

# Parent Letter and Activities

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our health class is currently studying food and nutrition. Learning about the elements of nutrition and the different food groups will help your teen make the right choices to achieve and maintain a balanced diet. Our studies will also include a lesson on how the digestive and excretory systems function. Our emphasis throughout will be on choosing a diet that will help your teen look and feel well and remain fit and healthy.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics include: *What influences my diet? How can I use the Food Guide Pyramid to plan a healthful diet? What nutrients do I need in order to be healthy? How can I use nutrition labels to make wise food choices? What snacks will provide important nutrients? How does digestion work, and how are waste products removed from the body?*

Planning a healthful diet often takes a back seat to convenience and the pressures of a hectic lifestyle. However, working together, we can provide your teen with the necessary information to enjoy the benefits of a balanced diet.

To support and extend our classroom work, please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Go food shopping together. Read the labels on the foods you buy, and identify the nutrients and calories in the various food products.
- The next time you go to your teen's favorite fast-food restaurant together, look for the nutrition information that these restaurants are required to display. Determine which fast foods are the healthiest and which are the least healthy. Make wise choices—and enjoy.
- Make a list of the foods you have in the house. Review the list to determine which foods are high or low in nutritional value. Then use the list to plan some healthy meals and snacks.
- Ask your teen to plan one or two balanced dinners that provide servings from the following food groups: milk, yogurt, and cheese; meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts; vegetables; fruits; bread, cereals, rice, and pasta.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities that you believe will encourage your teen to choose a healthful diet. Eating properly is one of the keys to a long and healthy life. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher