

thinkingfood

Food in Schools programme

The joint Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health Food in Schools programme brings together food related activities to ensure that coherent and consistent messages about healthy eating, food hygiene and practical food preparation are promoted to pupils.

The Food in Schools programme will help to ensure children have access to healthy food choices in schools. By introducing this programme which follows children through the school day, we will lay the foundations to help prevent obesity and disease later in life. The programme will also contribute to the priority areas for reducing coronary heart disease, cancer and health inequalities.

Welcome

This is intended to be a resource pack for food technology, science, PSHE, PE and other interested teachers who want to work with their colleagues to teach about nutrition issues to 14-19 year olds. It provides:

- a recommended list of what should be taught to help planning;
- some background notes about why it is important for nutrition to be taught and the issues that this resource is trying to tackle;
- some ideas of ways of working together and resources that already exist to support teachers;
- examples of a range of activities that other teachers have used, and could be adapted by schools for their own use.

Contents

Introduction

- What should 14-19 year olds be taught about diet and health?
- Why it is teaching about diet and health important?
- Young People's Food Choices 1983-2001
- Evaluation of Food and Nutrition Competencies amongst 14-16 year olds
- What are we tackling?
- How teachers can work as a team to deliver consistent messages
- Resources list

Example activities

Example activities are available as a separate document, along with teacher notes to help guide students through the activities.

These are, for Key Stage 3:

- Breakfast Boxes
- Balance of Good Health
- Food thoughts
- Who will live the longest?

For Key Stage 4:

- Scare stories
- Food labeling
- Food advertising

Introduction

Many children are aware of healthy eating messages and guidance, but they fail to apply these in their everyday lives.

There is an opportunity to link learning in science at Key Stage 3 and food technology Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, so that consistent messages are given to students. Students will then be able to apply what they have learned in science in a practical context: when they choose meals or make food products. This should lead to change in behaviour, because they are doing rather than merely 'knowing about' the subjects. This approach uses the strengths of both science and food technology. Food often provides a motivating and lively context to learn about science, but teachers need to be shown how learning should link together simply, without a great deal of extra work on their part.

Activities such as **Balanced of Good Health** and **Food Thoughts** provide an opportunity for science, food technology and PSHE teachers to work closely together at Key Stage 3. To transfer learning effectively when starting Key Stage 4 a range of further activities provide an easy mechanism for building on the work completed at Key Stage 3.

This provides a simple resource bank of ready-made activities so teachers can work together and teach nutritional messages effectively.

This resource provides activities that:

- addresses 14-19 year olds directly;
- are set in a context of the lifestyles of 14-19 year olds, i.e. are personal to them;
- are focused on things that 14-19 year olds can change in their lives;
- promotes discussion of thought provoking issues;
- provide topics for structured discussion with clear messages;
- challenges perceptions;
- promotes active learning with the aim of changing behaviour and attitudes;
- empowers students, i.e. lets them know 'they can do it'.

What should 14-19 year olds be taught about diet and health?

There should be planned opportunities for 14-19 year olds to develop food related core competencies (Evaluation of Food and Nutrition Competencies amongst 14-16 year olds. Food Standards Agency and DfES, in press, 2003). These are:

Diet and health

- An understanding of the relationship between food, good health, growth and energy balance throughout life.
- Knowledge about the components of, and the proportions in, a healthy diet.
- Knowledge about what constitutes a healthy weight and how it relates to diet, general health and physical activity.

Consumer awareness

- The capacity to make informed choices of food in relation to a healthy diet.
- The need to achieve a balanced and varied diet through wise choices of foods.
- Knowledge about the comparative costs of different foods.
- Understanding of the food labeling information provided by manufacturers.
- Awareness of the influence of food advertising and promotion.

In addition there are competencies for **Food preparation and handling** and **Food hygiene and safety**.

Why it is teaching about diet and health important?

Recent research shows that there is a significant need to plug the gaps in young people's understanding about food choices and healthy eating, to enable them to reflect on their attitudes and encourage them to change their behaviour.

Young People's Food Choices 1983-2002

Main findings

- There is an upward trend for all groups who have nothing to eat for breakfast. For example, amongst 14-15 year old females this has risen from 24% in 1981 to 41% in 2001.
- There is a downward trend for all groups having a cooked breakfast or cereal.
- There is an upward trend in those having just a drink for breakfast.
- There is an upward trend of those not having lunch. For example, 14-15 year old females not having lunch rose from 2% in 1984 to 18% in 2001. Reference is made to potential links between missing lunch, breakfast and the desire to lose weight.
- There is a downward trend for eating fresh fruit on most days. Those most likely to be eating fresh fruit on most days were also likely to have items that contribute to a healthy diet such as wholemeal bread, fish, high fibre salads and vegetables, and less likely to eat crisps or have sugary drinks.
- There is an increase of 10% in those who eat fried chips or roast potatoes on most days. For 14-15 year old females this has risen from 14% in 1990 to 25% in 2002.
- There is a declining trend in young people who consider health when choosing what to eat.
- There is an increasing trend of desire to lose weight.

Evaluation of Food and Nutrition Competencies amongst 14-16 year olds

Main findings

- Teenagers understand the theory that diet matters, however they did not attach health importance to food choice.
- Knowledge about food choices, preparation, safety, handling and cooking was primarily derived from the home environment. School emerged as an information provider which was seen as theoretical rather than emotionally motivating or practically relevant - the exceptions were some food technology respondents who had clearly gained more confidence in cooking.
- School was seen to focus on the science of food which can be easily divorced from their everyday food choices.
- Teenagers have a relatively high degree of autonomy over meals chosen but are limited by the food options presented to them.
- Fast food and snacks emerged as the area of greatest freedom of food choice and enjoyment.
- Overall, in term of core competencies set out, respondents held a grasp of theory but lacked depth of knowledge and coherent understanding.

What are we tackling?

We are trying to change attitudes towards healthy eating and common misconceptions of some 14-19 year olds, so that they:

- think about and prioritise healthier food choices;
- take more personal responsibility for providing, planning and cooking meals. They should be urged to take more responsibility for purchasing food and for making choices of food eaten outside the home;
- make informed choices about the nutritional content and balance of their diet when choosing meals by using labels etc;
- reflect on how a lack of time might emphasise convenient and available options;
- develop more experience and confidence in planning and cooking meals;
- understand how to use the 'Balance of Good Health' plate model in a practical way related to their own food choices;
- understand that balance and variety in the diet are important for their own health;
- are able to apply nutrition messages to their own diet, e.g. 5-a-day;
- understand what constitutes a healthy weight;
- understand the relationship between diet and ill health, particularly coronary heart disease and tooth decay;
- understand that both diet and exercise are important for a healthy lifestyle, that a poor diet cannot be rectified by exercise, and they can make realistic estimates of the amount of exercise, and its intensity, that they need.

How teachers can work as a team to deliver consistent messages

Teaching about healthy eating takes place in a number of subjects, for example, science at Key Stage 3, food technology at Key Stage 3/4/5, PE/sports studies, and PSHE. Healthy eating also provides an interesting context for the work in ICT (e.g. nutritional analysis) and general studies (e.g. debate regarding food issues).

Schools should ensure that consistent and appropriate messages are delivered through the curriculum ensuring that young people make informed food choices and develop positive attitudes to issues related to diet.

Where nutrition is presented in the curriculum, it should be seen as an entitlement for all rather than as extra-curricular subject for the minority, so that students see that this is as important as their other examination subjects and studies.

Some schools have developed their school websites with sections to support information on healthy eating for young people and teachers.

As an aid to whole staff planning, discussion and reference, a **key messages** checklist follows to help teachers at a whole school level and individual teacher consider the relevant issues.

Key messages

For the school

The main aim is to help young people to eat healthily and be healthy people. You should consider health when choosing foods.

- Healthy eating is a matter of concern and action for all schools.
- Teaching about healthy eating takes place in a number of subjects, for example, science at Key Stage 3, food technology at Key Stage 3/4/5, PE/sports studies, PSHE. It also provides an interesting context for the work in ICT (e.g. nutritional analysis) and general studies (e.g. debate regarding food issues).
- Subjects should work together to deliver consistent and appropriate messages, to ensure that young people make informed food choices and develop positive attitudes to issues related to diet.

There should be planned opportunities for 14-19 year olds to develop food related core competencies.

These are:

Diet and health

- An understanding of the relationship between food, good health, growth and energy balance throughout life.
- Knowledge about the components of, and the proportions in, a healthy diet.
- Knowledge about what constitutes a healthy weight and how it relates to diet, general health and physical activity.

Consumer awareness

- The capacity to make informed choices and food in relation to a healthy diet.
- The need to achieve a balanced and varied diet through wise choices of foods.
- Knowledge about the comparative costs of different foods.
- Understanding of the food labelling information provided by manufacturers.
- Awareness of the influence of food advertising and promotion.

In addition there are competencies for **Food preparation and handling** and **Food hygiene and safety**.

For the team involved

- Develop a coherent plan of how food technology, science, PSHE and other interested teachers can work together. Non-specialist food teachers will need support.
- Allow discussion time to decide how learning will be transferred across subjects and from one key stage to the next, for example, who is going to teach what, how common vocabulary and a logo or 'campaign' can be used to help transfer learning and encourage links in young people's minds.
- Check that the activities planned provide consistent and accurate messages.
- Focus on addressing changing attitudes towards healthy eating and common misconceptions of some 14-19 year olds, so that they:
 - think about and prioritise healthier food choices;
 - take more personal responsibility for providing, planning and cooking meals. They should be urged to take more responsibility for purchasing food and for making choices of food eaten outside the home;
 - make informed choices about the nutritional content and balance of their diet when choosing meals by using labels etc;
 - reflect on how a lack of time might emphasise convenient and available options;
 - develop more experience and confidence in planning and cooking meals;
 - understand how to use the 'Balance of Good Health' plate model in a practical way related to their own food choices;
 - understand that balance and variety in the diet are important for their own health;
 - are able to apply nutrition messages to their own diet, e.g. 5-a-day;
 - understand what constitutes a healthy weight;
 - understand the relationship between diet and ill health, particularly coronary heart disease and tooth decay;
 - understand that both diet and exercise are important for a healthy lifestyle, that a poor diet cannot be rectified by exercise, and they can make realistic estimates of the amount of exercise, and its intensity, that they need.

For the individual teacher

- Use the 'Balance of Good Health' plate model. Individual foods are not classed as healthy or unhealthy; the emphasis is on achieving a balance of foods in the whole diet over a period of time.
- The issues surrounding food choices and healthy eating are complex. Make sure that you are clear in your own mind about the key messages. Useful sources of accurate information include these websites:
 - www.food.gov.uk
 - www.nutrition.org.uk
 - www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk
- Use an interactive teaching style. The most useful activities are those that address young people personally and are set in the context of their lifestyle; that promote discussion of thought-provoking issues and challenge perceptions and misconceptions, and which empower them to make their own healthy choices and change their choices when faced with peer pressure.

Resources list

Highly recommended

www.food.gov.uk

Information, interactive quizzes and games

Diet and health

- How to be a healthy weight
- Your body shape
- Body Mass Index calculator
- Your daily diet
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Heart disease
- Food and sport
- Food related conditions
- Food labelling

www.nutrition.org.uk

BNF PowerPoint presentation - The Balance of Good Health

Ideas to make your own Balance of Good Health

Balance of Good Health Poster - click on each food group to find out more

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

An important site for accurate and up-to-date advice on what to teach students

A-Z health links

Healthy eating links

Information about physical activity.

Other recommended sites

<http://www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk>

What it's all about?

What should I eat? - leads to the Balance of Good health plate

What can it do for you? - leading to what can go wrong, cancers et al
Quiz

<http://www.lifebytes.gov.uk>

Enjoy your food

Eating for good health

Getting the balance right - The Balance of Good Health plate

Weight watching

Food hygiene

Quiz

Are you a healthy eater? - Interactive activity

www.sustainweb.org.

The Grab 5 curriculum pack

www.welltown.gov.uk

Play the food game, placing foods on the plate

www.coolmeals.co.uk

www.british-red-meat.co.uk

www.bmesonline.org.uk