

## VEGETABLES AND FRUIT



Did you know that children age 6 to 9 need to eat five or six servings of vegetables and fruit every day? One serving could be a medium-size apple or banana, ½ cup of fruit or vegetables, or 1 cup of lettuce or other salad greens.

Vegetables and fruit provide us with the vitamins, minerals and fibre we need to stay healthy. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends that we eat one serving of orange vegetables or fruit (e.g., carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe or peaches), as well as one serving of dark green vegetables (e.g., Romaine lettuce, spinach, kale or broccoli) every day.

Encouraging children to eat these foods every day is an important means of helping them develop healthy eating habits.

Note: It is best to cover the Balanced Lunch Box theme before starting this one.

### Curriculum link

- Health and Physical Education: Healthy Living

### Learning objectives

- learn about the vegetables and fruit food group
- understand that vegetables and fruit provide our bodies with nutrients that are essential to our health
- discover new vegetables and fruits



## Learning method

- playing a guessing game

## Materials

### Introduction

- empty multivitamin and/or multimineral containers
- sample servings
  - measuring cup (250 ml size)
  - medium-size carrot and apple (1 each)

### Activity A: Mystery food bag (grade 1)

- 6 vegetables and fruits
- opaque bag

### Activity B: Who am I? (grades 2 and 3)

- large sheets of construction paper cut into strips for headbands
- stapler
- copies of vegetable and fruit cards below
- scissors
- crayons (optional)
- glue

## Instructions

### Introduction: Vegetables and Fruit

1. Present *Canada's Food Guide* to students. Explain that the guide is a tool that can help us make healthy food choices and eat a balanced diet.
2. Quickly go over the food groups. What are they called? Remind students that each food group is made up of foods that are rich in certain nutrients. Show them the empty multivitamin or multimineral containers. Ask them to name the main nutrients that vegetables and fruit provide. Explain that, as well as providing vitamins and minerals, vegetables and fruit also give us lots of fibre. Fibre is good for the heart and it helps our intestines work properly to eliminate waste.
3. Ask students if they know how many servings of vegetables and fruit they should eat every day. Show them the carrot and the apple, and explain that each represents one serving of



vegetables or fruit. Show the measuring cup. Point out the centre of the cup and tell students that half a cup of vegetables or fruit also represents one serving. For leafy vegetables, such as spinach and lettuce, one serving is a full cup. Tell students that children their age need to eat five or six servings of vegetables and fruit every day to stay healthy.

4. Explain to students that they are going to play a guessing game. The goal of the game is to see how many vegetables and fruits they recognize and to discover some new ones.

## Activity A: Mystery food bag (grade 1)

### Pre-activity: prepare mystery food bag

Before beginning the activity, buy a variety of vegetables and fruit. Be sure to include some that students will know well and others that may be unfamiliar to them. This activity is an opportunity for students to discover new vegetables and fruit.

#### Instructions

1. Have students sit on the floor in a semicircle.
2. Beyond sight of students, put one vegetable or fruit in the mystery food bag.
3. Begin by giving students two clues that describe the hidden vegetable or fruit. For the carrot, for example: I'm an orange vegetable; I'm good for your eyes.
4. Ask students to guess the vegetable or fruit in the bag. If necessary, give students additional clues until they guess it right. For the carrot, for example: I can be eaten raw or steamed; rabbits like me; I can also come in yellow, red, purple or white.
6. Once students have guessed the vegetable or fruit, take it out of the bag. Start two groups: vegetables on one side and fruits on the other side.
7. Repeat the exercise with another vegetable or fruit.

### Suggestion

Ask students to take turns taking the mystery food bag home. They put a vegetable or fruit from home in the bag and bring it back to school, along with three clues. They present the clues to the class, and the other students try to guess the vegetable or fruit in the bag.

## Activity B: Who am I? (grades 2 and 3)

### Pre-activity: prepare craft stations

1. Before beginning the activity, print and cut out the images of vegetables and fruits below.
2. Give each student one image. Ask students to colour the images. Collect the images when they are complete.
3. Give each student a strip of construction paper and ask them to write their names on the strips.
4. Make headbands out of the strips by stapling the ends together. Make sure the staple points are on the outside of the headbands, to avoid any discomfort.

### Instructions

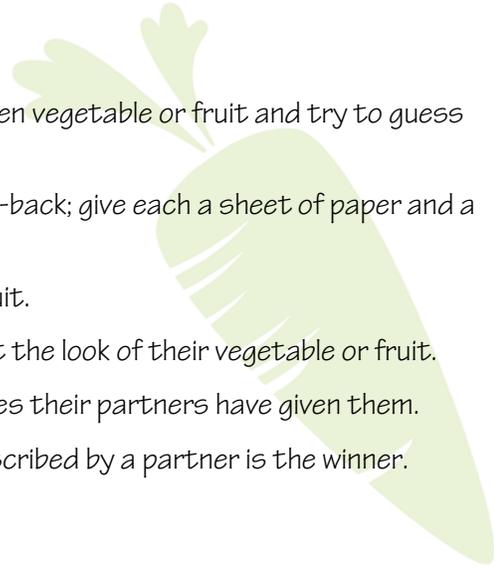
1. Explain the rules of the game to students. Students are grouped in teams. The first player puts on a headband with a card featuring a vegetable or fruit. He or she does not know what is on the card. To find out, the player has to ask teammates yes-or-no questions.
2. Divide the class into teams of between three and five students. In the centre of each team, lay out a few cards, face down. One player from each team puts on his or her headband and chooses one card. Without looking at it, he or she slips the card into the headband, making sure that it faces outward. Teammates must be able to see the vegetable or fruit that is featured on the card.
3. The player wearing the headband asks teammates simple yes-or-no questions that will help him or her to guess the vegetable or fruit. Here are some sample questions:
  - Do I grow underground?
  - Am I a fruit?
  - Am I orange?
4. When the player guesses the correct vegetable or fruit, put the card back in the centre and allow the next student to take a turn.
5. When all students have had a turn, talk about the vegetables and fruits on the cards. Are all students familiar with them? Have they eaten them? Are they vegetables and fruits that they bring to school in their lunch boxes?

## Suggestion

### Draw me a picture

Listening to clues from a partner, students draw an unseen vegetable or fruit and try to guess what it is.

1. Group students in pairs and ask them to sit back-to-back; give each a sheet of paper and a pencil.
2. Give each student a card featuring a vegetable or fruit.
3. Taking turns, partners give each other one clue about the look of their vegetable or fruit.
4. Students draw a vegetable or fruit, based on the clues their partners have given them.
5. The first student to guess the vegetable or fruit described by a partner is the winner.
6. Redistribute the cards and repeat the exercise.



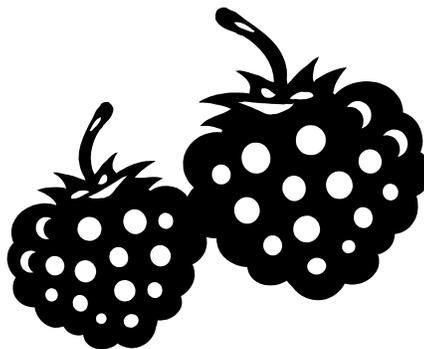
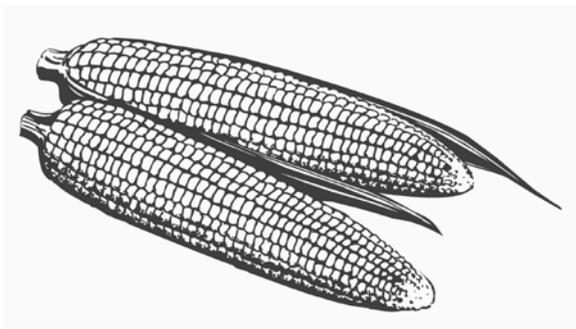
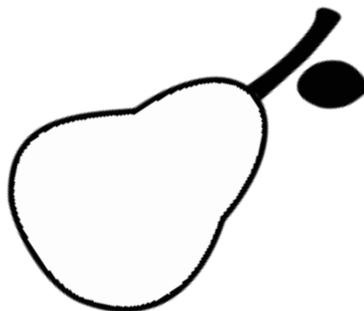
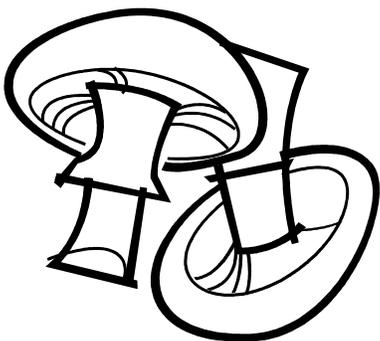
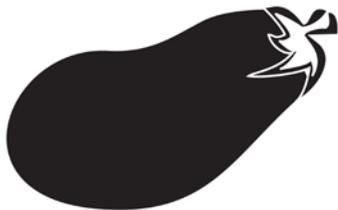
## Vegetables and fruit challenge

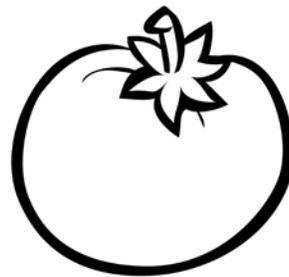
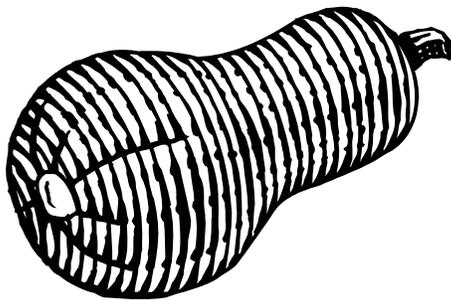
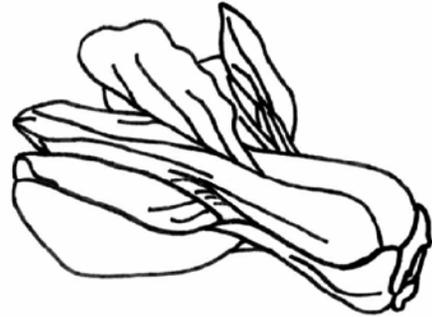
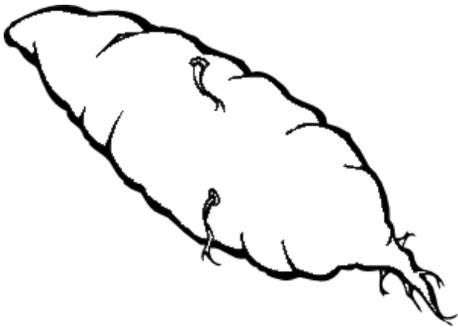
1. Once the game is over, ask students to think about the vegetables and fruit challenge. Talk about the five or six servings of vegetables and fruit that they should aim to eat every day. An easy way to meet this goal is to include at least one serving of vegetables and fruit in their lunch boxes every day.
2. Discuss orange and dark green vegetables and fruit and how they are important for our health. Ask students to name orange vegetables or fruits: carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, pumpkin, apricots, cantaloupe, mangoes, nectarines, papaya and peaches. Why is it important to eat orange vegetables and fruit? They contain vitamin A. Vitamin A allows our bodies to be healthy and to grow. It is also essential for the health of our eyes and skin. For these reasons, we need to eat foods that are rich in vitamin A every day.

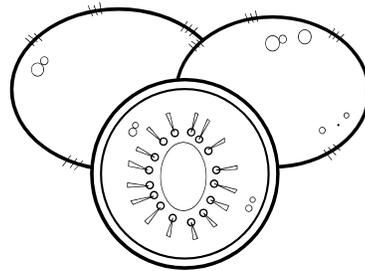
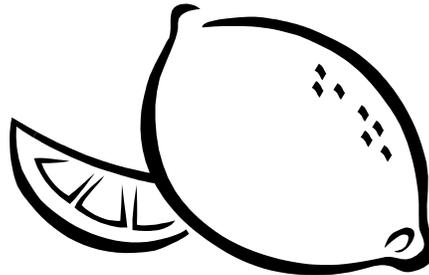
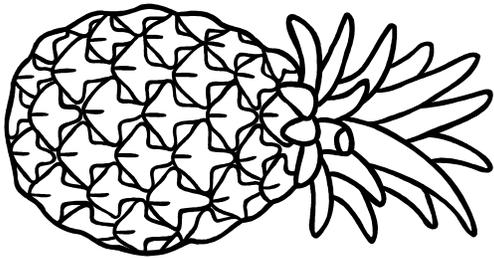
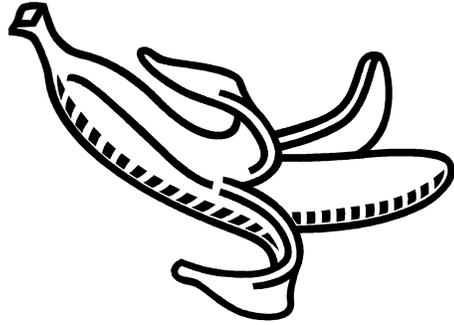
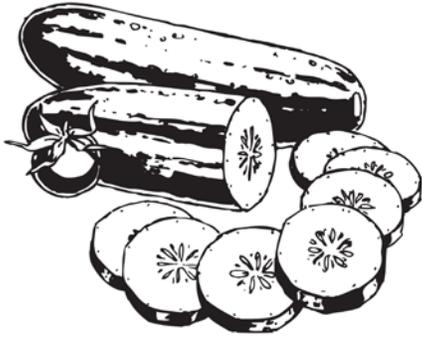
Ask students to name dark green vegetables: spinach, arugula, Romaine lettuce, green cabbage, kale, broccoli, Swiss chard, asparagus, dandelion leaves, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, okra and mixed greens. Why is it important to eat dark green vegetables? They are rich in folic acid, a vitamin that helps our bodies grow and repair themselves. Folic acid also helps to produce red blood cells (which carry oxygen to all parts of our bodies), so we need to eat it every day to stay healthy. Orange fruits also contain folic acid.

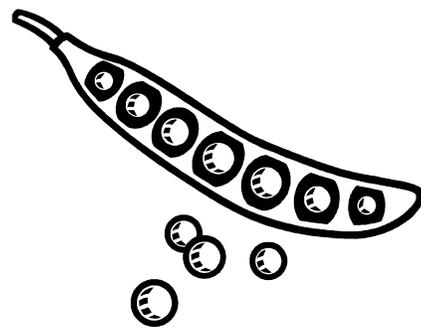
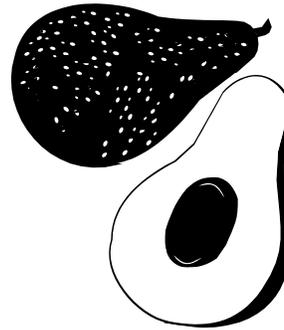
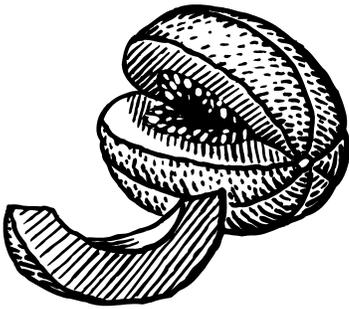
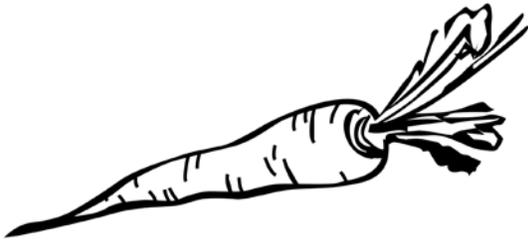
3. Ask students, as a group, to set themselves a challenge for the next four weeks (or other period of time). Here are some sample challenges for this theme:
- For the next X weeks, I will include at least one serving of vegetables and one serving of fruit in my lunch box.
  - For the next X weeks, I will include at least one serving of orange **or** dark green vegetables or fruit in my lunch box.
  - For the next X weeks, I will include at least one serving of orange vegetables or fruit **and** one serving of dark green vegetables in my lunch box.
  - For the next X weeks, I will include at least three servings of vegetables and fruit in my lunch box.











## MR. VEGETABLE AND MS. FRUIT



Grade 1 students enjoy crafts and like to invent make-believe characters. This activity lets them use their imagination while finding out which vegetables and fruits are available in their local grocery store.

### Curriculum links

- Health and Physical Education: Healthy Living
- Arts: Visual Arts

### Learning objectives

- distinguish vegetables from fruits
- discover new vegetables and fruits

### Learning method

- creating a poster collage

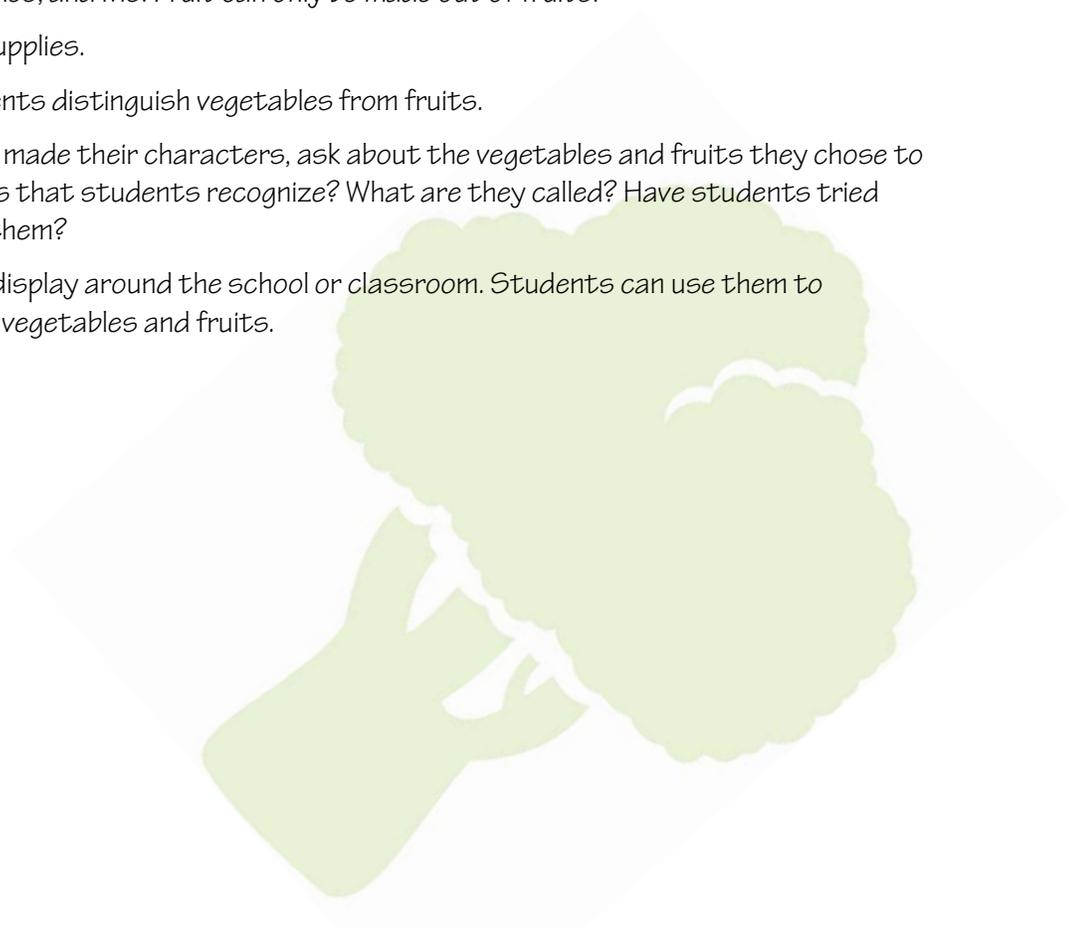
### Materials

- grocery store flyers
- large sheets of construction paper
- scissors
- crayons or markers
- glue



## Instructions

1. Explain to students that they are going to create two characters — Mr. Vegetable and Ms. Fruit — from pictures in grocery store flyers. Pay attention: Mr. Vegetable can only be made out of vegetables, and Ms. Fruit can only be made out of fruits!
2. Give out the craft supplies.
3. If needed, help students distinguish vegetables from fruits.
4. Once students have made their characters, ask about the vegetables and fruits they chose to use. Are they all ones that students recognize? What are they called? Have students tried them? Did they like them?
5. Put the posters on display around the school or classroom. Students can use them to distinguish between vegetables and fruits.



## MY SUPERHERO



Superheroes are popular with children. What if superheroes were “edible”? In this activity, students create their own superheroes out of food. Doing so gives them an opportunity to use their knowledge of vegetables and fruits, as well as their imagination.

### Curriculum links

- Health and Physical Education: Healthy Living
- Arts: Visual Arts
- Language: Oral Communication,
- Language: Writing

### Learning objective

- learn about the nutritional values of vegetables and fruits

### Learning methods

- creating a superhero using the characteristics and nutritional values of various vegetables and fruits
- preparing a fact sheet on the superhero
- illustrating the superhero
- introducing the superhero to the class in an oral presentation



## Materials

- sheets of construction paper
- crayons or markers
- blank superhero fact sheets
- scissors
- glue

## Instructions

1. Ask students to name their favourite vegetables or fruits. Why do they like those ones in particular? What do they think would be the perfect vegetable or fruit? A raspberry as big as an apple? Blueberries in bunches, and in all different colours? A strawberry-flavoured banana?
2. Ask students to name their favourite superheroes. Why do they like one particular character more than another? What are their heroes' superpowers?
4. Explain to students that they are going to create their own superheroes — made out of food. Using their imagination, students will make their own unique superheroes, choosing vegetables and fruits that will arm the character with nutritional superpowers.
5. Show students an example.

### Superhero Fact Sheet

**Name:**

Super Brocco-Strawb

**Physical description:**

Super Brocco-Strawb has a strawberry body, broccoli hair and celery legs. She uses her carrot arms to throw ground cherries. Her spinach cape allows her to fly through the air at top speed.

**Superpowers:**

All of Super Brocco-Strawb (even her broccoli hair) tastes like strawberries (mmm)! She battles treats by popping yummy ground cherries into children's mouths. Her super-special ground cherries have lots of vitamin A, vitamin C, folic acid, calcium, iron, magnesium and fibre. Super Brocco-Strawb moves so fast that nobody can catch her!



6. Explain the rules for creating superheroes:
  - (a) The bodies of the superheroes must be made from vegetables and fruits;
  - (b) The superpowers they possess must come from the nutritional values of those vegetables and fruits.
7. Offer students various conceptualization tools for developing their characters (e.g., constellations, diagrams or sketches). Suggest they begin by choosing their vegetables and fruits, and then check the nutritional value of each one. Students can research the nutritional values of vegetables and fruits at home (as homework) or at school.
8. Give each student a copy of the blank superhero fact sheet below. Ask them to write a short description of their superheroes' characteristics: his or her physical appearance and superpowers.
9. Once the superheroes have been thought up and described on the fact sheets, give out the craft supplies and ask students to illustrate them using the craft supplies.
10. Using tape or a stapler, attach students' illustrations to their fact sheets.
11. Ask each student to introduce his or her superhero (and describe its superpowers) to the rest of the class. They can prepare these oral presentations at home.
11. Put the superheroes (fact sheets and illustrations) on display around the school.

## Suggestion

1. Ask students what they have learned about the nutritional values of vegetables and fruit. Assess their knowledge by asking them to name, for example, a vegetable that is rich in iron, a fruit that is rich in vitamin C, a vegetable that is rich in folic acid and a fruit that is rich in vitamin A. Explain that this exercise was designed to give them a better idea of the nutritional values of vegetables and fruit.
2. Ask students to use real vegetables and fruits to make sculptures illustrating their superheroes. They can make these sculptures at home and bring them to school for their presentations.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Superhero Fact Sheet

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical description:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Superpowers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## WANTED: NEW VEGETABLES OR FRUITS



Nowadays, grocery stores are filled with all different types of vegetables and fruits. As new varieties become available, our choices get wider. Many of us are unfamiliar with some of these new vegetables and fruits. What do they taste like? How do we prepare them? How nutritious are they? This research project allows students to find out about new foods and to share their discoveries with their class.

### Curriculum links

- Health and Physical Education: Healthy Living
- Language: Oral Communication
- Language: Writing
- Social Studies: Canada and the World
- Science and Technology: Understanding Life Systems

### Learning objectives

- discover new vegetables and fruits
- learn about the nutritional values of vegetables and fruits
- learn where vegetables and fruits come from and how they are grown

### Learning methods

- carrying out research on an unfamiliar vegetable or fruit
- preparing a descriptive poster about an unfamiliar vegetable or fruit
- sharing the research results in class through an oral presentation

## Materials

- |                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| - large sheet of stiff paper | - scissors |
| - crayons or markers         | - glue     |

## Instructions

- Decide on the extent of research students should carry out, based on their grade level. Using the examples below, make a list of questions for students to answer.
  - What is the name of the food?
  - Is it a vegetable or a fruit?
  - Where does it grow: in Canada or elsewhere?
  - Which part of the plant do we eat?
  - Do you like the taste of this new vegetable or fruit?
  - How is it prepared? Do we eat it raw, cooked, mashed or prepared in some other way?
  - Why is this food good for our health? Does it contain vitamins and minerals? Is it rich in fibre? The lychee fruit, for example, contains vitamin C, which helps our bodies fight sickness.
  - How do we store this food: in the refrigerator, on the counter, in the cupboard or in the freezer?

Other questions can be added about the plant's essential needs:

- Does the plant need much heat to grow?
- Does it need a lot of water or very little?
- Does it need shade or sunlight?

As appropriate, add questions about the country or region of the world in which the vegetable or fruit is grown:

- Where in the world is this food grown?
- Where is that country or region in relation to Canada?
- Can you find it on a map of the world?

- Talk to students about the growing variety of vegetables and fruits we see in grocery stores. You may want to introduce some exotic or traditional vegetables and fruits and ask students to identify them. Have any of them tried these foods? See if they can describe each food's taste and texture. How is it prepared: do we cook it, marinate it or eat it raw?
- Explain to students that the purpose of the activity is to discover vegetables or fruits that they have not eaten before.

4. Send a note to parents explaining the research project and including the list of selected questions. Students choose one vegetable or fruit that is unfamiliar to them or that they have never eaten before. Suggest that students visit the grocery store with their parents to choose the new vegetable or fruit. They can purchase it together and eat it at home as part of the research.
5. At home or in class, students carry out their research on the vegetable or fruit, using the questions you have provided. They can print out pictures that illustrates what their vegetables or fruits look like, how they are grown, where they are grown (location on a map) and recipes that include them. Students prepare their posters, using information they have researched and including any material they have printed out. They can also make their own illustrations of the vegetable or fruit.
6. Next, ask students to present their posters in class. They can prepare their presentations ahead of time at home. They can bring their vegetables or fruits to class to show the other students.
7. Put the posters on display around the school or in the classroom so that students can share what they have discovered.



## VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Vegetables and fruit provide us with the vitamins, minerals and fibre we need to stay healthy. Did you know that children age 6 to 9 should aim to eat five or six servings of vegetables and fruit every day? In addition, *Canada's Food Guide* recommends that we eat one serving of orange vegetables or fruit and one serving of dark green vegetables every day.

The colour orange indicates a high vitamin A content. Vitamin A is particularly important for the health of our eyes and skin. Dark green vegetables are rich in folic acid, a vitamin that helps our bodies grow and repair themselves, and it also helps produce red blood cells. Orange fruits also contain folic acid. Encouraging children to eat these foods every day is important: it can help them develop healthy eating habits.

### Lunch box tips

Here are some practical yet fun ways to include vegetables and fruits in your child's lunch box:

- Make it ready-to-eat:
  - Cut, peel and remove pips from vegetables and fruits to make them easier to handle and eat.
  - Quarter an apple and sprinkle the cut edges with lemon juice (to enhance the flavour and keep the apple from discolouring) or cinnamon (for a different taste and to hide the brown discoloration resulting from oxidation).
  - Use a peeler for thin cucumber, carrot or zucchini slices.
  - Use a small cookie cutter to cut vegetables and fruits into enticing shapes.
  - Cut a slit in the peel of a banana to facilitate peeling.
  - Make fruit and cheese kebabs.
- Offer hummus, tzatziki or baba ghanouj dips for veggies or a yogurt dip for fruits
- Use a sealed container for salads: add the ingredients in layers, from the heaviest to the lightest, then all your child has to do is pour the dressing into the container.
- Add a variety of vegetables to sandwiches and wraps such as grated carrots, sliced peppers, cucumber slices, lettuce or germinated grains such as alfalfa, radish seeds or sunflower seeds.
- Use a thermos to send a hot vegetable soup or a serving of chili to school.

- Instead of butter, margarine or mayonnaise, use avocado as a spread.
- Add chopped apple, pineapple, grapes or raisins to a tuna or chicken salad.

## Home cooking tips

At the grocery store, have your child help choose vegetables and fruits. Children are more likely to eat foods (and to try out new foods) if they have chosen them.

For tips on how to handle vegetables and fruits safely:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-safety-fruits-vegetables.html>

### For vegetables

- Designate a day to wash and prepare a big supply of vegetables. Store vegetables in a resealable container in the refrigerator.
  - Making lunches is easier and faster when the vegetables are already prepared.
  - Having pre-cut vegetables in the fridge will also give your child a healthy after-school snack that doesn't need supervision to prepare.
- Use light dressings, seasonings, grated cheese, tamari sauce or salsa to highlight the taste of raw or cooked vegetables and add variety to your menus.
- Cook up lots of vegetables (more than you need). Store leftovers in the refrigerator, and use in other recipes.
  - Serve vegetables at breakfast, in omelettes or frittatas; this is a great way to use leftover cooked vegetables.
- Bake your vegetables in the oven; it's easy and delicious!
  - Drizzle oil over vegetables that have been washed, cut and spread on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper (to prevent vegetables from sticking to the cookie sheet and reduce clean-up time), then bake them at 200°C (400°F) for 30 to 60 minutes. Take the vegetables out of the oven when they start to caramelize (become lightly browned and slightly crispy).

### For fruits

- Prepare a fruit salad and store it in the refrigerator. Fruit salads keep longer than cut fruit, and are easy to serve as a side dish at breakfast or lunch, or as a dessert.
- Once melons have been cut open, they keep better if cut into small pieces and placed in a resealable container in the refrigerator.
- Keep a fruit bowl or basket on the counter, in sight and within reach.
- Add fruit to cooked cereal (e.g., oatmeal or steel-cut oats), pancakes and waffles.
- Bake apples or pears and serve them as a dessert with some cinnamon.



## BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE

A smoothie makes a delicious breakfast or a healthy afternoon snack.

### Ingredients

250 ml	plain low-fat yogurt	1 cup
250 ml	fresh or frozen fruit (strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, peaches, mangoes)	1 cup
1	medium-size banana	1
250 ml	100% pure orange juice	1 cup
125 ml	skim milk	½ cup
30 ml	chia or hemp seeds	2 tbsp



#### Allergy Warning!

If you have concerns about milk allergy, use a dairy-free yogurt and beverage option (soy, rice, hemp, almond, coconut or other).

### Instructions

Mix all the ingredients in a blender. Serve cold.

### Suggestion

Gelatin-free yogurt (e.g., western or Balkan-style) can also be used. To boost protein intake, substitute low-fat yogurt for a Greek yogurt (0–2% M.F.).

*Yield: 1L (4 cups)*



## ULTRA-QUICK PUMPKIN CURRY SOUP

### Ingredients

5 ml	olive oil	1 tsp
15 ml	garlic, minced	1 tbsp
5 ml	ginger, minced	1 tsp
5 ml	garam masala curry paste or mild curry paste	1 tsp
750 ml	canned pure pumpkin purée (or other orange vegetable, mashed)	3 cups
375 ml	low-salt vegetable broth	1½ cups
250 ml	milk, coconut milk or plain yogurt (feel free to use low-fat options)	1 cup

### Instructions

1. In a saucepan, heat the oil and cook the garlic, ginger and curry paste for 1 minute.
2. Add the mashed pumpkin, the vegetable broth and the milk. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Serve immediately.

### Suggestion

Chop fresh coriander/cilantro and sprinkle on soup servings.

*Yield: 1,25L (5 cups)*



## TASTY OVEN FRIES

French fries are popular with children, but can often be high in calories and saturated fats because of the way they are cooked. Try these better-for-you oven fries instead: they're tasty and crispy!

### Ingredients

	4 to 6 large potatoes or 5 sweet potatoes	
30 ml	olive oil	2 tbsp
2.5 ml	salt	½ tsp
5 ml	garlic, minced or in powder form	1 tsp
5 ml	paprika	1 tsp
5 ml	ground black pepper	1 tsp

### Instructions

1. Wash the potatoes and slice them using a knife or a french-fry cutter.
2. Submerge the potato slices in a bowl of cold water for 30 minutes or longer. This step keeps the potatoes from drying out in the oven.
3. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Grease a cookie sheet, or line it with parchment paper.
4. In a large bowl, combine the oil, salt, garlic, paprika and pepper.
5. Add the potato slices. Mix well so that they are thoroughly coated.
6. Spread the potato slices side by side on the cookie sheet. Try to avoid them overlapping.
7. Bake the potato slices for 20 minutes. Turn them over and increase the oven temperature to 230°C (450°F). Bake them for a further 15 to 20 minutes. Cooking time will vary, depending on the oven and the variety of potatoes used. Once the potato slices are crisp, well cooked and starting to brown, take them out of the oven.
8. Remove the oven fries from the cookie sheet and let them cool for a few minutes before serving. Eat with ketchup or your favourite dip.

*Yield: 2L (8 cups)*