

# Starting from children's own ideas



## TEACHER'S NOTES

These activities provide an opportunity for the children to explore their own ideas about some of the issues surrounding food and health. They are designed to encourage children to find answers to some of the basic questions about health and diet. The teachers will be able to assess the children's current understanding and behaviour around healthy eating.

Children are not expected to work through all of these activities and teachers should decide which are the most appropriate. Some of these activities might be revisited at a later point to allow children to reconsider their initial thoughts.

### 1. How can we stay healthy?



**PSHE: 3a**

**Science: Sc2: 2b, 2h**

- ➔ Hold a brainstorming session in which children answer the questions;
  - What does being healthy mean to you?
  - What does a healthy person look like and feel like?
- ➔ Ask the children to contribute ideas about staying healthy;

To stay healthy you should	To stay healthy you should not
Brush your teeth Get plenty of sleep	Smoke Stay up late

- ➔ Ask the children to explain how they think the factors in their list actually affect the body. For example, "eating bread is good for you because it's got lots of energy which makes you strong," and "when we sleep we use less energy so our body can concentrate on growing and mending."
- ➔ Ask the children to draw or write a short piece of work describing what it's like to feel healthy and unhealthy.





# Starting from children's own ideas

## 2. What have we been told about staying healthy?



**PSHE: 2k and 5h**

➡ Ask the children to think about any messages and advice about food and health that they may have seen or heard. Compile a list;

These people send us messages about food and health	Examples of their messages about food and health	Where we see or hear their messages	The reasons why they send us health messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An apple a day keeps the doctor away</li> <li>■ Eat your greens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ At home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To keep us healthy</li> <li>■ Because they love us and care for us</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Food producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'Healthwise'</li> <li>■ Fortified with vitamins</li> <li>■ Low Fat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Television</li> <li>■ Food packets</li> <li>■ Magazines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To sell their goods</li> <li>■ To help us choose what food we want</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Doctors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Eat lots of fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ At the health centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To help us understand what to eat to keep healthy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dentists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Eat fewer sweets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ At the dentist's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ For good teeth</li> </ul>

➡ Ask the children to think about these messages and to suggest reasons why some of them may not be true. For example, "I saw a drink which says 'Toothkind' on the carton, but that doesn't really mean it's good for your teeth. The people who make the drinks just want parents to stop worrying about our teeth going bad if we drink it."



# Starting from children's own ideas



## Is there such a thing as healthy and unhealthy food?

### TEACHER'S NOTES

This activity explores some of the messages about food and diet that the children may have already absorbed. Children will probably have ideas about what constitutes 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' food types and it is worth exploring these concepts. The terms 'healthy' and 'unhealthy', however, when used for foods, are controversial.

#### THE CASE FOR NOT USING THE TERMS 'HEALTHY', 'GOOD', 'UNHEALTHY' AND 'BAD' FOODS:

The messages around diet given by government, many health professionals and the food industry avoid the use of the terms 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods. The argument is that it is not the individual foods that are 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' but the overall balance and variety of foods that are eaten that result in 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' diets. The case is also made that using the terms 'unhealthy' and 'bad' for foods can lead to problems such as people feeling guilty about some of the foods they eat. This may encourage restricted eating among some groups which in the long term can lead to disordered eating patterns, possibly resulting in conditions such as obesity and bulimia. Conversely, it may lead some children to eat more 'junk' food, as an act of defiance against 'good' food.

#### THE CASE FOR USING THE TERMS 'HEALTHY', 'GOOD', 'UNHEALTHY' AND 'BAD' FOODS:

Others take the view that there are such things as 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods. How do people eat an unhealthy diet (containing too much saturated fat, sugar and salt) without eating unhealthy food (i.e. food containing too much of these components)? While children are always likely to eat 'junk' foods (fatty and sugary foods) they are not a necessary part of an adult's or a child's diet. While 'unhealthy' food will always need to be balanced with 'healthy' food to make a healthy diet, there is no need to "balance" a healthy diet comprising of 'healthy' foods by adding 'unhealthy' ones. It is important that the healthy eating message communicated to people, including children, is positive rather than negative, e.g. "eat more of the 'healthy' items such as fruit and vegetables, cereals and breads", rather than "eat less 'junk'". However, this does not mean that the terms 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' can not be used effectively and accurately. They can help to reinforce people's belief that they should eat less 'junk' food. Indeed, if these terms are not used, the food industry's advertising for such foods is more difficult to challenge.

#### TERMS USED BY THE GRAB 5! PACK:

It is important that health messages given to children and the public are consistent. The Grab 5! project has consulted widely with health and education specialists. The terms used in this pack are consistent with those in other widely accepted and used educational materials.





# Starting from children's own ideas

## 3. What foods should we eat to be healthy?



**PSHE: 3a and 2k**

**Science: Sc2: 2b**

➔ Ask the children to think about the effects of food and drink upon health. Compile a class list of food and drinks divided into two categories;

You should eat and drink more of these foods and drinks

Bread  
Apples  
Water

You should eat and drink less of these foods and drinks

Fizzy Drinks  
Chips

Note that some foods may fit into both categories.

➔ Invite children to explain their ideas about the ways in which these foods actually affect the body, for example, "Sweets are just full of sugar which makes your teeth decay".

➔ Ask the children to make a copy of the list. Ask them to put a tick next to the foods and drinks they like and a cross next to any foods and drinks they don't like. Ask them to find out which category has the most ticks and crosses.

➔ Ask them which foods they think they should eat more of to improve their diets.



**Science, Activity 1: Why we need food.**

**Maths, Activity 11: Use of Carroll diagrams to present information about their attitudes towards different foods and drinks.**



# Starting from children's own ideas



## 4. What do we need to know about eating a healthy diet?



**PSHE: 2a**

### YOU WILL NEED:

A display board. For details of materials available refer to the Grab 5! Action Pack, Section 6.

- ➔ Explain to the children that the work they do in the Grab 5! project will focus on the importance of a healthy diet and that particular emphasis will be placed on the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables.
- ➔ Compile a class list of questions and topics that the children would like to cover as part of their project. Display the list for the duration of the project so that children can add their thoughts as the work progresses. The list can be useful when planning the project or assigning topics for research by groups or individuals.

