



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

USING YOUR SUPER SENSES



We use our senses every time we eat. Colors, crunches, smells, textures, and taste all matter when we choose fruits and vegetables to eat.

4-H PROJECT AREAS

Foods & Nutrition

LIFE SKILLS:

Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Learning to Learn, Critical Thinking

TIME:

20 - 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Crayons or colored pencils
- Poster markers
- A large piece of paper or poster board
- White medium-sized paper plate
- A banana or pineapple slices (1 for the group)
 - Put this fruit in a small paper bag
- An orange or a kiwi (1 for the group)
- Baby carrots or a carrot stick (1 per youth)
- Blueberries in a clear container (1 container for the group)
- Red bell pepper (1 for the group)
- Extra samples of fruits and vegetables as desired for tasting

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Prepare the food samples for the "Investigate" sensory exploration activity by washing them thoroughly. Check with parents/caregivers ahead of time about food allergies. Everyone doing the activity should wash their hands using soap and warm water for 20 seconds beforehand.

Resources: Sources: "Eat Your Colors" From USDA's Discover MyPlate, "Color Your Plate! Eat More Vegetables and Fruits from Cornell Cooperative Extension's CHFFF, cookingmatters.org.

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Did you know?

Most Americans do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables and fruit. According to myplate.gov, children should eat 2 ½ cups of vegetables each day and 1 ½ cups of fruit per day. If we are not familiar with a vegetable or fruit, it can be tough to try a new taste. Sometimes we need to see and learn about a fruit or vegetable a few times before we learn to like it. Vegetables and fruits are packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber that keep us healthy. They help us grow strong, have healthy skin and hair, and do our best when we play and learn.

Ask

What fruits and vegetables can you name that are orange?

Write ideas down on a large piece of paper or poster board. Continue by asking for fruits and vegetables of other colors: green, purple, etc.

Ask, Have you tasted any of these fruits and vegetables before? What do they taste like? Where did you eat them?

Ask, Why do you think it is good to eat fruits and vegetables of different colors?

Follow up by explaining to the youth that eating different colors helps your body & brain.

Red, blue, and purple fruits and vegetables can boost your memory. Green ones give you strong bones and teeth. Orange and yellow ones keep your eyes sharp and help you fight off colds.

Investigate

Tell the youth that they will get to explore fruits and vegetables with their senses.

Gather everyone in a circle. Do not let the youth see the food items you have prepared.

Smell: Ask youth to close their eyes and stay quiet as you walk in front of them and allow them to smell the banana or pineapple slices in a paper bag. See how many participants are able to guess the correct fruit, after everyone has had the opportunity to smell it.

Touch: Pass around an orange or a kiwi and ask youth to describe how the outside feels.

Hearing: Have youth close their eyes and listen closely as you take a bite of a carrot. Can they guess which food made that sound? If you have enough samples, allow each participant to bite their own carrot.

Sight: Pass around some blueberries in a clear container and a red bell pepper. Ask youth to describe the colors and how the foods look.

Taste: Distribute samples of fruits and vegetables. Invite participants to taste the food and describe each one using all of their senses.

More to Explore

Make a recipe that uses different colors of fruits and vegetables, such as the Crunchy Rainbow Wrap or Fruitacious Breakfast Cup (fns-prod.azureedge.net)

Create

Give each youth a paper plate and some crayons. Ask them to choose 2 vegetables or fruits that they already like to eat, and 1 that they have not eaten that they want to try. Encourage them to draw these three choices on their plate, trying to get three different colors of fruits and vegetables in their choices! (If the youth have trouble thinking of ideas, look back at the list you made during the “ask” portion of the activity).

Share/Reflect

Ask, What did you discover when you used your five senses to explore fruits and vegetables?

Ask, How did you choose the three fruits and vegetables you drew on your plate? Where and when do you think you will try a new fruit or vegetable?

Ask, What are your favorite ways to eat fruits and vegetables?

Relationship to 4-H...

The second of the four H's is “health,” which includes things like good sleep habits, choosing nutritious foods, getting exercise, and making other choices that support our well-being. In 4-H, youth can explore a wide range of projects where they can learn about health, including: child development; fun and fitness; foods and nutrition - from growing or raising their own food to cooking; safety; lots of different outdoor activities like hiking, canoeing, camping; and more. Over time, they may become a youth leader in health projects they love.