

Year 5

Keeping healthy: activity ideas

1 Ask the children to collect food packets and labels. (Ensure that they do not bring in empty packets from foods that could turn mouldy, such as cheese or meats). Examine the labels and talk about how the nutritional value of the food is shown. Discuss the meaning of the terms used (*energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat, fibre, sodium* and so on). By comparing a variety of labels, can the children begin to identify which foods are high/low in fat, high in fibre, and high in carbohydrates?

2 Look at the ingredients of a range of different foods. Ingredients are listed in order of the amount contained in the food item – going from most to least. Before asking the children to look at the labels, show them a picture of the food (or the actual food if possible), and ask them to list what they think the main ingredients are likely to be. Certain foods, such as some types of pasta, may only list one ingredient. Make sure you include a wide range of food in the activity: some that should be quite obvious, some that the children will have to think about carefully, and some that may be surprising, like foods containing high amounts of sugar or salt.

3 Encourage the children to keep a food diary for a week. Try to involve parents in the activity by asking if they will keep a diary as well. Many children and parents will be aware of the campaigns to get people to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Ask the children why they think this is important and, by looking at their food diary, whether they manage to achieve the aim. Be sensitive about issues

surrounding food: many children may not have control over what they eat, and not all parents will have the same level of understanding about what constitutes a balanced diet. The food diaries do not need to be shared with anyone else, although it would make the activity more valuable if they could lead to open discussion.

4 Design a healthy menu for an imaginary restaurant. Write to some local restaurants, asking how they plan their menus and what consideration they give to the nutritional value of their food. Invite a local chef into the classroom to discuss the issue and answer the children's questions. Take care with the term 'healthy', and ensure the children understand that food is not divided into two groups: healthy and unhealthy. A healthy diet is one that is balanced and has the correct proportion of foods from each of the food groups over a long period of time.

5 Working in groups of four, provide each group with a large sheet of paper and some different coloured felt-tipped pens. Ask the groups to list any medicines that they may have heard of or may have needed themselves. What kind of illness were the medicines taken for? Children will probably include things like Calpol or antibiotics but may not think of things like asthma inhalers, so be prepared to offer prompts where needed. Share examples from each group to create a class list. Then ask the children to suggest reasons why it is vital to follow the instructions on how the medicine should be taken. Why do they think the medicine may be harmful if not taken correctly?

