12. Healthy Living Grade 8 Activities

Note:
Teaching about body image may increase peer teasing about students’ body size and shape. Before starting learning activities it’s important to set some ground rules or guidelines to help students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and feelings about their bodies (i.e. respecting and listening to each other, not making negative comments or jokes about peoples bodies; not judging someone based on their appearance or using the word fat as an insult). See group guidelines at http://teachnutrition.org/Files/body_image-activity1.pdf

Many students face teasing and harassment about their weight, appearance or culture which can strongly affect their body image and self esteem.

In Additional Resources see the following for more on teasing and harassment
- Video--Gossiping, Taunting, Bullying: It’s All Harassment (Gr. 5-9)
- Teachers Kit for Gr. 7-9. Body Image Works www.bodyimageworks.com. This kit may be available for loan from local school boards or Health Departments.

For Body Image lesson plans that reflect best practice:
- Adapt Tuning in to Hunger (see web links below)
- Adapt Body Image, Self Esteem and Eating Practices in Grade 6 section
- Use the websites listed below

Grades 6-8
- Mission Nutrition www.missionnutrition.ca provides lesson plans and activities specific to self esteem and body image as well as healthy eating and physical activity. Available in French and English.
### Healthy Living Grade 8 Activities

#### Healthy Eating Overall Expectation

**Adopt personal goals that reflect healthy eating practices**

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| Identify ways to maintain a healthy body weight (e.g., listening to hunger and fullness cues, physical activity). | 3. Healthy Body Weight Brainstorm  
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| Adopt personal food plans, based on nutritional needs and personal goals, to improve or maintain their eating practices. | 9. Personal Food Plan  
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• Recognizing challenges/successes in making dietary changes  
• Balancing meals |
Specific Expectation

Analyze the effects of under-eating (e.g., as a result of bulimia or sports dieting) and over-eating (e.g., obesity) on health and well-being.

1. Does Dieting Work?

(This activity also meets the following Specific Expectation: Analyze the effects of undereating (e.g., as a result of bulimia or sports dieting) and overeating (e.g., obesity) on health and well-being.

Ask the class what they think the word ‘diet’ means. Be sure to highlight in the discussion that having a healthy diet is not the same thing as dieting for weight loss (see section 8.2 Why Restrictive Dieting is a Concern in the Background Information). Explain the problems with dieting. The focus for all students should be on healthy behaviours, not body weight. Implementing healthy eating and physical activity habits, including a positive body image and self-esteem can improve students’ health. Distribute the Does Dieting Work? activity sheet for students to complete on their own.

2. A Positive Twist

(This activity also meets the following Specific Expectation: Analyze the effects of undereating (e.g., as a result of bulimia or sports dieting) and overeating (e.g., obesity) on health and well-being.

As a class, brainstorm a list of negative impacts weight loss dieting has on a person’s health. Some suggestions are listed below (see section 8.2 Why Restrictive Dieting is a Concern in the Background Information).

- Dieting doesn’t work.
- Dieting doesn’t make you fit.
- Dieting can make you fat.
- Dieting slows down your metabolism.
- Dieting makes you sluggish.
- Dieting can make you cranky.
- Dieting supports poor food choices.
- Dieting doesn’t make you more popular or happier.
- Dieting stops you from fully enjoying life.
- Dieting lowers your self-esteem.
- Dieting can interfere with your growth.
In small groups, have students turn their list of negative impacts into positive statements about the role healthy eating and physical activity have on health and well-being. For example, change the statement “Dieting makes you sluggish” to “Healthy eating makes you energetic”.

Create posters using the positive statements and post in the classroom or throughout the school for constant reinforcement of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
Specific Expectation

Identify ways to maintain a healthy body weight (e.g., listening to hunger and fullness cues, physical activity).

3. Healthy Body Weight Brainstorm

Explain to students that there is a range of healthy body weights. Stress that healthy habits, not a given number on the scale, are the goal (see Section 6- ‘Body Image during Puberty’ in the Background Information). No fixed number, table, or graph, can determine what a healthy weight would be for an individual.

As a class, brainstorm a list of ways people can maintain a healthy body weight. Encourage specific examples including the following:

- healthy eating practices (e.g., increase the number of servings of vegetables and fruit eaten each day)
- physical activity/active living (e.g., hockey, aerobics, dancing, walking to the grocery store, taking the stairs rather than the elevator)
- feeling good about yourself (e.g., positive body image, self-esteem)

Notes:

- There is no method to ‘measure’ and assess the weights of children to determine whether they are healthy. Children are growing at different rates through to the end of puberty.
- A measure of healthy weight range called the Body Mass Index (BMI) is available for adults age 20-65 who have completed their linear growth. The BMI is not suitable as a tool to estimate a healthy weight range for growing children and teenagers.

4. Healthy Body Weight Crossword

Distribute the Healthy Body Weight Crossword activity sheet. After the students have completed the crossword, discuss the answers (see Healthy Body Weight Crossword answer sheet).

5. Tuning into Hunger

Explain to students that a non-dieting approach to eating involves eating when you are hungry and stopping when you are full. Explain that the stages of ‘hunger’ can be plotted on a continuum:

satisfied → thinking of food → hungry → really hungry → starving
Make several copies of the *Hunger Scale Categories & Indicators* activity sheet. Cut the pieces along the dotted lines and place them in envelopes.

Divide students into groups of three to four. Distribute one envelope to each group. Ask students to sort the indicators into the appropriate categories (i.e., satisfied, thinking of food, hungry, really hungry, starving). While referring to the *Hunger Scale* answer sheet, have a class discussion around the following questions:

- How do you know when your body is hungry?
- What do you do when you are hungry?
- What happens when you ignore feelings of hunger?
- Do you ever eat when you are not hungry? Why?
- Are the foods you eat when you are starting to feel hungry any different than the foods you eat when you are feeling extremely hungry?

Source: *Every BODY Is A Somebody*, The Body Image Coalition of Peel, 1997

6. Active Living

Have students develop an ad that illustrates how physical activity promotes the maintenance of health. The ads must:

- focus on non-dieting messages (e.g., “Physical activity is good for bone health.”; “Physical activity helps you sleep well.”; “Physical activity boosts your energy.”)
- not be about losing weight or about excessive body building
- include a slogan
- include eye-catching colours and graphics (if a print ad)

Display poster ads around the classroom and school or announce over the PA system.

7. Fitness Breaks and Healthy Eating Tips

In small groups, have students design five simple one-minute fit breaks. Each fit break should focus on one of the following aspects of fitness:

- endurance activities (e.g., walking, dancing, jumping)
- flexibility activities (e.g., reaching, bending, stretching)
- strength activities (e.g., push-ups, stair climbing, carrying books)

Then have each group develop five simple healthy eating tips in the form of one or two sentences each (e.g., “Give your lunch a nutritional lift; pack two oranges and give one to a friend.”).

The class can introduce the concept of a daily one minute fit break and healthy eating tip to the entire school. One fit break or healthy eating tip can be read over the PA system each day. Right after the announcements, a student can lead their class in a one minute
fit break. Fit break routines and healthy eating tips can be repeated throughout the school year.

8. Tuning Into Hunger

Please see the Region of Peel Public Health website for more activities for this section: www.peelregion.ca/health/ baew/lesson-plans/healthy eating/lpth/intermediate/lplans/hunger.htm

Specific Expectation

Adopt personal food plans, based on nutritional needs and personal goals, to improve or maintain their eating practices.

9. Personal Food Plan

Review Canada’s Food Guide (food groups, serving sizes and recommended number of servings, (see Section 1.1 in the Background Information). Ask students to use the steps outlined below to develop a personal food plan.

a) Individually, students identify and record one personal goal to improve or maintain their eating habits.

b) In pairs, students help each other develop a personal food plan for the following day using the Personal Food Plan activity sheet. This plan should incorporate their personal goal(s) and meet the recommendations in Canada’s Food Guide. Ask students to use Canada’s Food Guide to make the comparison.

c) Students list challenges and corresponding solutions to achieving their goal. For example:
Personal goal - To include more milk in my diet.
Personal food plan - Include milk on cereal for breakfast and have a glass of milk for supper.
Challenge - Family drinks water or pop at supper.
Solution - Put milk jug on the table.

d) Students try to meet their goal for one month.

e) Students keep a record of challenges that made it difficult to meet their goal(s) with corresponding solutions as well as other things that helped them meet their goal(s).

Have a follow-up discussion on the challenges and solutions the students experienced in meeting or not meeting their goal. Ask students to discuss how they overcame the challenges (e.g., how they persuaded their family to change or how they coped with friends suggesting they have pop instead of milk).
10. Journal Reflections

Ask students to devote ten minutes a day to record reflections about healthy lifestyles, healthy eating, and active living. Ask them to reflect on things they want to continue, things they want to change, what they did yesterday to eat healthy and keep active, what they will do today, and what they can do tomorrow. Have students set personal goals and record the difficulties/successes in achieving those goals.

This journal activity can be done over several weeks. Please respect students’ privacy regarding journal entries. Offer to meet with students on an individual basis to discuss personal issues that are triggered by journal writing.

11. Balance your Meal

Ask the students to bring in a favourite entree recipe. Using the Balance Your Meal activity sheet, have the students form pairs and complete the activity sheet focusing on:

- Which food groups already exist in the recipes?
- Is the amount of a particular food (i.e. vegetables) in the recipe enough to be considered a serving size?
- Which food groups should be added to balance their meals?
- What adaptations could be made to make the recipes healthier (e.g., use half the amount of oil, milk instead of water, whole wheat bread instead of white bread)?

Ask the students to try the adapted recipes with their family and to discuss the results with the class. Did it still taste good? If not, why not, and could something be done differently?

12. Snack Nouveau

As a class, have the students brainstorm and list their favourite snacks that can be purchased from grocery stores, convenience stores, fast food outlets, cafeterias or restaurants. Discuss the concepts of ‘everyday’ and ‘sometimes’ foods. Classify the snacks into ‘everyday’ snacks and ‘sometimes’ snacks (see the Grade 1-3 Background Information). Have a discussion about what influences snack choices (e.g., peers, taste, advertising, cost and convenience).

Ask the students the next time that they purchase a snack to choose one of the ‘everyday’ snacks on their class list.

At a follow-up class have students identify where and how easy or difficult it was to find these snacks and whether they would continue to buy them. If it was difficult to find the snack, what would make it easier (e.g., having a vending machine with milk or yogurt)? What could they do to improve the availability of “everyday” snacks in their school and community? For example, students could write letters to their principal to ask for healthy choices in their school vending machines.
13. **The Fifth Nutrition Estate**

Have each student interview one person about their eating habits. Encourage students to interview people with different eating styles (e.g., vegetarian, kosher) and/or from different ethno-cultural groups (e.g., South Asian, Italian). Some sample questions follow:

- How many meals did you eat yesterday?
- How many snacks did you eat yesterday?
- How many servings of Vegetables and Fruit did you eat yesterday?
- What types of Vegetables and Fruit did you eat yesterday?
- How many servings of dark green or orange vegetables or fruit did you eat yesterday?
- How many servings of Grain Products did you eat yesterday?
- What types of Grains Products did you eat yesterday?
- Did you eat any servings of whole wheat or other whole grain foods?
- How many servings of Milk and Alternatives did you eat yesterday?
- How many of your Milk and Alternatives servings were low fat? (2% M. F. or less)
- How many servings of Meat and Alternatives did you eat yesterday?
- Did you eat any beans, tofu, lentils, or other meat alternatives?
- What types of cooking methods were used?
- Did you get overly hungry during the day?
- If so, what did you eat when you were very hungry?
- Would you say that yesterday was a typical day?

Ask the students to write a report summarizing the person’s one-day eating pattern. Have students make recommendations for improving the person’s eating pattern. Remind students that one day does not determine whether a person’s eating pattern is healthy or not.

Ask students to try one new food or cooking method they learned from the person they interviewed, if possible.