

Eat Smart Be Smart

TEACHING NUTRITION THROUGH MATH, SCIENCE,
LANGUAGE ARTS, AND HEALTH ENHANCEMENT

Overview

Eat Smart Be Smart is a curriculum guide for kindergarten through grade-five educators to teach students math, science, and language arts skills through important nutrition concepts. The guide contains a total of 36 lessons (six lessons per grade level), two each on math, science, and language arts. The lessons are designed to meet at least one Montana state education standard in the specific discipline, as well as one health enhancement standard for the particular grade level. The K-2 grade lessons are designed for a 30-40 minutes class period and 3-5 grade lessons are 50-60 minutes class period with minimal teacher preparation or additional supplies needed for instruction. The guide also provides ideas for lesson extensions and nutrition information.

Why Teach Nutrition?

Children's eating habits aren't what they should be—in fact, most children aren't making grade when it comes to eating a healthful diet. Less than 1 percent of children consume a daily diet of the recommended number of servings from the five major food groups of the USDA's MyPlate. Additionally, it is estimated that over 40 percent of a child's daily calorie intake is coming from added fat or added sugar. Therefore, it isn't surprising that health experts say children are overfed but undernourished. While children must be exposed to a variety of foods to receive adequate nutrition, children need to be taught nutrition education for them to learn how important nutrition is to adequate growth and development, maintaining good health, as well as helping them to be ready to learn in the classroom and perform well on the athletic field.

How Can You Easily Teach Nutrition?

Classroom teachers can help provide nutrition education through various ways including:

- Role modeling healthy habits.
- Teaching nutrition across the curriculum.
- Encouraging children to eat balanced meals and snacks with foods from the five food groups.
- Avoiding the use of food rewards (especially low-nutrient foods like candy).
- Helping parents plan healthful classroom parties.
- Encouraging children to eat breakfast every day and enjoy more fruits and vegetables.
- Encouraging children to listen to their own body cues (stomach) by not forcing them to eat at mealtime and allowing children a snack time during the day.

What State Education Standards and Skills are Addressed in the Lessons?

Science: Explore scientific investigations; interactions of physical and biological systems; organisms' interactions with the environment;

Math: Engage in mathematical processes like estimation, reasoning, measurement, and patterns; use numbers and operations;

Language Arts: Comprehend, interpret and respond to what is read; apply a range of skills and strategies to listen, read, speak, and write for a variety of purposes;

Health Enhancement: Gain basic knowledge and understanding of concepts that promote comprehensive health; use critical thinking and decision making to enhance health; self-assessment and goal setting; and demonstrating health enhancing behaviors.

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Nutrition Topics:

- Choose MyPlate concepts for meal and snack planning
- Variety, balance and moderation
- What counts as a serving
- Fruits and vegetables
- Calcium and Fiber (low fat dairy and whole grains)
- Origin of foods
- Six basic nutrients
- Food labels and a close look at the nutrient content of popular beverages
- Food safety and hand washing
- Breakfast and healthy snacks
- Healthy heart habits
- Food advertisements and media messages
- Physical activity and steps to balancing food with physical activity and growing bodies
- Healthy body image
- Examine fat content of fast food meals

Development Team for the Guide:

The *Eat Smart Be Smart* Guide was developed by the Montana Team Nutrition Program under the direction of Katie Bark, RD. Katie worked with a team of partners, including Phyllis Dennee from MSU Extension, Montana dietitians Denise Zimmer, RD and Dayle Hayes, MS, RD as well as educators from all around Montana who are helped by pilot testing the lessons. We also want to acknowledge the support from the USDA that funded this project as part of the 2006 Team Nutrition Training grant awarded to the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

The curriculum guide is accessible by the Internet and can be downloaded at the following web site: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/eatsmartmtcurriculum>

Hard copies of the guide are available on a limited basis to Montana educators. Please send your requests to the Montana Team Nutrition Program.

For More Information

The Montana Team Nutrition Program is located at Montana State University, in the Department of Health and Human Development (202 Romney Hall), in Bozeman. It is part of the OPI's School Nutrition Programs and is funded from USDA grants awarded to the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

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Additional Nutrition Education Resources can be accessed at the following web site:
http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/index.html#gpm1_10

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