom tasting activities.
- YES**, my child does have a food allergy and/or or sensitivities that might prevent him/her from participating in classroom tasting activities. S/he is allergic/sensitive to the following foods:

Parent/Caregiver Signature: _____ Date: _____



NAME _____

Food Tasting Chart

Name of vegetable or fruit: _____

I've tried this vegetable or fruit _____ times.

Description		😊	😐	😞
Taste				
Texture				
Appearance				

Name of vegetable or fruit: _____

I've tried this vegetable or fruit _____ times.

Description		😊	😐	😞
Taste				
Texture				
Appearance				

Name of vegetable or fruit: _____

I've tried this vegetable or fruit _____ times.

Description		😊	😐	😞
Taste				
Texture				
Appearance				

Name of vegetable or fruit: _____

I've tried this vegetable or fruit _____ times.

Description		😊	😐	😞
Taste				
Texture				
Appearance				

It can sometimes take 10 to 15 tries to like a new food, so keep trying.