



PBH Online Resources *for* Schools

Updated July 2016

Introduction

With childhood obesity at an all-time high, educators, health professionals, and parents know the importance of promoting and reinforcing healthy lifestyle habits with children at an early age. In support of this effort, Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) offers great online tools and materials that can be used to improve the health and well-being of young people, lower absenteeism, and improve the academic performance of students.

If you are looking for new ideas to create or update your wellness program or are interested in finding new ways to communicate, market, and promote your school's existing wellness efforts, PBH has a comprehensive array of online resources, with practical insights and proven suggestions to help you plan and implement your school-based program. Many of these resources have been designed with different age groups in mind, making them suitable for students across the K-12 grade span.

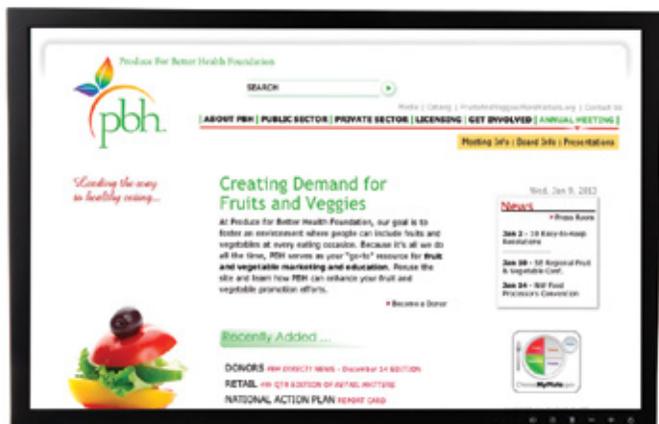
Did you know that . . . ?

- The obesity rate among children in the U.S. has tripled over the past 30 years.
- Today, one-third of U.S. children and adolescents are either overweight or obese.
- Today's children may be the first generation in history whose life expectancy is projected to be less than that of their parents, with poor diet being a primary contributor.
- Billions of dollars are spent each year marketing foods of low nutritional value to children.
- Close to 80% of adolescents in the U.S. do not consume their daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Good nutrition and learning go hand in hand: a healthy diet is important to the physical development and cognitive performance of students.
- Good eating habits started early. . . schools have an important role in teaching students about the importance of eating fruits and veggies and providing healthy school breakfast and school lunch menus.



School wellness programs have the potential to help students develop habits needed for a healthy lifestyle. Key to this behavior change is making students aware of the health benefits of adding more fruits and veggies to every meal and snack occasion. Through the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® public health initiative, PBH provides information, materials, and resources to promote healthy eating. Many of these resources contain action items that can be incorporated in a school-based wellness program to promote student health and well-being.

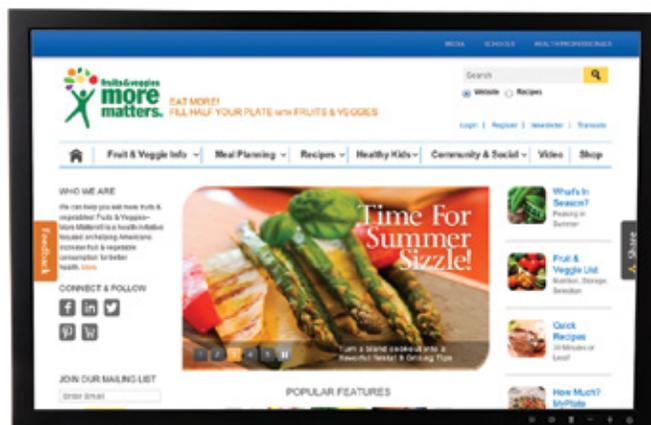
PBH Websites



Consumer Website

FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org

Our award-winning website has nutrition information and recipes you'll want to share with your students and their families! Add our web button to your website for a direct link to our consumer site.



Consumer Intermediaries Website

PBHFoundation.org

This intermediary site is a great resource for organizations and individuals who work and interact with consumers on a regular basis. The site offers a wealth of fruit and vegetable information and materials that can be tailored or customized to fit your needs.



Website for kids ages 2-8

FoodChamps.org

This interactive website for kids aged 2-8 features games, activities, and recipes. It offers kid-friendly resources that you can share with parents, including downloadable Printable Recipe Cards and a Food Champs Weekly Shopping Planner that encourages young children to shop for fruits and veggies with a parent or guardian and then track what they eat each week.



How-To Resources

for your school wellness program

Getting Started

1. Identify a leader or point person (staff member or parent) to help manage your wellness program.
2. Organize a student advisory board to obtain suggestions and feedback on student needs, interests, and ideas.
3. Enlist your principal's support early on for your wellness promotion campaign. Discuss the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters health initiative with staff, along with your wellness goals, methods, timetable, and budget.
4. Consult with your Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or parent support group and ask for their help and/or funding for your wellness education program and activities. Consider asking a parent representative to join your planning committee as a way to obtain parent suggestions and feedback as you build and implement your program.
5. Incorporate the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® Brand Messages as part of your school's wellness mission, and post them on your website and in common areas throughout your building as reminders to eat healthy by including more fruits and veggies.
6. Encourage your principal to speak and participate in meetings with students about your wellness campaign. Invite the superintendent or a local celebrity to kick off your wellness program.
7. Ask for a letter of endorsement to be sent from the principal to students and parents.
8. Set a budget for your wellness program, including money for incentives and special events.
9. Choose age-appropriate activities that encourage positive behavior change. Create an action plan that increases awareness of health issues, motivates students to adopt healthy eating and lifestyle changes, and increases availability of fruits and vegetables in the school environment.

Creating Your Wellness Program

- Recruit staff to help develop a school wellness campaign.
- Adopt a five-week pilot program to start.
- Set challenging goals for your wellness promotion program. Establish benchmarks for student participation, attendance at activities and events, etc.
- Plan some seasonal or holiday activities and events during those months of the year that offer access to fresh produce or special promotions in supermarkets and food service establishments. Celebrate National Fruits & Veggies—More Matters Month in September and National Nutrition Month® in March.
- Design lesson plans that feature a fruit or veggie of the month for use by classroom teachers and post this information on your school website, complete with recipes and information about each commodity. Everything you need is available in downloadable, hi-res PDFs on the PBHFoundation.org and FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org websites.
- Use P.A.C.K. Materials for Teachers to design your own lesson plan for teaching young children to pack and eat a variety of colorful fruits and veggies each day. Our ready-to-use toolkit is complete with reproducible handouts, in-class group activities, tracking sheets, certificates for participants, and much more!



Motivating Students to Eat Healthfully

- Add the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® logo to your school website and encourage teachers to add the logo to written materials they send home to parents.
- Share messages about healthy eating and how eating more fruits and veggies will make students feel more in control of their lives. Check out resources like Eating Fruits & Vegetables On the Go to find simple ways that students can improve their diet and their health.
- Increase awareness about the importance of good nutrition by conducting campaigns around a specific fruit or vegetable or a group of fruits and vegetables. Develop a plan for promoting these food items. Use multiple channels (email messages, bulletin board displays, posters, etc.) and have a simple message such as Fruits & Veggies—More Matters. For information on specific fruits or vegetables, visit our Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Database.
- Plan a student assembly focused on healthy eating and arrange for a dietitian from a local hospital or university extension office to talk to students about the importance of good nutrition for optimal health and growth
- Conduct “micro-campaigns” throughout the school year that focus on themes and resources available from these Fruits & Veggies—More Matters links:
 1. National Nutrition Month
 2. Eat a Colorful Variety Every Day
 3. Heart Health Month (February)
 4. P.A.C.K. Assorted Colors for Kids Program(For an annual calendar of various monthly celebrations, consult the National Health Observances Calendar.)
- Share information with students that all forms of fruits and veggies—fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice—count towards their recommended daily allowance!
- Encourage younger students to track what they eat each day as a way to be sure they are meeting their recommended goals for fruits and veggies. Ask children to count how many yummy fruits and veggies they eat over the course of a day, week, or month.
- Conduct a school-wide competition between grade levels or classrooms based on healthy eating. Challenge students to see how many fruits and vegetables they can add to daily meals and snacks over the course of a week or month. Plan a special celebration if students reach a pre-determined goal for their school community.
- Choose incentives for students participating in your wellness activities that serve as healthy eating reminders.
- Organize a Family Nutrition Night, using Nutrition through Core Content, an instructional resource for educators seeking to hold Family Nutrition Nights (FNN) for grades K-4 and 5-8. These lessons are designed to help students and their parents develop positive attitudes toward good nutritional practices, establish lifelong healthful eating patterns, take action for good health, and provide accurate and current nutrition information.
- At staff meetings, provide updates to staff about upcoming activities and the progress being made in your school wellness efforts.
- Sponsor a special walking event or coordinate a fitness plan with your physical education teacher for the students at your school.
- Organize a healthy eating recipe contest and a recipe cook-off. Award prizes to the top winner(s). Remind students (and their parents) that recipes entered in the contest must be low in fat and not too high in sodium.
- Sponsor a special student luncheon where only fruits and vegetables are served, and arrange for a guest speaker to talk about the health benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Conduct a trivia email contest about fruits and vegetables. Find all the information you need at FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org.
- Sponsor a poster contest about eating healthy with fruits and veggies and award stickers or small prizes to the students who create the best posters.
- Post 50 Ways to Add More Fruits & Veggies on your school website.



- Provide suggestions to parents about healthy meals and snacks — visit Fruits & Veggies—More Matters for nutritious recipes that students will enjoy! Share this information in your school newsletter and on your school website; remind everyone how easy it is to add more fruits and veggies to meals and snacks.
- Distribute Fruits & Veggies—More Matters nutrition education materials in the classroom or at school/PTA meetings.
- Display Fruits & Veggies—More Matters posters in classrooms, offices, gym, cafeteria, and other common areas in your school. You'll find them available for download at PBHFoundation.org
- Plan a classroom “fun tasting fest” and invite students to bring their favorite fruit and vegetable dishes. (Ask them to bring along copies of their recipe to share!)

Improving Cafeteria Options

- Offer healthy, tasty food to students in your cafeteria. Choose menu items that are low in fat, high in fiber, and that contain fruits and vegetables. Information on many different types of fruits and vegetables can be found in the Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Database.
- Place fruit like bananas, apples, and oranges in prominent, attractive displays near the cafeteria checkout lines to promote the sale of these healthy items.
- Offer menu specials with pre-set fruit or vegetable side dishes at discounted prices to encourage students to try healthy meal options.
- Increase the number and variety of fruits and vegetables available in the cafeteria; making more healthy options available to students will increase the amount of fruit and vegetables they are likely to eat.
- Change food preparation techniques, menus, and food offerings so students can choose items that fit into a healthy diet.
- Provide a healthy lunch alternative with a salad bar that includes more low-fat fruit and veggie choices; offer packaged ready-to-go fruits and vegetables in serving lines; set up vegetable serving lines; and offer fruits in the dessert line
- Offer single-serving packs of fruit and vegetables in your cafeteria as convenient and inexpensive ways to add healthy lunch choices.
- Introduce a new fruit or vegetable to your cafeteria menu through promotions and taste tests.
- If your school/district contracts-out for food services, work with the food service contractor to develop menus and meals meeting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. Menu and meal planning is an easy way to incorporate more fruits and vegetables in your cafeteria offerings.
- Ask your cafeteria/foodservice staff to create a report card on their healthy food offerings, including the percentage of sales attributed to healthy items.
- If you want tips to share with your cafeteria staff about promoting healthy menu items to employees, be sure to take a look at Promotion Ideas for Foodservice Operators.



Offering Healthy Vending Machine Products

- Offer fruits and veggies in vending machines at school. Work with a local for-profit vendor, or buy vending machines for your building and stock them with healthy foods.
- Beware of “fruit drinks” when you ask for juice to be added to machines. Be sure the beverage choices you are offering are 100% juice.
- Ensure that a wide variety of healthier products are available in vending-size packaging (dried fruit is a great form to include in a vending machine).
- Purchase a refrigerated unit to expand the number of healthy options you can sell (fresh fruit, salads, and low-fat yogurt with fruit added in).

Getting Involved in the Community

- See what’s going on in your local community regarding fruits and vegetables. Link to our Community page to get ideas, and be sure to let students/families know about local events that support healthy eating.
- Support a Salad Bar: Add a salad bar to your cafeteria. Organize a fund-raising effort for parents and supporters to contribute to this effort. Visit Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools for more information.
- Encourage parents to take their children to a farmer’s market or the supermarket so they can learn more about fruits and veggies. The Take Your Child to the Supermarket kit contains downloadable activity sheets and recipes to help parents or guardians introduce their kids to fruits and vegetables in a supermarket setting.

Creating Nutritious Food Policies

- Establish nutrition standards for food served at school-sponsored meetings, events, and programs. Policies could address: inclusion of a variety of fruits and vegetables; healthful alternatives at all school meal functions; offering 100% juice instead of soda; and cafeteria foods that follow the U.S. Dietary Guidelines.
- Make it a practice to serve fruits, vegetables, or 100% fruit juices instead of donuts, cookies, and soda at meetings.



Featured External Links

The following is a list of organizations with nutrition education websites that provide additional online information and resources for school-based wellness programs:

CDC: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website has toolkit materials to help plan, design, and manage a school wellness program. This website has a downloadable PDF of the 2010 **Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010**. In addition, CDC has put together a free PowerPoint® presentation and accompanying materials can be downloaded for public use at:

School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.

American Cancer Society: The American Cancer Society has a section on its website called **Eat Healthy**, with information on the benefits of good nutrition, regular physical activity, and staying at a healthy weight.

American Diabetes Association: The American Diabetes Association website has nutrition information and recipes, meal planning and fitness tips, and **Create Your Plate**, six easy steps for managing diabetes and losing weight that you'll want to share with parents/students who are pre-diabetic or diabetic.

American Dietetic Association: The American Dietetic Association provides tips on timely topics, such as "What are my best snack options from a vending machine?", and tips for getting even the pickiest kids to eat more fruits and veggies. Be sure to check **It's About Eating Right** for great ideas and resources you can include in school newsletters and web materials.

American Heart Association: Follow the links at **School Programs** to take you to **Elementary School Lesson Plans** and **Middle School Lesson Plans**. You'll find a wealth of information and resources that your classroom teachers can start using right away! You may want to enroll in the **Healthy Schools Program** founded by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to get expert advice and resources for school professionals, teachers, students, and parents about ways to encourage healthy eating.

National Alliance for Nutrition and Alliance: Schools and school districts can adapt and use their **Model School Wellness Policies**. PBH was 1 of 50+ organizations that

helped to develop this set of model policies for local school districts.

National PTA: On this website, you will find information on **Nutrition; Ten Things a PTA Can Do to Improve Student Nutrition; Jamie Oliver and the PTA's Toolkit to Fight Childhood Obesity; the PTA Healthy Lifestyles Guide; and Ideas for Helping Your Overweight Teen.**

USDA: In the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015**, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) outlines strategies for creating a healthy eating environment. At the new **USDA MyPlate** website, you'll find tips, print materials, and interactive tools. Look for a PDF of the **Consumer Brochure** and **Sample Menus** to share with parents.

Here is just a *small sampling* of other USDA online resources that you could adopt for your school wellness program:

Enroll your school in the **HealthierUS School Challenge** that challenges schools to help raise a healthier generation of kids. (See if your school can win monetary incentive awards!)

- ✓ Sign up to participate in the **Chefs Move to Schools** program, where chefs partner with interested schools in their communities to create healthy meals that meet the schools' dietary guidelines and budgets, while teaching young people about nutrition and making balanced and healthy choices.
- ✓ Review a wide variety of online resources at **Farm to School** and learn how your school can partner with a local farm. (When children understand where food comes from, they are more interested in eating fruits and vegetables!)
- ✓ Another companion resource, **Eat Smart!—Farm Fresh**, will help your school take the next step—it's a handbook for school food service focusing on procurement and distribution, how to find locally-grown food and farmers, menu planning considerations, and strategies for success.



- ✓ Check out [Local Wellness Policy](#): it lists [Local Wellness Policy Resources for Schools](#) and a [State Sharing Center](#) where you can discover what organizations in your state (and across the country) are doing to support wellness programs, the materials they have developed, and their success stories.
 - ✓ Look to the USDA [Resource Library](#) for links to:
 - [Education and Training Materials Database](#), a compilation of educational materials developed by universities, private industry, and local, state and federal government agencies for school personnel and others working in Child Nutrition Programs.
 - [Bulletin Board Resources](#) for classrooms and cafeterias.
 - [Gardens for Learning—Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden](#), a comprehensive guidebook for anyone looking to enhance learning through the use of gardens in schools and other community settings. (This site provides access to a free downloadable PDF from the California School Garden Network.)
 - [Helping Kids Fight Obesity: Best Online Info Sources](#), a list of the top resources selected a registered dietitian.
 - [Nutrition Education](#), a resource with lesson plans, activities, tips, strategies, and more to help you make healthy eating a fun part of your program!
- *For a complete list of key topics on child nutrition available on the USDA website, browse the [Topics A-Z](#) index.

Social Media Tools

It's easy to stay connected with PBH (and get great ideas and content, whenever you need them) via our social media outreach.



Like us on Facebook
Fruits & Veggies—MoreMatters



Follow us on Instagram and tag us in your fruit & veggie pics.
fruitsandveggiesmorematters



Follow us on Twitter
Fruits_Veggies



Check out our weekly Mom's blog, *Stem and Stalk . . . Let's Talk*. Hosted by a PBH staffer/Mom, this blog provides an opportunity for parents to join in an online parent-to-parent conversation about fruits and veggies.



Join us on Pinterest
fvmorematters



Don't forget to link your school website to ours!

It's easy to do, costs nothing, and is a great way to share information with your school community about healthy eating with fruits and vegetables. Contact PBH about adding the Fruits & Veggies—More Matters web button to your website so that everyone at your school can link directly to information and ideas about healthy eating with fruits and vegetables!