



Alameda County Public Health Department

Oakland Eats Garden Fresh: Three Days of Activities



Goal: To celebrate the abundance of produce grown in California by learning about seasonality and locally grown fruits and vegetables, and encouraging students to “eat garden fresh”.

Objectives: By the end of April, 2011, your students will be able to: 1) state two reasons why eating fruits and vegetables are good for their health 2) name three fruits and vegetables that are grown locally in the Bay Area and, 3) identify the closest farmers’ market or school produce stand to their school.

Materials Needed:

1. Writing instruments and paper
2. *Rainbow of Fruits/Vegetables* Handout (provided)
3. *Bay Area Seasonality* Handout (provided)
4. *Five Reasons to Buy Local Food* Handout (provided)
5. *Oakland Farmers’ Markets* Handout (provided)

Time You Will Need in the Classroom: approximately 15 minutes each day.

ACTIVITIES

Day 1: Fruits and Vegetables

Use the talking points on the back of this sheet to discuss fruits and vegetables.

Vocabulary word: *phytochemicals*

Handout: *Rainbow of Fruits/Vegetables*

Day 2: Seasonality and the Bay Area

Use the talking points on the back of this sheet to discuss seasonal Bay Area produce.

Vocabulary words: *seasonal* and *local*

Handouts: *Bay Area Seasonality*

Day 3: Local Food

Use the talking points on the back of this sheet to discuss local produce.

Vocabulary words:

Handouts: *Five Reasons to Buy Local Food* and *Oakland Farmers Markets*



This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health’s *Network for a Healthy California* with funding from USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low income households and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.

Oakland Eats Garden Fresh

Teacher Talking Points

Day 1 – Fruits and Vegetables

Ask students: Do you eat fruits and vegetables? How many do you eat on a typical day?

Did you know that most teenagers in the U.S. are not eating enough fruits and vegetables?

- Fewer than half of all teenagers in California between the ages of 12 and 17 report eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables on a given day.
- Fruit and vegetable intake decreases between middle and high school for *all* youths.

Discuss: Why do you think teenagers aren't choosing to eat fruits and vegetables? (Cost, taste, don't like them, don't know how to prepare them, don't know where to buy them, etc.)

Why is it important to eat fruits and vegetables?

- They provide fiber which helps regulate digestion and helps you to feel full. All fruits and vegetables provide fiber, but some of the highest sources of fiber include: apples, berries, pumpkin and beans.
- They are usually low in calories and fat, and high in vitamins and minerals. Examples: Fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin C include citrus fruits like oranges, and vegetables like broccoli and bell peppers. Fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin A include dark leafy greens (like spinach) and orange fruits and vegetables (like sweet potatoes, carrots and mango)
- They have something called phytochemicals (fight-o-chemicals)
 - *Phytochemical:* is a plant chemical that appears to have protective or disease preventive properties. There are more than one thousand known phytochemicals! Plants produce these chemicals to protect themselves against disease and when humans eat the plants, the phytochemicals in the plants may also protect humans against diseases.

Have students write down definition and tell a partner the definition in his/her own words

- The phytochemicals and vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables help your body in many ways! Fruits and vegetables can supply...
 - Vitamin A, which helps maintain good eyesight and vision health.
 - Vitamin C, which helps maintain a healthy immune system to help prevent you from getting sick.
 - Other phytochemicals, which help with memory function.
 - Calcium, which strengthens bones and teeth.

Divide students into five teams: Red, Orange/Yellow, Green, Blue/Purple and White. Give them 5 minutes to write down as many fruits and vegetables that they can think of in the color of their team. How many did they get? Refer to a Rainbow of Fruits/Vegetables handout. Discuss.

Optional: Have student's record fruits and vegetables (if any) they eat after school/for dinner that night and report back the next day.

Day 2 – Seasonality and the Bay Area

Ask students if they have heard of the words 'seasonal' and 'local'. What do they mean?

- *Seasonal:* dependent on a particular season of the year (spring, summer, autumn, winter)
- *Local:* close to a particular place. Not general or widespread.

How does this apply to fruits and vegetables? Right, specific fruits and vegetables grow in specific places during specific seasons. Can you think of examples of fruits and vegetables that grow during a specific season? Try thinking of holidays to help...

Examples:

- Which fruits and vegetables remind you of the 4th of July and summer BBQs?
Watermelon, Corn on the Cob, Avocado – these are “in season” during the summer
- Which fruits and vegetables remind you of Halloween and Thanksgiving?
Pumpkins, Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Cranberries, Collard Greens– these are “in season” during the fall

What about the word ‘local’? How does that apply to where food is grown? “Locally grown food” can be defined in many ways: food grown in your city, in neighboring cities, within 100 miles of your city, etc. What does ‘local’ mean to you?

Have students divide into pairs or groups and come up with a collective list of the fruits and vegetables that they commonly consume. Discuss as a class where they think these items are grown? Do they think produce in their homes is local or comes from out of state or out of country?

Pass out Handout: *Bay Area Seasonality*. Have students compare their list of favorite fruits and vegetables with the handout. Do their selected fruits and vegetables grow in the Bay Area? Which fruits and vegetables grow in the Bay Area right now (April)?

Homework: Have students conduct a survey of their home kitchens (or school cafeteria) to see if they can identify where the produce comes from (stickers on produce or “product of _____” statements on packaging can provide this information) Students can also look at produce available at a local store and look at advertisements and signs to see where it comes from.

Day 3 – Local Produce

Ask volunteers to talk about the produce they found in their home and where it came from. Discuss.

We are lucky to live in the Bay Area as it encompasses one of the most diverse agricultural regions on earth. Did you know that each year, farmers bring over 1200 varieties of fruits and vegetables to farmers markets in the Bay Area? That’s one thousand two hundred different kinds of produce! Thanks to this abundance, it’s easy for us to eat seasonally and locally.

Why is eating seasonally important?

- Eating produce at the height of its natural harvest time means that you’ll get to enjoy it at its best; when it is ripe, fresh and delicious.
- Eating seasonally allows you to support your local farmers who transport their goods the shortest distance to your plate. This also helps support the environment.
- Produce is at its cheapest when it is in season.
- You get to experiment with delicious foods that you might not otherwise consider.

Remind students that the Harvest of the Month program (where they get to taste produce in class) highlights seasonal Bay Area fruits and vegetables. The Harvest of the Month taste test for April will be spinach!

What about eating locally? Why is this important?

Go over *Five Reasons to Buy Local Food* handout

Where can you buy food locally?

- Farmers Markets and School Produce Markets
 - Point to *Oakland Farmers Markets & Produce Stands* handout. Discuss
- Supermarkets: Some may offer a selection of locally grown and produced items.

Divide students into groups and have them list the closest five places that they can buy fruits and vegetables. Remind students to Eat Garden Fresh every day!