



Losing It

Activity 2: Grades 5-8

Healthy Choices

Whether you're trying to lose weight or not, you should have an appreciation and understanding of good nutrition. Proper diets are critical to adolescent health. Yet it is often at this age that both poor food choices are made and irregular eating habits developed. But there's more than diet to good health. In addition to nutrient intake, it's important to maintain an ongoing program of physical exercise. With a mix of proper nutrition and adequate exercise, you can help secure a future of long-term health.



This activity page will offer:

- The opportunity to create a daily food record
- A chance to calculate the amount of calories and protein in your diet
- An opportunity to apply critical thinking to healthy food choices

A Diet Analysis

Is your diet a healthy one or will it increase your risk for getting certain diseases? How aware are you of good nutrition? If you're like many people, you'll be surprised at the quantity and calorie intake of the foods you consume.

Materials

- [Copies of Reporting Sheets](#)
- Access to the Internet site: http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut_search.pl
- -or- print references to nutritional content to food

Steps

1. Make seven copies of the [food reporting sheet](#). Label and date one sheet for each day of the week.
2. On day one, begin reporting each food item you consume. If possible,

organize them under the headings of breakfast, lunch and dinner. If you need more space, continue the list on the reverse side of the reporting sheet.

3. Continue recording your food intake. At the end of day seven, compute the total for each column.
4. Compare your daily totals with the suggested minimum requirements* for boys and girls age 12 to 15 listed below. Are you getting enough of each nutrient?

Calories Girls 2,000- 2,300 Calories

Calories Boys 2,600-3,000 Calories

Protein Girls 46 grams

Protein Boys 45 grams

*These are average values. They should not be used as definitive values. The actual value will vary widely depending on individual factors such as body weight, activity level, muscle mass, metabolic level, health, etc.

5. Compare and contrast the nutritional totals of your diet for each day. Can you observe any pattern in eating? How does a school day diet compare to a weekend diet? When do you consume more calories? When do you consume more protein? When do you make choices for healthier food?

Questions

1. Why might adolescent boys have greater caloric needs than adolescent girls?
2. Why is it important to have a balanced diet?
3. Think about it. Where might a typical teenager get their required amount of fats?

Online Ads

As you are aware, the Internet offers all sorts of information. To use this information wisely, one must critically examine the posting content and underlying philosophy of the site. Search the Internet for commercial diet sites. Select several sites. Analyze their pages for unbiased information, assumptions and hidden agendas. What are they selling? Is their information valid?

Finding Nutrients

What foods contain the highest percentages of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats? Use Internet and print resources to uncover the common dietary sources for these nutrients. Does an individual's economic status effect the sources? Explain.

Balance Point

As you learned in this segment, people seem to be programmed to a general

weight set point. Once an intense dieting regimen ends, people are likely to return to their pre-diet weight. How could you communicate this concept using an ordinary ruler balanced on a fulcrum (like a seesaw)?

Diet Ad Index

What is the ratio of diet advertisements to other types of ads in magazines? Examine an assortment of magazines that specialize in topics such as sports, news, self-help, fashion, celebrities, and homes. Record the total number of ads and those that specifically pertain to diet. Calculate a ratio of diet:total ads for each magazine. Create a class chart based on your findings that identifies how each magazine fits into this range.

Web Connection

[Food and nutrition information center](#)

Food and nutrition center website run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

[Fast Food and Calories](#)

A unique calorie counting site that lets you select familiar food items from national fast-food restaurants

http://www.chowbaby.com/10_2000/fastfood/fast_food_nutrition.asp

[Dieting Review](#)

An easy-to-use website that offers information on dozens of diets, nutrition facts, and online weight-loss tools.

<http://www.dieting-review.com/>

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Questions

1. Why might adolescent boys have greater caloric needs than adolescent girls?
(They have greater physical activity levels and larger bodies that have higher energy demands)
2. Why is it important to have a balanced diet?
(Your body requires an assortment of nutrients that come from different foods)
3. Think about it. Where might a typical teenager get their required amount of fats?
(Fast food and fried foods)