BEING HEALTHY

Before students can set themselves realistic challenges and attempt to make healthy lifestyle choices, they need to understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They must also recognize how eating healthy food and being physically active contribute to being healthy. This introductory activity provides the foundation for the Healthy Kids Quest program. Depending on your timetable, conduct this activity on the Thursday or Friday before kickoff week, to prepare students for the following week’s activities.

Curriculum links
- Health and Physical Education: Healthy Living
- Science and Technology: Life Systems
- Mathematics: Data Processing and Probability

Learning objective
- understand how eating nutritious food and being physically active contribute to being healthy

Learning methods
- creating a conceptual diagram that illustrates how eating healthy food and being physically active contribute to being healthy
- grouping items based on their relation to healthy-lifestyle choices
Materials

- exploration boxes
- 3 large cardboard boxes or containers

Pre-activity: prepare exploration boxes

1. Prepare a box for each group of three to five students.
2. Use shoeboxes or boxes of a similar size.
3. Fill the box with items that represent activities, products or food that can contribute to being healthy, or print and cut out the illustrations below.
4. Place three or more items (or illustrations) in each box. Vary the items from one box to another, making sure that each has something from at least two of the categories listed below.
5. Choose from the following items:
   - nutritious food (e.g., fresh or canned fruits and vegetables, a package of whole grain pasta, a clean, rinsed yogurt or milk container, a package of whole grain crackers or cereal, canned beans, an empty egg carton)
   - water (e.g., a small water bottle or reusable water cup)
   - small sports equipment items (e.g., a tennis ball, golf ball or ping-pong ball, a hockey puck, a skipping rope, a dog leash, knee pads, cycling gloves, running shoes, elbow pads)
   - oral hygiene products (e.g., a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss)
   - sun protection (e.g., sunscreen, a sun hat, sunglasses, a cap with visor)
   - body hygiene products (e.g., soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, a washcloth)
   - sleep-related items (e.g., a small blanket or stuffed animal, a recording of relaxing music or lullabies)

Instructions

1. Divide the class into teams of three to five students. Give each team an exploration box.
2. Ask the teams to look at the items (or illustrations) in the boxes. What are they? How do they fit together?
3. Bring the class back together and ask the teams to present their items and explain how they think they fit together.
4. If students have not guessed the connection between the items, lead them toward the answer by asking questions and giving hints. All the items in the boxes have something to do with being healthy.

5. Tell students that they are going to learn about being healthy by creating something called a “concept web,” and then explain the term. A concept web is a tool that connects words and phrases with arrow or lines, and gives us a “bigger picture” of an idea.

6. In the centre of the board, draw a circle and write Being Healthy inside.

7. Draw two more circles: one each side of the first one. Draw a line from each new circle to the main one. Write Eat Healthy inside one circle and Be Active inside the other one.

8. Ask students to help expand the concept web by providing more words or phrases that are connected with the idea of being healthy. They can use the items (or illustrations) from the boxes as a starting point.
   - If the word or phrase relates to nutrition, write it on the board near the Eat Healthy circle and draw a line connecting it to that circle.
   - If the word or phrase relates to physical activity, write it on the board near the Be Active circle and draw a line connecting it to that circle.
   - If the word or phrase is not about nutrition or physical activity, write it on the board near the Being Healthy circle and draw a line connecting it to that circle anyway. Some of these ideas may be related to each other, and may form a cluster concept, for example, oral hygiene, body hygiene or sleep.

9. Place a large cardboard box or container under each circle. Ask students to place the items (or illustrations) in the appropriate boxes. For example, an apple would go in the box under the Eat Healthy circle. Place items not connected with nutrition or physical activity in the box under the Being Healthy circle.

10. Explain to students that, to be healthy, we have to make sure we meet our bodies’ basic needs. Ask if they can list them. We need food, water, air, warmth (from clothing and shelter) and space; we also need to be active and to be safe; and we need to take care of our teeth (by brushing them every day) and to keep our bodies clean.
11. Introduce the Healthy Kids Quest. Tell students that over the next few weeks they will take part in an educational program designed to encourage them to develop healthy lifestyle habits and keep their bodies strong. Each day of the week, they will study a theme related to being healthy. At the end of the day, they will set themselves a challenge as a group that they will repeat on that same day of the week for the following weeks. If the students manage to keep their efforts going, they will be given some fun rewards four weeks into the program. And if they continue to meet the challenges, they will get more rewards each month that follows.

**Suggestion**

Mathematics: Talk to students about the concept web. Explain that concept webs are used for organizing information. Explain that there are other types of graphic that they can use to display information or data. Count the number of items in each box. Which box contains the most items? Use pictograms or a bar graph to illustrate the content of the boxes.
Our pets, just like humans, have essential needs. All pets need to eat nutritious food and be physically active to be healthy, whether they are mammals (dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters or mice), birds (parrots, canaries or hens), reptiles (snakes, turtles or lizards), amphibians (frogs or salamanders), insects (stick insects), arachnids (trapdoor spiders or scorpions) or fish. This activity allows students to take all that they learned during the Healthy Kids Quest kickoff week on the topic of humans’ needs and apply it to animals’ needs. It also gives them an opportunity to talk about their roles and responsibilities with regard to pets.

Curriculum links
- Science and Technology: Life Systems
- Social Studies
- English: Writing, Oral Communication

Learning objectives
- learn that pets have essential needs, just like humans
- understand that pets need to eat nutritious food and be active physically to be healthy
- discover the needs of animals in different classes (including mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects)
- learn about the responsibilities of caring for pets
Learning methods
- creating a poster illustrating the needs of pets and how to care for them
- making an oral presentation explaining how to care for a pet

Materials
- photos of each student’s family and their pet (see Pre-activity)
- large sheets of coloured construction paper
- crayons or markers
- glue
- scissors

Pre-activity
Ask students to bring photos of their family members and their pets to class. Students who don’t own a pet can bring a photo of one they know (e.g., a grandparent’s dog) or a pet they’d like to own.

Instructions

Introduction to activity
1. Ask students whether they have pets at home. Note their answers on the board. Which animal is the most popular pet?
2. Ask students who in the household looks after their pet. Which tasks do students take on and which ones do other family members carry out? Note their responses on the board.
3. Explain to students that, just like humans, animals have essential needs. Ask students to list the essential needs of various pets: food, water, air, warmth (shelter), space, physical activity.
4. Ask students how different tasks meet the essential needs of a pet. Walking the dog, for example, keeps it physically active. What would happen if we stopped caring for pets? Would they be healthy? Of course not — which is why it’s so important to take pet care seriously.
Pet care poster

1. Explain to students that the purpose of this activity is to create a poster illustrating the needs of pets and how they should be looked after. Once they have finished their posters, each student will give an in-class presentation on his or her pet, describing its needs and explaining how it’s cared for by different family members. For example: Jello, my goldfish, lives in water that needs to be changed daily. My mom replaces the water in the aquarium every day.

2. Distribute the sheets of construction paper and other craft supplies. Students can glue the photos of their family members and pets onto the paper. They can draw their animal’s food, water bowl, toys, cage, aquarium, litter or wood shavings, leash, brush, or any other equipment and supplies needed to care for the pet. They can draw a line connecting each item to the family member responsible for related tasks. For example, if the student walks Fido, a line would connect the leash to the photo of the student.

3. Ask each student to make a presentation to the class, based on his or her poster. Students can practise at home. The complexity of the presentation will vary, depending on the grade level. Ask students to introduce their pet (giving, e.g., its name, age, history, preferences and favourite activities) and then describe its needs and the care it’s given to keep it healthy. Does the pet need feeding, grooming or tooth-brushing, a change of water or litter, or to be taken to the vet? What are the student’s pet care responsibilities? Grade 1 students can simply introduce the pet and describe some pet care tasks. Students in grades 2 and 3 can say more about the pet’s needs and how different family members take care of it.

**Suggestion**

Divide the students’ pets by animal class (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, arachnids, insects). Identify the physical characteristics each class shares (e.g., mammals have fur and are warm-blooded; the females produce milk to feed the young). Create an encyclopaedia of pets from each class of animals.
This collection of fun facts is aimed at helping parents make informed decisions about their children’s lifestyle. Taking in these healthy lifestyle tips, one fact at a time, can bring a greater appreciation of what’s meant by healthy eating and active living.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose the fun facts that you think are most appropriate for your students.
2. Cut them out and glue them to a sheet of paper.
3. Make photocopies (enough to send each fun fact home with each student).
4. Once or twice a week, cut out one fun fact and staple it to each student’s agenda.
5. Ask parents to initial the fun fact in the agenda, to confirm that they have read it.

SUGGESTION

Since parents receive a great deal of information during the first week of the Healthy Kids Quest, it’s recommended that you start sending home the fun facts in the second week of the program.
Watch out for added sugar!
Flavoured instant oatmeal is a common breakfast food that, perhaps surprisingly, has a lot of added sugar. A single serving can contain as much as 3½ teaspoons of sugar. Try regular quick oats instead. This way, you can control the amount of sugar that’s added to your oatmeal.

Time-saving tip
Once cooked, grains like rice, oats, bulgur and quinoa freeze well. To save time, cook twice as much as you need and freeze the rest in individual servings. Once thawed, the grains are easy to add to salads or soups, or to serve as a side dish.

Expand your horizons!
Visit a bulk food store to find a variety of whole grains in small or large quantities. It’s an economical way to try out different whole grains. You can also visit the natural food aisle of most grocery stores for pre-packaged whole grains.

Did you know?
In Canada, whole wheat flour is not necessarily a whole grain product. During processing, as much as 70% of the wheat germ can be extracted from the grain. This process helps keep the flour fresh for longer but it reduces its nutritional value. Note that bread made from whole wheat flour still provides more fibre than white bread.

When buying whole wheat flour, look for “whole grain whole wheat flour.” It has more bran and germ than regular whole wheat flour, making it richer in nutrients.

Limit screen time
The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends limiting children’s screen time to a maximum of 2 hours per day. You can use a timer to help your child take responsibility for tracking time spent playing video games, at the computer (including tablets and smartphones) or watching television.

Healthy hydration
Water makes up a large part of our bodies. To rehydrate their bodies and replace fluids that have been lost, children should aim to drink about 6 cups of water each day.
Did you know?
Fruit and vegetable juices are a good source of vitamins and minerals but they usually contain a lot of sugar and little fibre, compared to the whole fruit or vegetable. Choose 100% fruit and vegetable juices, and try to limit your child’s intake to no more than ½ cup (120 ml) per day.

Did you know?
Just 1 cup (250 ml) of 100% orange juice can contain 5 teaspoons of sugar. One cup (250 ml) of soft drink can contain 10 teaspoons of sugar. Given their high sugar content, enjoy these drinks in moderation. Water is always a great option: it’s refreshing and calorie-free.

Green gold
Dark green vegetables are known as “green gold” because they are a gold mine of vitamins and minerals that are important for good health. Arugula, broccoli, cress, kale, spinach and Swiss chard are nutrient-rich dark green vegetables.

Did you know?
Frozen vegetables and fruits are sometimes more nutritious than fresh ones found in grocery stores. This is because they are frozen right after harvest and have lost little of their nutritional value (over time, nutrients naturally degrade).

Start the day with a full tank
Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A healthy breakfast provides your child with the energy and nutrients he or she needs to concentrate, learn and play.

Looking for Vitamin C?
Vitamin C is not exclusive to oranges. Bell peppers, kale, broccoli, papaya, strawberries, kiwis, thyme, parsley, guavas and mangoes are all chock full of Vitamin C!