

NETA Quarterly News

Nutrition, Physical Activity & Gardening for
Early Childhood Providers



Volume 7, Issue 4 • July–September 2007

Keeping Healthy Recipes Safe

Hands-on activities are a great way to keep young children actively engaged in the learning process. Food and nutrition lessons are a natural fit for these active learning techniques. Kids love to help with “grown up” tasks like preparing food, and they may be more likely to try a healthy snack if they are involved in its preparation.

Food preparation in the classroom is a great opportunity for learning but it is also a prime opportunity for foodborne illness. Small size and immature immune systems make young children more likely to become ill from food pathogens than healthy adults, and they often suffer more severe consequences. To keep your classroom food activities safe for everyone:

- **Wash** hands for at least 20 seconds in hot soapy water before and after food preparation. Make sure to cover all surfaces including under and around the fingernails. Practice good hand washing techniques with your students.



- **Wash** utensils, cutting boards and all food preparation surfaces with



hot soapy water before and after food preparation. If possible, run utensils and cutting boards through the dishwasher.

- Avoid using raw meat, eggs, poultry or seafood in the classroom. If preparing them at home to use in a recipe at school, make sure to always store and prepare these foods **separately** from fruits, vegetables and other ready-to-eat foods.



- **Cook** foods thoroughly. If a food is improperly heated, bacteria can survive and cause illness. Use a thermometer to make sure the internal temperature is hot enough.
- **Chill** cold foods to 40°F or less and put any leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Following these simple rules will keep your classroom recipes safe and set a good example so students know how to be food safe at home. To get answers to specific questions about food safety call: 1-888-MPHotline.



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www.Befoodsafe.gov

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Damaging Diets?

Could feeding young children “diet” food actually increase their risk of becoming overweight? Parents trying to indulge their children’s desire for high-calorie foods by giving them low-calorie versions may be saving a few calories now, but a new Canadian study suggests it could lead to overeating later.

The researchers fed low-calorie gelatin cubes with a salty or sweet taste to juvenile and adolescent rats. Later, the rats were fed high-calorie gelatin



Fall into Good Habits

- As school starts and schedules get busy, make sure to plan for healthy snacks. A bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter or veggies cut into kid-size pieces in the fridge are easy to grab when you know you’ll need a snack. Dried fruit or nuts in your car or bag are a good back-up when schedules change unexpectedly.
- Take advantage of the last few months of Daylight Saving Time to get in some physical activity. Walk to the park, ride your bikes or just stroll around the neighborhood after dinner.
- September is National Food Safety Education Month. Teach your students to be food safe in the classroom and at home.

cubes with the same flavor before a regular meal. The juvenile rats overate, while the adolescent rats did not. This was true of the juvenile rats that were genetically predisposed for obesity **and** those that were not.

The researchers claim that this shows early taste conditioning distorts the relationship between taste and calorie content. The juvenile rats learned that the sweet or salty treat did not provide many calories so they ate sufficient calories from their regular food. When given high-calorie treats with the same flavor, they continued to eat regular food as if the treats were low-calorie, resulting in a surplus of calories. Juvenile rats that had been given the high-calorie snacks all along learned that the treat provided lots of their calorie needs and so they didn’t need as much of their regular food.

The older, adolescent rats were able to use more than just taste to assess the calorie content of each treat and compensated for the high calorie treats by eating less of their regular food even if they had previously been receiving the low-calorie version. It could be that they have more experience matching food to their energy needs or just that the biological systems linking intake and appetite were more fully developed in the older rats.

It is a big leap from rats to humans, but think about how diet foods could be affecting the tastes and preferences of children. Even if it turns out the rat study doesn’t

translate to humans, children who grow up having cookies, chips or sodas everyday (even low-calorie versions) get in the habit of eating these foods and will likely continue to eat them later in life. Maybe it will be the diet version, maybe not. It would be much healthier to get in the habit of eating foods that are naturally low in calories like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.

Perhaps most important, is what they are missing. Diet foods don’t have the calories of the high-fat or high-sugar foods they replace, but they rarely offer the nutrients necessary for growth and development either. Many foods that are naturally low in calories and fat are also high in nutrients. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy contain important nutrients and they can be crowded out of a diet that contains a lot of “diet” food.

Replacing high-sugar, high-fat, and high-calorie foods with healthy alternatives like fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy rather than diet versions of the same foods is healthier for both children and adults.

References:

Pierce, W.D. *Obesity*, August 2007; vol 15: pp 1969-1979.



A Squash for All Seasons

Squash is grown locally year around. With so many different varieties there is always a new one in season, and they are easy to grow in your home or school garden.

The many varieties are usually divided into two groups depending on the prime harvest season, though there is considerable overlap in California. Most squash are a source of fiber, vitamin C, and Potassium. Summer varieties are usually high in folate and many winter varieties have deep orange flesh that is full of beta-carotene (a vitamin A precursor).



SUMMER SQUASH

crooknecks, straightnecks, scallopini, chayote, pater pan, sunbursts, gourmet globe, sun drop and many varieties of zucchini

WINTER SQUASH

acorn, banana, butternut, buttercup, carnival, delicate, hubbard, kabocha, spaghetti, sweet dumpling, and turban

This is the time of year when you are likely to find summer **and** winter squash in your local store, so make a game of it and see how many different kinds you can try!

The many varieties of squash can seem overwhelming at first, but you can try them all with just a few simple cooking techniques.

References:

www.harvestofthemonth.com/Cycle11/Month2/WinterSquash
<http://whatscookingamerica.net/squash.htm>
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp

EASY SAUTÉED SUMMER SQUASH

Ingredients:

- 6 summer squash sliced
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- Optional: salt and pepper to taste



Heat oil in large iron skillet and add the squash and onions in layers, sprinkling salt and pepper between layers. Cover and cook over low heat

until squash is tender, about 20 minutes then divide into 4 servings.

Each serving has:
 88 calories 88, 12.4 g of carbohydrates, 3.7 g of fiber, 3.9 g of protein, 3.9 g of fat, .6 g of saturated fat, 589 IUs of Vitamin A, 52 mg of Vitamin C and 90 mcg of folate.

EASY BAKED WINTER SQUASH

Ingredients:

- 1 Acorn or other winter squash, halved
- 1 tsp of butter
- 2 tsp of maple syrup **or** 2 tsp brown sugar
- Nutmeg or cinnamon

Scoop seeds out of each half with a spoon. Add 1/2 tsp of butter and 1 tsp of syrup or sugar to the hollow of each half. Place upright on a greased cookie

sheet at 400 degrees until tender (about 1 hour). Serve with a sprinkle of nutmeg or cinnamon.



Each half squash serving has:
 121 calories, 26.8 g of carbohydrates, 3.2 g of fiber, 1.7 g of protein, 2.2 g of fat, 1.3 g of saturated fat, 853 IUs of Vitamin A, 23.7 mg of Vitamin C and 36.8 mcg of folate

References:

<http://whatscookingamerica.net/squash.htm>
www.nutritiondata.com



Dance to Great Health

Did you know exercise increases brain chemicals that encourage nerve cells to grow? Because dancing requires us to remember dance steps and sequences, it is a great way to stay active while developing memory skills.

BENEFITS OF DANCING:

- strengthens bones and muscles without hurting joints
- tones entire body
- improves posture and balance
- increases stamina and flexibility
- reduces stress and tension
- builds confidence

Incorporating dance into your classroom is a great way to add

noncompetitive physical activity. Use music and movement during: circle time, morning greeting, clean-up time, outdoors and after naptime.

TIPS FOR CLASSROOM DANCING:

- Use appropriate materials (i.e. scarves and music)
- Begin with small movement songs
- Give children time to explore and add their ideas
- Keep the pace moving
- Keep verbal directions to a minimum
- Stop before children get tired or bored

Dance is a great way to stay in shape

for people of all ages and physical capabilities. If you're looking for a fun way to stay fit and healthy, its time to kick up those heels and dance!

Reference:

http://www.aarp.org/health/brain/takingcontrol/get_regular_exercise.html

<http://www.little-folks-music.com/what.htm>



Funded by the USDA's Food Stamp Program through the *Network for a Healthy California*. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call 1-888-328-3483.

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