

Year 6

Keeping healthy: activity ideas

1 Present the children with a collection of photographs of different types of food. Provide cards showing the headings of different food groups needed for a balanced diet – proteins, carbohydrates, fats and oils, vitamins and minerals, sugary foods. Children are not required to know these at this stage, but many will already be familiar with the terms. They should also begin to understand that different foods provide different things a body needs. Ask the children to work in pairs or small groups to discuss what would be the main component of each of the foods in the photographs. They should categorise each of the foods and give an explanation for their decision.

2 Food labels can be a great stimulus for numeracy activities. Most food labels give nutritional values as a proportion of the whole pack – per 40g and per 100g, for example. Challenge the children to calculate the total nutritional value for a pack of food. Most values are usually given to one decimal place. Take advantage of this by using labels as an aid to understanding or revising work on decimals in a real context.

3 Ask the children to investigate the RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) of vitamins and minerals. Cereal packets are usually excellent sources of this information as they are often fortified. What percentage of the RDA of different vitamins and minerals would be provided by a recommended serving of a variety of cereals?

4 Many processed foods contain ingredients or additives that will not be immediately recognisable to children. For example: antioxidants, partially inverted sugar syrup, and tripotassium phosphate. Once the children have compiled a list of these ingredients, they can write to food manufacturers asking them to clarify what the ingredients are and the purpose of including them in the food. Some of the replies may be quite fascinating!

5 Divide the class into small groups, providing each group with felt-tipped pens and paper. Ask the children to discuss what is meant by the term 'drug'. (A drug is a substance that acts to change our physical or mental state). Following their discussion, challenge each group to write an agreed definition of the term on their piece of paper. Share the definitions with the whole class and discuss them.

6 Ask the children to list any drugs that they know of. (Be prepared for illegal drugs to appear. Ensure that you have consulted your school's health/drugs education policy and have sufficient knowledge to deal with the matter.) List the children's responses, and if they haven't considered substances such as caffeine, alcohol and tobacco, add those to the list.

(**Note:** Activities 5 and 6 are ideal as a starting point for introducing work on drugs. Any activities concerning drugs education should not be carried out in isolation, but should be undertaken as part of a carefully planned and agreed programme.)

