

Healthy Eating Challenge

Activity

Resource: Ideas for Action

Grade(s): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

What Is it All About?

Healthy eating can be challenging. Student leaders share a list of general food and nutrition-related concerns that teens sometimes have. Students then create a possible list of solutions.

Why Do It?

It is often a challenge to eat well with our busy lifestyles, the availability of unhealthy food, and the advertising that bombards us. Healthy eating requires awareness and planning. Explore some of the challenges teens have around healthy eating together.

How Do We Do It?

Youth in our current society face many challenges to eating well. However, many solutions also exist!

Examples of challenges include the following:

- Difficulty sitting without distractions so one can enjoy meals
- Extensive marketing of pop, energy drinks, and other sweetened beverages
- Abundance of highly processed foods
- Busy schedules (e.g., homework, jobs, extra-curricular activities)
- Lack of nutritious choices at school, recreational facilities, or work

- Little to no food knowledge or cooking skills

Nutrition concerns for youth can have a major impact on their general health and well-being. Possible issues of concern for youth include:

- Too little time for breakfast
- Drinking pop and other sweetened beverages frequently, instead of water or more nutritious beverages like milk
- Not drinking enough water
- Drinking energy drinks often
- Too little time (or too little food available) to eat prior to or after extra-curricular activities
- Lack of nutritious choices in vending machines, in school, recreational facilities, or work

Divide students into small groups and assign one issue to each group of students. Student leaders debunk the nutrition concern being discussed and provide a possible solution. Include any research findings (e.g., why eating breakfast is important, why getting enough water is necessary, why too much pop is a concern).

Student leaders can stand by and help to educate peers to overcome their challenges as needed.

What Else Do We Need?

- Computer/device
- Credible sources of information re: food/nutrition/healthy eating issues
- Internet access

How Do We Get Creative?

Have students anonymously submit their own challenges.

Have a Registered Dietician from the community (e.g. community health centre, public health, grocery store) come to speak about overcoming challenges to eating well.