

Key Foods and Nutrients

Subject: Nutrition

Grades: 3–5

Mix up your foods to be healthy and strong. Different foods have different nutrients, and you need all kinds of nutrients for a strong body and alert mind. Certain food groups provide specific nutrients, so eating from all the food groups is smart nutrition.

Protein Food Group: Meat, poultry, fish and eggs have valuable protein to help build your body. Red meat has iron that helps carry oxygen in your blood.

Grain Food Group: Enjoy whole grain foods for B vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. Grains, as in bread and cereal, have carbohydrates that give you long-lasting energy. Oatmeal is a whole grain that makes a great breakfast

Fruits: Apples, oranges, bananas and other fruits also have carbohydrates that give you energy. They have vitamins, minerals and special nutrients called antioxidants. Oranges and kiwis have Vitamin C for healthy skin and to help you fight infections. Berries are loaded with antioxidants, which help fight disease. Bananas have potassium, which aids in energy production. Fruits also have fiber, which is good for digestion.

Vegetables: Orange vegetables like carrots and pumpkin and dark green vegetables like spinach help you get your Vitamin A for healthy skin and eyes, minerals, and many other nutrients. Vegetables have fiber, too. Some, like broccoli, are also full of antioxidants.

Milk Food Group: This includes yogurt and cheese, as well as the milk you drink. These foods give you calcium, a mineral for strong bones and healthy teeth, as well as vitamins and other minerals. Most milk products have Vitamin D added, which also helps build your bones. Milk products are good sources of protein and B vitamins.

Fats and Oils: Some fats are good for you. Especially important are Omega-3 fatty acids. These are found in ocean fish like salmon and in many nuts. One type of Omega-3, DHA, helps the brain, eyes and heart stay healthy. Oils like olive oil and canola oil have health benefits. Avoid processed trans fats and limit saturated fats.

DISCLAIMER: The lesson plans and information therein are for general information only.

For guidance on individual health issues and diagnosis and treatment of specific conditions, consult a physician or other health-care professional.

