

Lesson: Eat a Rainbow

Supplies Needed:

- EP_5-Minute-Fitness-Ideas
- 2.3_LV_EAT-A-RAINBOW-VISUALS
- 2.3_LW_Eat-A-Rainbow-Worksheet
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Optional: stickers of fruits and vegetables

Goals:

- Students will learn to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables.
- Students will learn the health benefits of consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Students can identify specific reasons why it is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.

Background:

Children have a hard time remembering the benefits of the various food groups. To help them remember, Nurture uses specific food group actions every time a food group is mentioned. We encourage the students to use these symbols as well.

- Vegetables – Smile because they make our bodies happy
- Fruits – Make okay symbol with hand because fruits keep us feeling okay
- Grains – Pump arms like your running in place because grains give us energy
- Protein – Flex your bicep muscles because muscles are made of protein
- Dairy – Point to your teeth because dairy helps build strong teeth and bones

Lesson:

(Start with two or three minutes of exercises from 5 Minute Fitness Ideas.)

Let's review a bit from last month. Can you name four foods in the protein group **(Flex biceps.)**?

(Meat, fish, poultry, nuts, seeds, beans, eggs)

What does the grain group do for us **(Pump arms.)**?

(Gives us energy.)

Can you name two different foods in the dairy group **(Point to teeth.)**?
(*Milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, etc.*)

How much of our plate should be filled with fruits **(Make okay sign.)** and vegetables **(Smile.)**?
(*Half*)

Great job! Let's talk a little more about the colorful part of our plate-- the fruits **(Make okay sign.)** and vegetables **(Smile.)**! Fruits and vegetables provide our bodies with many minerals, vitamins, and phytochemicals. Can you say *fight-o-chemicals*? This is the perfect name, because phytochemicals fight off diseases. Phytochemicals are special nutrients found in fruits and vegetables that prevent you from getting sick. Phytochemicals give fruits and vegetables their color. It is important to eat many different colored fruits and vegetables so your body gets a variety of different phytochemicals.

Fruits and vegetables can be broken down into the following five colors:

(Show slide 1.) Red- promotes a healthy heart, memory, and brain function
Can you think of a red fruit or vegetable?
(*Cherries, red peppers, strawberries, tomatoes*)

(Show slide 2.) Blue/Purple- are rich in antioxidants which help our bodies stay healthy.
Can you think of a blue or purple fruit or vegetable?
(*Blueberries, grapes, eggplant, plums, purple cabbage*)

(Show slide 3.) Green- promotes healthy eye sight/vision and strong bones and teeth. Can you think of a green fruit or vegetable?
(*Broccoli, celery, green apples, lettuce, kiwi*)

(Show slide 4.) Orange/Yellow- promotes healthy eye sight/vision, may reduce the risk of some cancers, and promotes a healthy immune system. Can you think of a yellow or orange fruit or vegetable?
(*Carrots, oranges, peaches, pumpkin, cantaloupe*)

(Show slide 5.) White- keeps your heart healthy, and protect your cells. Can you think of a white fruit or vegetable?
(*Bananas, cauliflower, potatoes, onions. pears*)

Some fruits and vegetables like bananas and apples can be confusing because their skin is one color and the flesh or inside is a different color. The phytochemicals we care about are the ones that we eat. So a banana would be white because we only eat the inside. If we eat a red apple, including the skin, we benefit from both red and white phytochemicals!

Scientists are doing a lot of research to find out if certain phytochemicals can cure diseases. They are learning new things every day. Some scientists have tried to capture these phytochemicals and put them in vitamins or pills. However, they have found that phytochemicals help us the most when they are consumed as a food or beverage. This is why it is best to get most of your nutrients from whole foods (lots of fruits and veggies) rather than from vitamins or supplements.

Who can remember how many fruits and vegetables we should eat each day? **(Show slide 6.)** *(We should fill half of our plates with fruits and vegetables, or at a minimum, eat three veggies and two fruits every day.)*

What if I only ate orange fruits and vegetables?
(I would miss out on the phytochemicals found in green, red, purple/blue, and white fruits and vegetables.)

When you look at your plate, aim to make it as colorful as possible. Try to include at least two different colored fruits or vegetables at meal time. For example, for lunch, enjoy orange carrot sticks **(Smile.)** and a red apple **(Make okay sign.)**. At dinner, eat green broccoli **(Smile.)** and blueberries **(Make okay sign.)** and you'll have eaten all the colors in just two meals.

There are so many choices when it comes to fruits and vegetables. **(Do Activity 1 or Activity 2 then finish with the recap of what eating a rainbow means.)**

Activity 1:

I am going to divide you into groups and assign your team a color. When I say, "Go!" your team is going to write down as many fruits and vegetables that are that color. After three minutes, we will see which team has the longest list.

(Divide into teams, assign colors.) Ready? Go!

(Wait three minutes-- then review the groups' lists as a class)

Activity 2:

(Show slide 7.) Now that we've thought about the colorful fruits and vegetables we love to eat, I will give you your very own rainbow to fill with your favorite fruits and vegetables.

(Distribute Eat a Rainbow Worksheet, colored pencils, and fruit/vegetable stickers if available.)

Fill in each stripe of your rainbow with your favorite fruits and vegetables of that color. Either use stickers or draw a fruit or vegetable that you like. Try to fill up each row of the rainbow. You will have about seven minutes to make your rainbow delicious. If you want to write the names of fruits and vegetables and need help spelling one, raise your hand, and I'll write it on the board.

You can take your rainbow home and put it on the refrigerator or use it as a placemat to remind you of all the colorful fruits and vegetables you love to eat!

(Continue with Recap or Lesson.)

So what does eating a rainbow mean?

(Eating a rainbow is eating many different colored fruits and vegetables.)

Why is eating a rainbow important?

(Eating a rainbow enables your body to get a variety of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals, which keep your body strong and healthy.)

On the next page is a table of different fruits and vegetables to aid in brainstorming.

Blue/Purple	Green	White	Orange/Yellow	Red
Blackberries	Avocado	Bananas	Bananas	Apples
Blueberries	Apples	Pears	Apples	Cherries
Cabbage	Grapes	Nectarines	Apricots	Cranberries
Currants	Honeydew Melon	White Peaches	Cantaloupe	Raspberries
Eggplant	Kiwi	Cauliflower	Grapefruit	Watermelon
Grapes	Limes	Garlic	Oranges	Strawberries
Plums	Pears	Ginger	Mangoes	Pomegranate
Raisins	Artichoke	Artichoke	Nectarines	Peppers
Purple Potatoes	Arugula	Jicama	Peaches	Tomatoes
Figs	Asparagus	Mushrooms	Pineapple	Radishes
Beets	Broccoli	Onions	Tangerine	Rhubarb
Purple asparagus	Brussels Sprouts	Parsnips	Melon	Red Onion
	Cabbage	Coconut	Beets	Red Potatoes
	Celery	Shallots	Squash	Red Pears
	Cucumber	Turnips	Corn	
	Lettuce	Corn	Peppers	
	Peas		Carrots	
	Peppers		Pumpkin	
	Spinach		Sweet Potato	
	Zucchini		Pears	