

## Eat the Rainbow

**Overview:** Children will be introduced to vitamin and mineral content of fruits and vegetables with a brief explanation of their benefits to the body. Children will be given the opportunity to taste a variety of produce items and learn which vitamins and minerals they contain.

**Subject area:** Nutrition

**Grade level:** K-5<sup>th</sup>

### Oregon Benchmarks/Common Core Standards:

Grades K-3

- Strand - PROMOTION OF HEALTHY EATING
  - Recognize the importance of variety and moderation in food selection and consumption
  - Choose a variety of foods from all food groups at home and school.
  - Advocate for a variety of foods from all food groups (focus on food groups to encourage: dairy, fruit, vegetables and whole grain).

Grades 4-5

- Strand – PROMOTION OF HEALTHY EATING
  - Explain the importance of variety and moderation in food choices and consumption.
  - Explain how healthy eating habits can lead to wellness.

**Objectives:** Children will be able to explain why it's important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.

**Prep time:** 20-30 minutes

**Lesson time:** 15 minutes

### Materials needed:

- Paper plates or regular plates and sticky notes (1 per produce item)
- Writing utensils
- Fresh produce -fruits and vegetables of varying colors, chopped (see steps 1 and 3 below)
- Nutrition information on vitamins/minerals in fruits and vegetables:  
<http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/index.html>  
<http://chasingdelicious.com/kitchen-101-nutrition-in-produce/>

**Staff needed:** 1

### Preparation steps:

1. Choose two to three produce items from each color category:
  - Red: sweet red peppers (vitamin C), strawberries (vitamin C), raspberries (vitamin C), red apples (vitamin C)

- Orange/Yellow: squash (vitamin A), carrots (vitamin A), oranges (vitamin C and potassium), tangerines (vitamin C), apricots (vitamin C), pineapple (vitamin C and manganese), lemon (vitamin C)
  - Green: lettuce (vitamin K), kale (vitamin K and calcium), broccoli (vitamins C and K, calcium), asparagus (vitamin B and riboflavin), snap peas (folate), kiwi fruit (vitamin C), lime (vitamin C), spinach (vitamins A, B, C, and K, calcium, folate, iron, magnesium)
  - Blue/Purple: (all contain antioxidants) purple cabbage, purple potatoes (vitamins B and C, potassium, iron), purple carrots (vitamin A), grapes, blueberries, raisins, plums, blackberries
  - White/Tan: bananas (potassium, vitamin B6), pears (vitamin C), onion (vitamin C), cauliflower (vitamin C), mushrooms (vitamin B6)
2. For more information about vitamins and minerals, refer to the links above.
  3. Chop up the produce items that you have chosen from each category. Make sure you have enough pieces for each child to have a sample of every produce item.
  4. On the backside of the paper plates or on a sticky note, write the name of each produce item and the 1-2 vitamins/minerals they contain.
  5. Also write or draw a quick image or word that describes what those nutrients are good for. Below are some examples:
    - Vitamin A: healthy eyes and skin
    - Vitamin C: healthy immune system, heals cuts and bruises, healthy teeth and gums
    - Vitamin K:
    - B Vitamins: healthy nerve function, helps the body release energy
    - Calcium: strong bones and teeth, helps heart and muscles work
    - Folate: helps make red blood cells
    - Iron: transports oxygen to the rest of the body
    - Magnesium: helps make bones and gives energy to muscles
    - Potassium: healthy heart and muscles
  6. Place each different fruit or vegetable onto its labeled plate

#### **Presentation Steps:**

1. Have all children wash their hands.
2. Offer the children tastes of the red colored fruits and vegetables. Let them try whatever they would like. Some children may refuse, and that is fine. They might change their minds if they see other children trying new things.
3. Once tasting is completed, flip the plates over and read together which vitamins and minerals are in the produce items the children just ate, and what those vitamins do in their bodies.
4. Repeat with each of the color categories.
5. Point out that you get different vitamins and minerals from different fruits and vegetables, so eating a rainbow is good for your body!