



Lesson Eleven: Nutrition – We Are What We Eat

Background

Next to families, schools are the primary place where kids learn about nutrition and health. Explore strategies to develop healthy eating habits, the origins of our nation's current obesity crisis, and examines why teens overeat. Help students learn how small changes in diet and physical activity levels can make a dramatic impact in lowering a person's risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke.

Discussion Questions

1. According to the video, what are some of the reasons that people in the United States are overweight? What are some of the serious effects of eating too many calories?
2. How many calories equal a pound of fat? (Answer: 3,500 calories). Consider this: walking 30 minutes a day uses about 150 to 200 calories. If you walk about 30 minutes a day for a month, you will lose 1.25 to 1.75 pounds a month. Likewise, if you substitute high-calorie foods with more moderate calorie choices, you could easily reduce several more pounds a month. Why is that?
3. Each year, people in the United States spend millions of dollars on diets. Research estimates that more than 90 percent of these diets do not produce long-term results. Why do you think this is?
4. If you wanted to lose weight and keep it off for the rest of your life, what would be the best way to do that? (Answer: Develop a weight management plan that combines physical activity you enjoy, with a healthy meal plan you can live with.) Why is this so hard for most people to do?
5. In addition to helping you to lose weight, what are other benefits of physical exercise? (Answer examples: It helps you feel better, reduces stress, reduces cholesterol, and helps prevent osteoporosis by increasing bone density. It can also be a great way to connect with friend and family.)



- 6. Most fitness and nutrition experts recommend making a series of small changes to increase a person’s amount of physical activity or to encourage better nutrition each day.
- 7. What are some of these small changes? (Answer: Take the stairs instead of the elevator, keep the television off during mealtimes, never “super-size” unless it is to share food with others, drink water in place of high-sugar drinks). By doing these simple things, researchers have found that individuals can lose 10-15 additional pounds a year!

Vocabulary Builders

Term	Definition
Healthy meal plan	The process of selecting foods so to create an overall healthy diet. With this approach, foods are not seen as “good” or “bad.”
Portion size	A recommended amount of food. For example, a portion of meat is about the size of your palm or a deck of cards. A portion size of pretzels is about the size of a cupped handful.
Calories	The units of energy contained in food and drinks. Calories are used by the body to create energy and to sustain the organs of your body. Excess calories are stored in the body as fat to be used later.
Weight management	A term used to describe the process of combining physical activity with a healthy meal plan to lose, gain or maintain an appropriate weight.



Activity

Make it a Habit

1. Ask the class to number a blank sheet of paper from one to 10 and classify each of the following food items as good or bad for you.

Good Food or Bad Food Quiz

Food	Good	Bad
1. Catfish		
2. Filet Mignon Steak		
3. Olive Oil		
4. Margarine		
5. Potato Chips		
6. Ice cream		
7. Chicken		
8. Broccoli		
9. Carrots		
10. Pecan Pie		

After everyone has completed the quiz, you can:

- How many of you think you have identified all of the 10 foods correctly?
- How many of you feel you identified the majority of the foods correctly?
- How many of you think the majority of the foods are “bad?”
- How many of you think most of the foods are good?
- If you marked all of the foods either good or bad, ... (pause for effect).. you failed the quiz!
- If you didn't classify any of the 10 food items as good or bad, you get an A.
- Why? Repeat after me: “There are no good foods or bad foods – there are only good or bad nutritional habits.” In other words, no food is “good” or “bad” as long as you maintain a healthy diet.

Now use the information on the There Are No Good or Bad Foods handout to cite the reasons why even “bad” foods can benefit the body. As you discuss this information with the class, reinforce the theme, “there are no good or bad foods, only good or bad habits.”



There Are No Good or Bad Foods

Food	Nutritional Value
1. Catfish	A healthy, low fat choice if not fried.
2. Filet Mignon Steak	A well-trimmed filet is rich in iron, zinc, and protein.
3. Olive Oil	This is a healthy monounsaturated fat, but it also has as many calories as butter or margarine.
4. Margarine	Less saturated than butter, but still high in calories.
5. Potato Chips	While high in fat and salt, it does provide vitamin C.
6. Ice cream	Ice cream, while high in fat and sugar, does provide calcium.
7. Chicken	Like catfish, chicken is a healthy, low fat selection if not fried.
8. Broccoli	Filled with fiber and vitamins!
9. Carrots	Another rich source of fiber and vitamins.
10. Pecan Pie	While it has about 450 calories a slice, nuts contain monounsaturated fat and some fiber.

After reviewing the information with the class, you can say:

- By labeling foods as either good or bad, we create a set of dietary rules that often make people frustrated and discouraged.
- The truth is that foods are neither good or bad, black or white. Once in a while, eating a small portion of a high fat or high salt food -- such as potato chips -- is okay. People shouldn't feel guilty because they eat ice cream, chocolate cake, or a slice of pecan pie every now and then.
- The challenge is to learn how to balance high fat and high calorie foods with lower-fat, lower-calorie choices to create a well-balanced, healthy diet.
- For those of you who like the crunch and salt of potato chips, you might try pretzels instead. Have a sweet tooth? Try eating frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.
- Need a good source of calcium? Try drinking skim milk rather than whole milk. Each of these choices has fewer calories per portion size.
- All foods can have a place in a healthy diet; it's a balancing act.
- Remember, there are no good or bad foods, only good and bad diets!



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