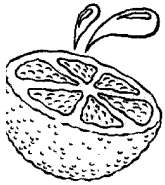


# CHOICE



Consumers for  
Healthy Options in  
Children's Education

WWW.CHOICEUSA.NET CHOICE@CHOICEUSA.NET BOX 5888 BETHESDA MD 20824 1-877-6CHOICE



Dear Teacher:

Thank you for ordering **Health Protectors**, your one-day *Healthy Choice Kit* for grades 3-8. The lesson plan also allows you to extend the lesson beyond one day. Please pass the materials along to interested colleagues.

**Health Protectors** allows you and your students to discover the role that eating habits play in reducing or enhancing the risk of major diseases. Students need to understand the importance of healthy eating, as the USDA has found that *half of all children eat less than one serving of fruit a day*.

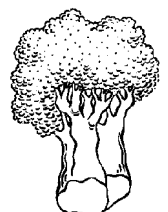
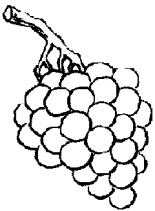
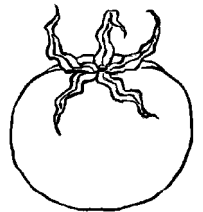
The *Healthy Choice Kit* is designed to increase consumption of fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetables through active student participation, attractive graphics and visual aids, and by including parents in the educational process. You will find the following materials enclosed:

- \* Lesson plan (including extension ideas)
- \* Lesson masters (**Background Information page 1 & 2, What Will I Eat?, What Did I Eat?**)
- \* Stationery for family letter
- \* A list of Internet resources
- \* Full color classroom poster
- \* Evaluation card

Please use the evaluation card to help us improve next year's lesson; your feedback is important! You are encouraged to suggest other educators who might wish to receive information about our classroom programs. We look forward to hearing how your class responded to **Health Protectors**.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Dune, Director





## Health Protectors

## Lesson Plan

### MATERIALS

- 1) Teacher copy of **Background Information page 1 & 2** (student copies optional).
- 2) Class copies of **What Will I Eat?**
- 3) Stationery for family letter.
- 3) (Optional) Class copies of **What Did I Eat?**

### PROCEDURES

**INTRODUCTION:** Teacher asks students what foods they or their friends eat. The teacher lists the fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetables on one side of the board. On the other side, the teacher lists all of the other foods mentioned. The teacher labels the fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetable column "Health Protectors." The lesson then focuses on these "healthy" foods.

**STEP 1:** Introduce **Background Information page 1 & 2** in an appropriate manner (distribute handouts, give lecture, or stimulate class discussion...).

**STEP 2:** Use the **What Will I Eat?** meal planning guide to design a day's meal to include 5 or more fruits and vegetables.

**STEP 3:** Have students write brief letters to their families relating the class information and providing suggestions for a healthy meal.

**CLOSURE:** Call on several students to summarize the content of their letters to the class.

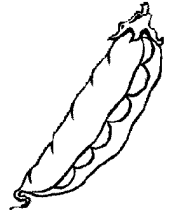
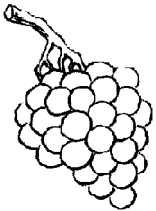
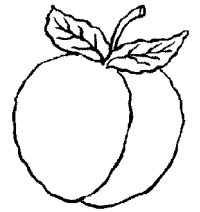
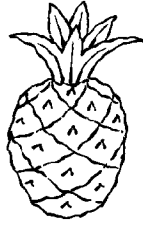
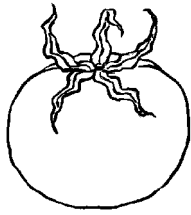
**EXTENSION:** Follow up the next day with a **What Did I Eat?** meal record sheet, continue as desired. Establish class or team goals for increased consumption of fruits and vegetables or for experimentation with previously untried plant foods. To establish accountability, you may wish to focus on only those fruits and vegetables brought to school for snack and lunch. Instead, you may wish to have students plan (and complete) a shopping trip for **Health Protectors**.

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**CHOICE (Consumers for Healthy Options in Children's Education)** promotes plant-based meals and nutrition education in schools. This lesson is adapted from "Changing the Course" by the American Cancer Society.



## Health Protectors

## Internet Resources

### CURRICULUM MATERIALS

✓ **Leafy Greens Council** provides *Leafy Greens Lesson Plans* to encourage our youngest generation to understand the nutritional benefits and the cancer-fighting elements of leafy greens. Classroom students can receive free materials such as book covers, trading cards, brochures and posters ([www.leafy-greens.org](http://www.leafy-greens.org)).

✓ The **Dole Company** sponsors a national program to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables ([www.dole5aday.com](http://www.dole5aday.com)). If your class has Internet access, they can use the site's exciting interactive elements—your students can listen to veggie theme music, download coloring books, and read about fruits and veggies.

✓ **Washington State Apple Growers** has created a complete elementary school curriculum to teach healthy lifestyles and promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Many of the materials are available directly from the website ([www.healthychoices.org](http://www.healthychoices.org)).

### TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

✓ The **Produce for Better Health Foundation** has an exhaustive website designed to disseminate information on the importance of increased consumption of fruits and vegetables ([www.5aday.com](http://www.5aday.com)).

✓ The **Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine** contains a wealth of information concerning health and plant-based nutrition. You may want to check out the excellent article, "Vegetarian Diets: Advantages for Children" ([pcrm.org/health/Info\\_on\\_Veg\\_Diets/vegetarian\\_kids.html](http://pcrm.org/health/Info_on_Veg_Diets/vegetarian_kids.html)).

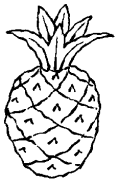
✓ The **Vegetarian Resource Group** offers vegetarian and vegan recipes, nutrition information, cookbooks, and a vegetarian game ([www.vrg.org/nutshell/kids.htm](http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/kids.htm)).

✓ The **Vegetarian Society of the U.K.** provides two child related resource sections. The Youth Pages supply materials and ideas for working with adolescents ([www.vegsoc.org/Youth/youth.html](http://www.vegsoc.org/Youth/youth.html)). The Virtual Schoolroom offers complete lesson plans from primary to secondary grades designed to promote plant-based eating ([www.vegsoc.org/VirtualSchoolroom/VSchrm.html](http://www.vegsoc.org/VirtualSchoolroom/VSchrm.html)).

✓ **Vegsource** is a reference site to direct the user to other Internet resources on the subject of plant-based eating. The site includes discussion boards, an online magazine, and links to famous vegetarian doctors with online resources ([www.vegsource.com](http://www.vegsource.com)).

## Protecting Our Health with Plant Foods

Americans are surrounded by messages telling us how to eat. Unfortunately, much of that advice comes from the fast food industry and recommends food high in fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar. However, nutrition science has taught us that such diets increase our risk of heart disease, cancer, strokes, and obesity.



Just as some foods increase the risk of disease, other foods protect our health. Fruits, grains, and vegetables are three groups of foods that help us stay strong and healthy. Fruits are foods such as pineapples, oranges, and bananas; grain foods include bagels, breakfast cereals, and toast; and tomatoes, carrots, and potatoes are part of the vegetable groups.

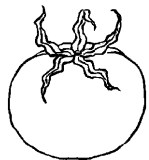
These are delicious and fun foods that are already a part of most people's diets. Unfortunately, while we all know that it is important to eat more fruits, grains, and vegetables, most of us do not eat the recommended servings!

We can improve our health across the nation by substituting more and more of the health protecting foods for the disease promoting foods. Below is some information on how the food we eat plays a part in major diseases with which we are all familiar.



### A DIETARY PROBLEM

The US Dietary Guidelines recommend no more than 30% of calories from fat, and no more than 10% from saturated fat. Yet, a USDA survey found that school lunches contain 38% of calories from fat, including 15% from saturated fat. Other surveys found that only 10% of school children eat the recommended five servings of vegetables and fruits a day and 23% eat less than one serving.



In the past three decades, a dozen expert panels found that a diet high in animal fat elevates the risk of **heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes**, and other chronic diseases. All recommended a diet of whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits. These diseases kill 1.4 million Americans annually. The associated annual costs of medical care and lost productivity have been estimated at up to \$300 billion.

### CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

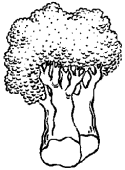
**Cardiovascular diseases** are diseases linked to problems in the body's blood supply. **Heart disease, stroke, atherosclerosis, and hypertension** are all types of cardiovascular diseases.

Diets laden with saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt play a role in contributing to these diseases. **Cholesterol**, for example, is manufactured by animals to form cell membranes and hormones. Therefore, all animal foods contain cholesterol. On the other hand, plant foods contain no cholesterol and are naturally low in the other factors.



## Protecting Our Health with Plant Foods

Excess cholesterol forms a fatty build-up that lines blood vessels and restricts blood flow carrying needed oxygen and nutrients in our bodies. This condition is known as **atherosclerosis**. Saturated fats, contained mostly in animal foods, raise blood cholesterol level more than any other factor. However, antioxidants (vitamins C and E, and other plant components) and folic acid, present only in plant foods, work to protect arteries from plaque formation.

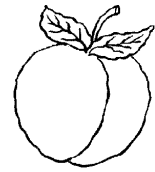


When fatty build-up restricts blood flow, blood pressure rises, and this leads to a condition known as **hypertension**. Salt consumption increases water retention and blood volume, promoting hypertension.

An artery leading to the heart can become blocked, killing a portion of the heart muscle and causing a **heart attack**. Obstruction of an artery leading to the brain may kill a portion of the brain, causing a **stroke**.

### CANCERS

Cancer occurs when certain cells begin to grow out of control. Eventually, they start to destroy important parts of the body. Cancers of the lung, breast, prostate, colon and other digestive organs are closely connected with a diet high in animal foods. Several reasons have been identified. For example, consumption of animal fats raises blood testosterone and estrogen levels, leading to prostate and breast cancers.



Fortunately, plant foods contain fiber which prevents colon cancer by helping to pass food through the digestive tract before cancerous growth can get very far. They also contain special compounds, phytochemicals and antioxidants, that make it harder for cancer cells to start forming.

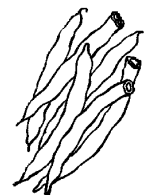
### DIABETES



The cells of our body feed on glucose which is escorted by a hormone called insulin. Animal fat in the bloodstream prevents insulin from playing its vital role. This causes adult-onset or type II diabetes.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Name some of your favorite fruits and vegetables and tell why you like them.
- 2) What are some of the health benefits of plant foods?
- 3) How many servings of fruits and vegetables should you eat?
- 4) What do you think are some of the advantages of being healthy?
- 5) What foods can you eat to improve your own health?
- 6) Which of these foods are you going to eat in the next week?



	<b>FRUITS &amp; VEGETABLES</b>	<b>BREADS &amp; CEREALS</b>	<b>OTHER FOODS</b>
<b>BREAKFAST</b>			
<b>LUNCH</b>			
<b>DINNER</b>			
<b>SNACKS</b>			

**TOTAL FRUITS & VEGETABLES** \_\_\_\_\_

LESS THAN 5 SERVINGS – Needs Improvement  
 EXACTLY 5 SERVINGS – On Your Way to Health  
 MORE THAN 5 SERVINGS – Health Expert

	What You Ate...	Which of these foods do you think are healthy?
BREAKFAST		
LUNCH		
DINNER		
SNACKS		

**TOTAL FRUITS & VEGETABLES** \_\_\_\_\_

LESS THAN 5 SERVINGS – Needs Improvement  
 EXACTLY 5 SERVINGS – On Your Way to Health  
 MORE THAN 5 SERVINGS – Health Expert