

## Fruits & Veggies

### Goals:

- *Students will learn the health benefits of eating a rainbow of color*
- *Students will calculate the number of servings of fruits and vegetables needed for optimal health*

**Audience:** 3rd-5th grade

### Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:

- *Fruit Dip*
- *Fruit Salad*
- *Veggies and Hummus*

### Materials:

- *Apple*
- *Apple slicer/corer*
- *Small cutting board*
- *Splash of Orange juice or lemon juice*
- *Plate*

### Lesson:

Leader: If I were to tell you one thing that we could all do to have a healthier diet, what do you think it would be?

Leader: To eat more fruits and vegetables! I think we all know that fruits and vegetables are good for us, but almost 75% of Americans do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables!

Today we are going to talk about:

1. Why fruits and vegetables are so good for us; what they do for our bodies
2. Why it is important to eat a 'rainbow of colors'
3. How many fruits and vegetables we should eat every day
4. Finally, we'll brainstorm ways of how we can fit in more fruits and veggies!

Leader: I don't know about you, but even though I know something is good for me, sometimes it is hard to put this knowledge into practice! Today I'm going to demonstrate one of the most amazing benefits of fruits and veggies! (Hold up apple). I'm going to cut this apple in slices. What do you think is going to happen to the flesh of the apple in about 10-15 minutes if I don't eat it?

- Leader: It will turn brown! Why do apples turn brown once you cut them?
- Leader: Because they are exposed to air (oxidation), which in a sense ages the inside of the apple.
- Leader: We are going to do a little experiment: I'm going to cut this apple in pieces; half of the pieces will be left alone, the other half will be dipped in orange/lemon juice for a brief moment. (Leave apple slices on a plate for display).
- Leader: While the apples rest, we're going to talk about the health benefits of fruits and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are packed with nutrients that you need for proper growth. They contain fiber which helps you stay full and supports a healthy digestive system. Fruits and vegetables are usually low calorie foods. A large percentage of fruits and vegetables are made of water, so they tend to be really filling; which helps us maintain a healthy weight. They also contain essential vitamins and minerals that your body needs to function properly.

- Leader: I want everyone to look at their skin. Vitamin A, which is found in vegetables such as carrots, helps your skin stay healthy and promotes good vision.
- Leader: Raise your hand if you've ever had a bad cold? Being sick is not very fun! Vitamin C, which is found in fruits and vegetables such as strawberries and oranges, help build a strong immune system, so your body can fight off colds and sickness.
- Leader: Did you know that some vegetables, such as broccoli, contain calcium! Calcium is needed to build strong bones and teeth.
- Leader: Potassium is a mineral that your body needs to stay hydrated. It also helps regulate blood pressure. Bananas are an excellent source of potassium.
- Leader: With all these wonderful health properties, you would think people would eat more fruits and vegetables! How many fruits and vegetables do you think you need to eat each day?

- Leader: At a minimum, you need at least 3 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruits.
- Leader: Show me with your hands how much a serving looks like.
- Leader: A serving of vegetables is about a ½ cup; ½ cup is about the size of a baseball. One small apple would be 1 serving. A large grapefruit would be about 2 servings. 5-6 baby carrots would be one serving.
- Leader: There are a lot of fruits and vegetables to choose from! When choosing fruits and vegetables, think of a rainbow. Try to eat a variety of colors. By eating a rainbow of colors your body is getting different nutrients needed for proper growth.
- Leader: When selecting fruits and vegetables, try to eat the 'whole' food. Juice is missing the fiber that is found in the peel of the fruit or vegetable. And don't be fooled by labels, just because something contains the word fruit in the name, doesn't mean it is a natural fruit. For example, fruit roll ups!
- Leader: Now that we have many great reasons to eat more fruits and vegetables, can anyone think of creative ways to make sure we actually eat more? (Brainstorm).  
Add more veggies to your sandwich  
Pack an-easy-to eat fruit for an afternoon snack (apple or raisins)  
Enjoy 100% fruit smoothie for dessert
- Leader: I wonder how our apple is doing. Show the apple slices to the class (half should be turning brown the other half should still look fresh). I only gave these slices a splash of orange/lemon juice, but look how much fresher they look compared to the other ones. Why do you think they look so healthy?
- Leader: Orange/Lemon juice contains vitamin C which is an antioxidant. Antioxidants protect our cells from damage and keep them looking healthy! Think of all the amazing ways fruits and vegetables protect our body and help it perform at its best! It's pretty cool that something so simple can make such a big impact! Challenge yourself to eat 5 a day; your body will thank you!