Group Program

1. How many purple foods can you name?

Brainstorm foods in each of these colors: blue/purple, green, white, yellow/orange, and red. Ask youth to bring enough of one food per color in a ready-to-eat form to share with the whole group. Let each create a “rainbow” on a small plate. Eating a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables daily is a fun way to get a wide range of good nutrients.

2. How do you measure fitness?

Invite a physical therapist, personal trainer, athletic trainer, and PE teacher to discuss and demonstrate how they measure flexibility, muscle strength, endurance, and cardio fitness. Ask them to explain why each is important, and to offer age-appropriate tips on how to achieve those qualities.

3. Can you dance the night away?

A CD player, music, and an experienced dancer are all you need for this great fitness and social activity. Start with group dances, such as the Hokey Pokey, YMCA, Bunny Hop, Cha-cha slide, or Macarena. This is a no-watchers activity; everyone participates.

4. What happens in a commercial kitchen?

Arrange to tour or meet at a school, nursing home, hospital, or other site that has a commercial kitchen. Ask a staff member to explain how they develop their menus, how they secure, prepare, and serve the food, and what food safety precautions they follow. Discuss field trip manners and what food safety precautions they follow. Discuss field trip manners and what food safety precautions they follow.

5. What food goes where?

Designate teams of 6 to 8 members. Prepare bags of identical grocery items for each team. Each bag should contain fresh or packaged items representing the food groups. Some suggestions include:

- **Grains**: a package of rice, loaf of whole wheat bread, box of cereal, oatmeal
- **Dairy products**: cheese sticks, empty yogurt containers, empty milk carton
- **Fruits**: apples, oranges, canned pineapple
- **Vegetables**: small package of carrots, cucumbers, canned green beans, can of vegetable or tomato juice
- **Meat/protein**: peanut butter, packaging for pre-sliced meats like ham or turkey, canned tuna, canned nuts
- **Sweets/fats**: candy bars, soda

Place filled bags at one end of the room. Place bags labeled for each food group at the opposite end. Each team member must pull an item from their bag, run to the opposite end and place it in the correct food group bag. (You may want a judge at each bag.) If they go to the wrong bag, they must return to the team to get help. (No shouting instructions across the room!) The first team to correctly empty their bag wins. Briefly review serving sizes for foods in each group and what food safety precautions they follow. Discuss field trip manners and what food safety precautions they follow.

6. What’s highest? What’s lowest?

Ask youth to bring a food item to donate to the local food pantry, then sort the items by their labels. For example, find the vitamin C or calcium values and sort food items from highest to lowest. Do the last sort by food groups and bag accordingly, then deliver items to food pantry.

7. Does your portion align with the recommended amounts?

Cut a large bag of rubber bands to resemble spaghetti and place in a bowl. Invite youth to use tongs to place the amount they would normally eat on a plate. Ask how they think their amount compares to the proportions depicted by MyPlate.gov. (Is it taking up slightly over ¼ of the plate?) Ask how much they think they need. (2,000 calories = 6 oz grains) What does an ounce of spaghetti look like? (½ cup) Let them measure their portions (4 oz cup measures well!) Eating more than the recommended amount at a time is okay when it fits within the total day’s amount. Want to know more about the recommendations about each food group contributing to your plate? See www.choosemyplate.gov/

8. Is “super-size” a good deal?

One recommendation for a healthy lifestyle is to only rarely (or never!) select super-sizes. Divide the group into 4 teams and give each one a different size of regular soda (12-ounce can, 20-ounce plastic bottle, 1-liter bottle, 64-ounce fountain drink). Ask each team to determine how much sugar is in their soda. (Hint: 4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon or sugar cube.)

9. How clean are your hands?

Call your local Iowa State University Extension office and reserve the Handwashing Kit. Follow the directions and ask youth to suggest other songs that are as long as “Happy Birthday” to use for their own personal guideline.

10. What’s on MyPlate?

Post a copy of MyPlate and briefly review each food group. Divide youth into teams that include a mix of ages. Give each team a sheet of legal-size paper, scissors, and magazines containing food photos so they can cut out the pictures and design their own plate. Check for accuracy before handing out glue sticks. Let each team display their plate and share highlights with the entire group.

More RESOURCES

You don’t have to look far for more great information about food and fitness activities.

**Iowa State University Extension Web Sites**

www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition

https://store.extension.iastate.edu/

Look at these topic headings:

- Food, Nutrition, and Health
- Kids and Teens/4-H

Other Websites

www.livehealthyiowa.org

- Organize a team to set fitness goals

www.kids.gov/

- Check links to dozens of Web sites

www.fruitsandvegetablesmatters.org

- Find ideas and recipes for using fruits and vegetables

www.bam.gov

- “Body and mind” site for youth answers health and nutrition questions

www.actionforhealthykids.org

- Share ideas

www.dtkkards.com/bingo

- Make custom bingo cards

www.4daythrowaway.org

- Get fun, educational food safety information

More RESOURCES

- Find ideas and recipes for using fruits and vegetables

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach**

www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition

https://store.extension.iastate.edu/

Look at these topic headings:

- Food, Nutrition, and Health
- Kids and Teens/4-H

Other Websites

www.livehealthyiowa.org

- Organize a team to set fitness goals

www.kids.gov/

- Check links to dozens of Web sites

www.fruitsandvegetablesmatters.org

- Find ideas and recipes for using fruits and vegetables

www.bam.gov

- “Body and mind” site for youth answers health and nutrition questions

www.actionforhealthykids.org

- Share ideas

www.dtkkards.com/bingo

- Make custom bingo cards

www.4daythrowaway.org

- Get fun, educational food safety information

Prepared by Heidi Bell, field specialist; Kim Brunner, county extension education director; Clark Budish, communication specialist; DeBull, county extension education director; Jane Hayes-Johnst, Stuart Johnson, and Susan Klein, field specialists; Beth Litchfield, extension nutritionist.
1. Donate fruit or veggie snacks to a preschool or child care center
Better yet, deliver the snacks and do an activity with the children. Take them for a neighborhood nature or art walk, play games, or read a fun food book. When reviewing plans with the teacher/provicer, ask about food allergies that any of the children might have. For book ideas, see Michigan Team Nutrition Booklist at http://healthynaturals.michigan.gov/OpportunityNutritionBookList.pdf.

2. Organize a workday
Exercise while cleaning up a community site, such as a park, county fairgrounds, or local community center. Sweep, mop, pick up trash, cut weeds, wash windows, paint, whatever needs to be done. Provide water or juice-based beverages for the crew.

3. Hold a dance marathon
Donate the proceeds to a worthy cause. Serve healthy snacks.

4. Get growing
Plant and care for a community garden or flower bed. Set up a care schedule that includes watering and weeding for the entire summer.

5. Assist with a community health day
Check with local public health or hospital officials to find out if there is a health fair and when. Brainstorm ideas you might want to do.

6. Fight hunger
Volunteer at a local food pantry, homeless shelter, or meals on wheels site. Pack cold lunches, help in the serving line, or stock shelves when deliveries are made. Visit with managers to find out what food items are in short supply.

7. Give healthy treats
Make and deliver fruit baskets to shut-ins, child care providers, new residents, or anyone else in your community. Create your own “holiday” instead of waiting for the traditional gift-giving days.

8. Promote healthy snacks
Work to get healthy choices on the menu at concession stands. String cheese, 100% fruit juice, pretzels, oranges, apples, and baked potatoes might be big hits.

9. Say thanks
Let teachers know you care by preparing nutritious snacks for in-service or parent-teacher conference days. Talk to a school official in advance to organize this project.

10. Promote walking
Check out www.walkthisway.org/ Consider mapping safe walking routes for specific distances throughout the community.

Gorp
Set out a box of cereal (e.g., Cheerios, Chex) 1 bag pretzels, 2 cups raisins, 2 cup peanuts, 2 cups honey, 1 tablespoons brown sugar. Glaze and mix together with 1 cup of the cereal and 1 tablespoon of each of the other ingredients. Serve 8.

Ice Cream in a Bag
Mix 4 cups whole milk (some or 2% chocolate), 1 cup sugar (lightly less if using chocolate milk), and 1 tablespoon vanilla. Divide between 2 quarter-size zipper plastic bags. Seal, then tape edges together with duct tape. Place 2 cups ice and a generous handful of fine rock salt in 2 gallon-sized zipper plastic bags. Place filled quart-size bags inside gallon bags. Add 1 to 2 cups more ice and another handful of fine rock salt. Seal gallon bags, and wrap each in a towel. Have youth form 2 lines. Start the bags at two different locations and ask participants to flip and shake bag for 1 minute, then pass it to the next person. Play music or sing a group song. Keep shaking and passing until the ice cream hardens. Remove inner bags. Clip off the bottom corner of each bag and squeeze servings into cups. Top with fresh fruit, if desired. Serve.

Quesadillas
Sprinkle 11/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese on half of a 8- or 9-inch flour tortilla. Wet the edge of the tortilla with water, fold the tortilla in half, and use a fork to seal the edge together. With a spatula, place quesadilla in a large non-stick skillet or grill (if desired use non-stick spray) over medium-high heat. Turn when brown and cooked until the other side is browned. Cut in half and serve with salsa. Optional: Add cooked meat and chopped veggie with cheese in the tortilla before heating. Serve 2.

Fruit Kabobs
Select a variety of fruits (bananas, apples, pineapple, strawberries, melon, grapes) Wash and cut into 1-inch chunks. Thread fruit chunks onto wooden skewers. Prepare in advance, dip apples and bananas into orange or pineapple juice to keep them from turning brown.

Italian Dunkers
Prepare “brown and serve” breadsticks by package directions. Heat a 10-inch pan of spaghetti sauce with 1 pound browned, drained, and rinsed ground beef. Spoon mixture into 8 individual serving bowls; dip breadsticks in sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve.

Fruit and Yogurt Parfait
Place 1 tablespoon low-fat granola-type cereal (e.g. Nutty Nuggets or Grape Nuts) in the bottom of a cup. Add a large spoonful of yogurt. Add 1 cup of granola fruit. Add another spoonful of yogurt. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of cereal. One 8-ounce container of yogurt will make 2 to 3 servings.

Blueberry Smoothie
In blender, combine 2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen), 1 cup 1% chocolate milk, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Divide between 2 quart-size zippered plastic bags. Seal, then tape edges together with duct tape. Place 2 cups ice and a generous handful of fine rock salt in 2 gallon-sized zipper plastic bags. Place filled quart-size bags inside gallon bags. Add 1 to 2 cups more ice and another handful of fine rock salt. Seal gallon bags, and wrap each in a towel. Have kids form 2 lines. Start the bags at two different locations and ask participants to flip and shake bag for 1 minute, then pass it to the next person. Play music or sing a group song. Keep shaking and passing until the ice cream hardens. Remove inner bags. Clip off the bottom corner of each bag and squeeze servings into cups. Top with fresh fruit, if desired. Serve.

Tortilla Wrap-Up
Spread 1 tortilla with reduced fat French onion or ranch dip. Top with 1 cup chopped vegetables (tomato, pepper, cucumber, carrot, onion, and zucchini) and 2 tablespoons grated cheese. Roll-up, cut in 2. Makes 2 servings. (Make your own spread by blending 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 2 tablespoons salsa, 3 tablespoons salsa, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and dry ranch dip seasonings until smooth).