

## Things you can do for Nutrition Month to Gain Excitement around Healthy Eating

Looking for something to do to help celebrate nutrition month (March)? Try some of these fun ideas!

Remember that nutrition is something that happens year round, not only in March, so keep nutrition in focus the whole school year.

[Dietitians of Canada](#) 2020 nutrition month theme: More Than Food

For support with your nutrition month ideas and for more information contact:

Chelsea Brown, Registered Dietitian  
[chelsea.brown@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:chelsea.brown@saskhealthauthority.ca)  
Saskatchewan Health Authority  
Health Promotion



- 1. Link nutrition activities to the SK Health curriculum** – Download support documents, “Teaching Nutrition in Saskatchewan: Concepts and resources” for grades 1-8, Health Science 20 and Phys Ed 20/30 [HERE](#)
- 2. Celebrate Family Food Traditions** – have students think about some of their favourite family food traditions and then get details from their parents or grandparents about how that tradition started and then share with the class (they can either write a poem about it, draw a picture, write a few paragraphs, bring in photos or recipes, etc.) Some examples might include: eating turkey on thanksgiving, having a certain type of cake on birthdays, frying up fresh caught fish on the fire on camping trips, smoking meat, berry picking in the summer, picking peas from the garden at the family farm and then shelling them with auntie, air popping popcorn together with your parents and then eating on movie night, etc.
- 3. Celebrate/incorporate Foods or flavours from across Canada or around the world** (Consider the cultural diversity of your school. Ask students and parents for ideas).
  - Show pictures or bring in samples to taste of different foods and beverages from around the world. Could be prepared foods and beverages or single ingredients. Have students guess where in the world or where in Canada they are traditionally eaten (or drunk), and then point it out on the map.
  - Host a cultural food family potluck and have families bring their favourite cultural dishes or family favourites.
  - Have students research a cultural food or food practice, how it’s made and where it is traditionally eaten and share with the class.

4. **Feature foods grown/produced in Saskatchewan** – local foods! (leafy greens, carrots, turnips, onions, lentils, chickpeas, mustard, canola, wheat, flax). How/where are they grown/raised, do any farms nearby produce them, why are they good for us, what do they look like before and after they are prepared for us to eat, what kinds of dishes are they eaten in, how do you prepare them, etc.
5. **Have a Food Talking Circle** – Teaching point: *Try to have meals together with your family or other people you are close to. These can be with friends, grandparents, aunts, siblings, parents, whoever and wherever! Just eating together is a good healthy habit and a good opportunity to connect with those close to you.*

Activity: Have a talking circle with some conversation starters to pull out of a hat about eating habits and practices, cooking skills, snacks, etc. You could also give them some conversation starter ideas to take home with their families (see [HERE](#) for more ideas). The conversations children have at meal times can help them work on their story telling and vocabulary. Some food examples of conversation starter could be:

- What is your favourite snack that you know how to make?
  - What is one of your family food traditions? – something you make or eat for special occasions or when you see certain family members – something about food that reminds you of your family (e.g. fishing and cooking it over the fire when we camp; eating popcorn on movie nights; making moose stew when we visit auntie; having turkey at Christmas; etc.)
  - What is your favourite food from another culture (or your own culture)? E.g. Perogies, palak paneer, burritos, pho, souvlaki, bannock, sushi, etc.)
  - In the book Green Eggs and Ham, Sam-I-am does not want to eat green eggs and ham at first. Later, he does and he likes them. Has something like this ever happened to you?
  - What is your favourite thing about eating together with your friends or family?
  - What do you like to talk about with others when you are eating meals together?
  - What is your favourite fruit and why?
  - What would you say are Foods from the Canadian culture? (e.g. Saskatoon berries, poutine, maple beans, taber corn, deer sausage, bison, butter tarts, beaver tails, fiddle heads, etc.)
  - Have you ever been on a farm before? When? Why? Were there any animals there? Do they grow anything?
6. **‘Litter-less Lunch Challenge’** - can be done with a class or whole school. Download Instructions [HERE](#)
  7. **Start growing herbs in your class or nutrition room** - Apply for Little Green Thumbs grant and they will set you up with everything you need to get started! [www.littlegreenthumbs.org/Apply](http://www.littlegreenthumbs.org/Apply)
  8. **Name that vegetable or fruit**
    - Show pictures of vegetables or fruit growing in the garden or ground and get students to guess what it is. Discuss how it is grown, whether the edible ‘fruit’ is the root, leaf or stem portion of the plant, and where the seeds come from.

**9. Have a feature vegetable/fruit/ingredient of the week** – a different one each week – e.g. spinach, lentils, pears, flax seed, etc.

- This is about exposure to healthy (and maybe new) foods, as well as good and fun experiences with healthy foods.
- Coordinate with school admin to have students make announcement over the intercom, or include information in the school newsletter about where spinach, for example, is commonly grown, how it can be grown here, how to plant it, what the seeds look like, why it is good for us, what healthy nutrients it contains, etc. Have spinach featured in several snacks and/or lunches throughout the week. (e.g. spinach, strawberry and sunflower seed salad; spinach in a smoothie, spinach pureed in with scrambled eggs for *green eggs* – like Dr. Seuss!, etc.)
- Note: never force students to try something they do not want to. Encourage students to politely turn down food without negative comments if they are not interested.

**10. Promote the all mighty pulses!** (chickpeas, beans, lentils, dried peas, etc.). Some ideas for this theme:

- Make foods including these ingredients, see if students can guess which one was used in the recipe (have a picture of a variety of pulses and their name in front of each).
- Could also get students *guessing the number of beans (not jelly beans!) in a jar*.
- Have different varieties of pulses in clear jars and have students *try to match their names up correctly*.
- Have pictures of the plants they come from and have students *guess which seed (pulse) comes from which plant*.
- ✓ Pulses can be used in chili, soup, stew, pasta sauce, muffins, cookies, tacos, burritos also try: [www.pulsecanada.com/food-health/recipes](http://www.pulsecanada.com/food-health/recipes) AND [www.lentils.org/](http://www.lentils.org/)
- ✓ Pulses are a more affordable source of protein than animal products and have many health and environmental benefits, many are also produced right here in Saskatchewan!
- ✓ With the rising food costs this is a good option for schools and families trying to stretch their food dollar.
- ✓ Teaching kids about how to cook with pulses and exposing them to these foods early on helps develop a liking and preference for these affordable and healthy foods.

**11. Have a Daily/weekly challenge for students to try at home:**

- Eat something for breakfast
- Eat a meal without distractions (TV, phone, computer, etc.)
- Eat a meal together with your family or friends.
- Help out making dinner
- Try a food you have never tried before

**12. School Nutrition Posters** - Print off and post posters around the school or feature information in school newsletters, websites, social media, etc.. School Nutrition Posters can be found [HERE](#).

**13. Four Corner Foods Game** – Instructions:

- Post 4 [food category signs](#) in each of the corners of the gym or outside ('vegetables and fruit,' 'whole grains,' 'protein foods,' and '[healthy drinks](#)') and a '[Healthy Eating Habits](#)' sign in the centre. Go over with the group which corner is category.
- Everyone starts in the centre. Caller calls out any food they can think of or [healthy eating habit](#) (enjoy food, eat mindfully, eat with others, cook) (see examples in Canada's Food Guide) and everyone has to run to the corner (food category) that food belongs to.
- If the kids are comfortable doing so, let them help to pick some of the food names to call.
- Nobody goes 'out' in this game. It's all just for fun to get kids moving around and learning Canada's food guide.

**14. Foods Relay Race** – Materials needed: Four Buckets or chairs with food category names on each: '[vegetables and fruit](#),' '[protein foods](#),' '[whole grains](#),' and '[healthy eating habits](#)'); food pictures cards with foods from all categories.

**Instructions:**

- Clear enough space in the room to be able to run back and forth.
- Evenly space the four food category buckets or chairs in a line at one end of the room.
- Divide participants into two groups and have them line up at the opposite end to the buckets.
- Give participants one food picture each to start off with.
- Once the race begins participants will take their food picture card and place it in the bucket with the name of the correct food category that their food picture belongs to.
- Each time a participant's turn comes around they will be required to take a new food card, and get to the bucket or chair in a different way (ex: round 1: hop on one foot; round 2: walk like a penguin; round 3: skip; round 4: run, etc.), until all the food cards have been put into their correct category. The action will be labeled on the back of each food card.
- Games ends once all players have had 2-5 turns (depending on the size of group and number of food cards you have).

**15. Food Category Dance Party** – incorporates nutrition and physical literacy. Can be done with the class or at school assembly. **Instructions:**

- Have a different dance move for each food category:
  - Vegetables and fruit – The Twist
  - Whole Grains – jump side to side
  - Protein Foods - swim
  - Water – one leg stretch
  - 'Eat Meals with others' – link arms with a partner and skip in a circle
- Teach kids the dance moves and practice a couple times before the music starts.



- Start the music.
- Call out a food category or family meals one at a time throughout the music and kids can do the appropriate moves all together as a dance! (Allow kids to repeat each dance move for at least 5-30 seconds before calling out the next food category or family meals).

**16. Take the class on a Grocery Store Tour** – A registered dietitian with ‘Save on Foods’ in Regina does grocery store tours linked to the SK curriculum. See [www.saveonfoods.com/nutrition-tours/](http://www.saveonfoods.com/nutrition-tours/) for details and to book a tour.



**17.** See some of the ideas on the *Bright Bites* [Pinterest Page](#) for **food art, learning with food, science, math, language, books, cooking** and more!

**18. Host a tasting party** – try vegetables and fruits of all the different colours of the rainbow; try foods from around the world; try different foods made with pulses; get creative!

**19. Nutrition Month Tasting Challenge or Scavenger Hunt** – each student gets a card and checks off/fills in items they have tasted in certain categories over the month (see below for examples). There are no winners or losers, but just see how many they can fill in at home and at school for the month of March.

**An alternative idea** is to take the worksheet to the grocery store and find these items together or in small groups like a scavenger hunt (will need permission from the store first).

*See form on next page...*

Something <b>GREEN</b> <i>Example: peas</i>	Something <b>BLUE</b>	Something <b>PURPLE</b>	Something <b>RED</b>	Something <b>ORANGE</b>
Something <b>YELLOW</b>	Something <b>WHITE</b>	Something Sweet	Something Sour	Something Bitter
A seed (e.g. sunflower, pumpkin, flax, hemp, chia, etc.)	Something made from whole grains	Something for breakfast	Something made with beans, chickpeas or lentils	Your Favourite Food

**20. 'Foods' Scavenger Hunt - Instructions:** bring one example of each of the 'answers' listed below. Lay them out on a table or blanket laid on the ground. You can either print copies for kids to fill out themselves. Or read out the questions and have kids call out the items. Or group kids to work through the questions together.

*Foods Scavenger Hunt Answers:*

1. Find a food that is orange? (bell pepper, mango)
2. Find a food that is dark green? (broccoli)
3. Which food is the root of a vegetable? (carrot)
4. Which food is the leaf part of a vegetable? (spinach, lettuce, kale or swiss chard)
5. Which food is made of wheat? (bannock, naan, pita bread)
6. Which food comes from an animal? (egg, milk)
7. Find a drink that we should have every day (cup of water)
8. Find a food that is crunchy when you eat it (celery, carrot, apple)
9. Find a food that is an herb (dill, parsley, chives)
10. Find a food that melts when you heat it (cheese, butter)
11. Find a fruit that can be 'mushed' easily (banana)
12. Find a food that is a protein food (beans, lentils)
13. Find a food that is a vegetables or fruit (any will do)
14. Find a food that is a whole grain (quinoa, wild rice)
15. Find a healthy drink (fortified soy beverage, white milk, water)

*Some talking points around each of the questions:*

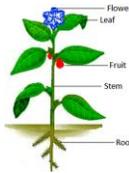
1. **Find a food that is orange?** (bell pepper, mango)
  - Orange vegetables are high in beta-carotene or Vitamin A. What are some other examples of orange vegetables? (carrot, papaya, sweet potato, squash like pumpkin, butternut, or acorn, etc.)
2. **Find a food that is dark green?** (broccoli)
  - Dark green vegetables are high in Folate. What are some other examples of dark green vegetables? (lettuce, green peas, asparagus, spinach, kale, bok choy, beet greens, swiss chard, etc.)
3. **Which food is the root of a vegetable?** (carrot)
  - Show the Diagram of a plant or bring a potted plant to show.
  - Ask anyone if they have ever grown any vegetables or fruit before maybe in a garden in their yard, a community garden plot, on a farm, at school, or in containers at home?
  - Ask if vegetables taste any different when they are fresh?
4. **Which food is the leaf part of a vegetable?** (spinach, lettuce, kale or swiss chard)
  - Show the Diagram of a plant or bring a potted plant to show.
  - What part of the plant is a tomato? (Fruit – the flowers turn into the tomato)
5. **Which food is made of wheat?** (bannock, naan, pita bread)
  - Show a picture of wheat.
  - Ask if anyone has seen this growing in farmers' fields. There is lots of wheat grown in Saskatchewan.
  - Talk about how the grain (seed) has to be crushed into flour to be made into bread, bannock, pasta etc.

6. **Which food comes from an animal?** (egg, milk)
  - Chickens lay eggs
  - We get milk from cows
7. **Find a drink that we should have every day** (cup of water)
  - We need water to stay hydrated and it is the best thirst quencher! Water from the tap in a cup or reusable water bottle is better for the environment.
8. **Find a food that is crunchy when you eat it** (celery, carrot, apple)
9. **Find a food that is an herb** (dill, parsley, chives)
  - What are your favourite herbs? (if you can have some there to taste test)
  - What kinds of foods do you eat these herbs with? (E.g. chives with potatoes, dill with salmon, basil with tomatoes).
  - Herbs can be used to add flavour to foods.
10. **Find a food that melts when you heat it** (cheese, butter)
  - Do you think it tastes better cold and hard or warm and melted?
11. **Find a fruit that can be 'mushed' easily** (banana)
  - Do you like crunchy or mushy foods better? Or are they both good but in different ways?
12. **Find a protein food** (beans, lentils)
  - Most of the world's lentils are grown right here in Saskatchewan!
  - They have lots of protein and iron just like meat does, but more fibre!
  - What kinds of meals can you have with beans and lentils? (chilli, hummus, bean dip, salads, pasta sauces, East Indian and African foods, etc.)
13. **Find a food is a vegetables or fruit** (any will do)
  - Vegetables and fruit help to stop us from getting colds, help to make our skin heal fast, help to make us see well, and so much more!
14. **Find a healthy drink**
  - White milk and fortified soy beverages help keep our bones and teeth healthy and strong. Water keeps us hydrated for everyday activities and body functions.
15. **Find a food that is a whole grain** (wild Rice, quinoa, whole grain pasta or bread)
  - Whole grain foods give us energy to play and be active, and help our brains think and concentrate. They are also high in fibre which keeps our heart and stomach healthy too.

# Foods Scavenger Hunt

1. Find a food that is orange?  \_\_\_\_\_

2. Find a food that is dark green?  \_\_\_\_\_



3. Which food is the **root** of a vegetable? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which food is the **leaf** part of a vegetable? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which food is made of wheat? \_\_\_\_\_



6. Which food comes from an animal? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Find a drink that we should have every day \_\_\_\_\_

8. Find a food that is crunchy when you eat it \_\_\_\_\_

9. Find a fruit that is 'mushy' \_\_\_\_\_

10. Find a food that is an herb \_\_\_\_\_

11. Find a food that melts when you heat it \_\_\_\_\_



12. Find a protein food \_\_\_\_\_

13. Find a vegetables or fruit \_\_\_\_\_

14. Find a healthy drink \_\_\_\_\_

15. Find a whole grain food \_\_\_\_\_