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The facts of childhood obesity

Obesity is a recognized disease. It has become a worldwide pandemic. The Government publication *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Guidance for Local Areas* (March 2008) states that in the UK, "Almost two-thirds of adults and a third of children are overweight or obese."

The UK has the worst weight problem in Europe, with almost a quarter of adults classed as grossly overweight. Most worrying is the increase of obesity in children. Obesity rates have doubled among six-year-olds and trebled among 15-year-olds in the last ten years.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) calls obesity one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st century on their website: www.euro.who.int/obesity.

By the International Obesity Taskforce's (IOTF) international standards nearly 22% of boys and 27.5% of girls aged 2-15 were found to be overweight in the UK. The IOTF analysis indicates a marked acceleration in the trend from the mid-1980s onwards.

The document *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* stresses that we will only succeed as a nation if the whole society plays a part. This is why child obesity has been included as a national priority within the NHS and why the Government launched a £75 million three-year marketing programme to promote healthy weight in the autumn of 2008. Schools have a big part to play in re-educating society.

It is important to highlight healthy eating and exercise in schools. By teaching the younger generation we will be helping to reduce the problem nationwide. It is easier to guide children toward good eating habits, sleeping and exercise routines when they are young. As they get older, they are strongly influenced by peer groups and advertising. This book aims to help schools, children and parents work together to improve overall health prospects and longevity of life.

Projects and initiatives

There are many projects and initiatives, which aim to promote healthy eating, exercise and emotional well-

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being. It is important primary schools are aware of these programmes.

National Healthy Schools Programme

A joint Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) initiative to combat the rise in obesity, is the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP). It aims to teach children the skills and knowledge to make informed health and life choices, so they are able to reach their full potential. This includes healthy eating and physical activity. The Government's target is for all schools to be participating in the NHSP by 2009 and aims for 75 percent of schools to have achieved National Healthy School Status.

In 2007, the Government agreed 198 national indicators to help local authorities prioritise their funding and set targets. Seven of these national indicators (NI) are directly linked to children and tackling obesity.

The National Child Measurement Programme

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) was established in 2005 and is conducted by both the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Every year, as part of the NCMP, children in Reception and Year 6 are weighed and measured during the school year by the school nursing service and the results are made available to the children's parents.

The *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices - Foresight Project* maintains that giving the results to parents is a vital way of engaging both children and families about healthy lifestyles and weight issues. The figures have highlighted trends in growth patterns and obesity linked to particular areas and schools. This information is then used to inform local planning and the delivery of services for children.

Dcsf School Meal Standards

The Government has set down rules to maintain the standards of food being served within schools. The School Food Trust has launched a web-based tool that helps schools assess whether the food and drink provided at lunchtime and at other times of the school day meet these food-based standards. This is run in conjunction with the 'Million Meals' Campaign, which encourages the take-up of healthy school meals.

<http://schoolfoodchecklist.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/client/index.aspx>

National Schools Fruit and Vegetable scheme

The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is part of the **5 A DAY** programme to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Under the Scheme, all four to six year

National Indicator		Link to Tackling Obesity
N1 50	Emotional health of children	Overweight children are more likely to be bullied and suffer from low self-esteem. School-based interventions to reduce bullying are effective.
N1 52	Take up of school lunches	Encouraging more children to eat school dinners will ensure they get at least one healthy meal a day. This could improve nutritional intake and may reduce obesity.
N1 55	Obesity among primary school age children in Reception	Figures are being collated and analysed by the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)
N1 56	Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6	Figures are being collated and analysed by the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)
N1 57	Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport	Children should be doing at least 60 minutes of planned and incidental physical activity every day.
N1 69	Children who have experienced bullying	Schools can build good self-esteem through PSHE and Seal programmes
N1 198	Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used	Schools can encourage pupils to walk and cycle to school to promote a healthier lifestyle.

old children in LEA maintained infant, primary and special schools will be entitled to a free piece of fruit or vegetable each school day.

This is the same scheme that was originally piloted and supported by lottery money in 2000. The Government took over the funding in March 2005 and expanded the scheme further. Now 99% of eligible schools have chosen to participate in the Scheme and nearly two million children receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable each school day.

The Mind, Exercise, Nutrition Do it (MEND) Programme

As a teacher, you will often be asked what is available for obese children and their parents outside of school. The MEND Programme is a fun, free after-school course which helps families to learn how to be fitter, healthier and happier. It was developed by experts in child health and supported by national lottery funding.

MEND Programmes are open to children aged 7 to 13 who are above their ideal weight. They must be accompanied by a parent or carer. There are currently MEND Programmes running in over 300 locations across the UK. More information is available at their website: www.mendprogramme.org

Change4Life initiative

This involves a series of adverts starting in January 2009 that promote healthy living. Firms including Cadbury, Unilever, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, Kraft, Mars, Nestle and PepsiCo are all taking part alongside major supermarkets Asda, Tesco and The Co-operative Group. People will be able to call a dedicated helpline and speak to specially-trained advisors for advice on exercise, nutrition and support services. A website has

also been set up to bring together more than 45,000 groups and projects aimed at promoting healthy living.

Anti-Bullying Week

This has been initiated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, founded by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau (NCB), in 2002. The Alliance brings together over 50 organisations into one network with the aims of reducing bullying and ensuring teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address bullying effectively. This includes a child being bullied over weight issues.

National School Meal Week

This is organised by the Food Standards Agency and provides a platform for school meals caterers to drive up school meal numbers as well as promote the importance of healthy eating to young children. By encouraging pupils to have a school dinner, we can ensure all children have at least one healthy meal a day.

National Lunchbox Week

Healthy eating starts at home with the family - according to the Schools Food Trust (SFT), less than 45% of primary and secondary school pupils eat school meals, resulting in more than half of all school children relying on lunchboxes and food from home. National Lunchbox Week (week commencing 1st September) has been set up by the snack manufacturer Sun Valley to support parents and offer advice and ideas to help them move away from fried and fatty snacks such as crisps and chocolate and find healthy and tasty alternatives.

Let's Get Cooking

Let's Get Cooking is a network of cookery clubs for young people and parents. The project received £20 million from the Big Lottery Fund. The money funds a potential 5,000 clubs, set up from Autumn 2007 and

Healthy or not

Learning Objective

To understand some food is good for us and some is not

Key Vocabulary

Healthy, unhealthy, meals, dinner, dessert, allergies, intolerances, famine

Organisation

Whole class discussion, group discussion and individual work at the pupil's own level.

Resources

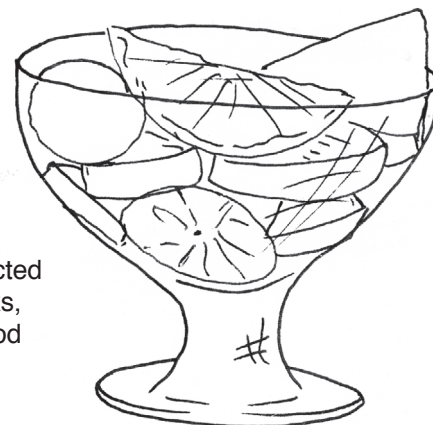
- 'Healthy or not' activity sheet (one per group)
- Magazines, cookery books and leaflets with pictures of healthy and unhealthy dinners and desserts
- Non-fiction books about food allergies and intolerances
- Internet access

Introduction

Discuss what makes a healthy meal. Show pictures of the healthy and unhealthy dinners and desserts. The pictures on the activity sheet could be displayed on

an overhead projector or interactive whiteboard for whole class discussion.

Supplement this with pictures collected from cookery books, magazines and food leaflets.



Discuss with the children why they are healthy or why they are not healthy.

Main activity

Split the class into small groups and give each group a copy of the activity sheet 'Healthy or not'. Encourage the children to discuss which pictures they think are healthy and which ones are not.

Each group should only put a tick by the meals they think are healthy or a cross by the meals they think are unhealthy when the whole group has come to a consensus. The children from each group must justify their decisions.


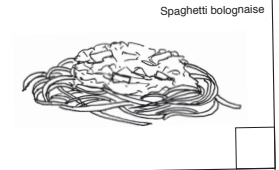
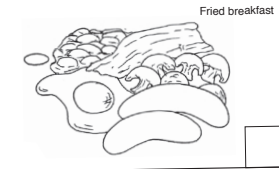
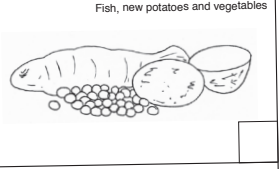
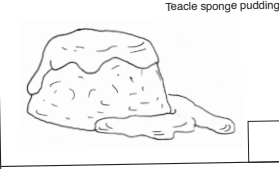


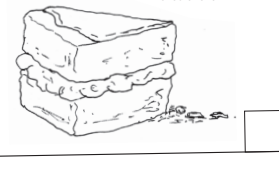
Plenary

Ask if everyone has the same access to a healthy diet. Talk with the class about some of the Government initiatives, such as the school fruit and vegetable scheme outlined in chapter one.

Discuss that some people may have allergies or intolerances to different types of food and have to be careful what they eat. Consider world-wide issues such as, famine, religions and cultures.

Extension

Research what foods people can have allergies and intolerances to in library books and on the Internet. Provide time for these children to report their findings to the class.

What do we eat?		Activity 2
Name _____		
● Put a tick by the foods you think are healthy and a cross by the ones you think are not healthy		
Pie with chips  <input type="checkbox"/>	Spaghetti bolognaise  <input type="checkbox"/>	Section Three
Fried breakfast  <input type="checkbox"/>	Fish, new potatoes and vegetables  <input type="checkbox"/>	
Teacle sponge pudding  <input type="checkbox"/>	Fruit salad  <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fruit jelly  <input type="checkbox"/>	Slice of chocolate cake  <input type="checkbox"/>	

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What do we eat?

Learning Objective

To examine their own diets and amount of physical activity they do and compare it to Government guidelines

Key Vocabulary

Diet, balanced, physical activity, exercise

Organisation

The 'What do we eat?' activity sheet should be given for homework at least a week before this lesson.

Class discussion and working with a partner

Resources

- 'What do we eat?' activity sheet (homework)
- 'Food pyramid' activity sheet 1a to use for analysis (one per pair)
- Access to a computer

Introduction

The 'What do we eat?' activity sheet has been designed for the children to do as homework to keep a record of what they eat over the week and then bring back to the classroom to decide whether they have eaten a healthy balanced diet.

There is also space to record how much exercise they have done and consider whether this was enough physical activity compared to the amount of food they have eaten and consider this against the Governments recommended daily activity of 60 minutes a day.

Explain the sheet to the children and that they need to record what they eat for their breakfast, lunch and dinner every day for a week. Point out there is a space to include snacks. Discuss how they can estimate how much exercise they do. Tell them walking to and from school counts.

Emphasise that you will be using the information they have collected in the classroom for a variety of different activities so it is important they bring the activity sheet back completed.

Main activity

Look at the information they have collected with a partner and compare the types of meals they have eaten.

Use what they have learnt about the food pyramid to explore if they have food from each food group in their diet. Write these questions on a whiteboard so all the children can see them to focus their discussion with their partner.

- Have they eaten the same everyday?

- Have they eaten the same as each other?
- What things are different?
- Over the week have they eaten a balanced and varied diet?
- Have could their diet be improved?

Plenary

Ask for volunteers to share what they have found out from their charts with the whole class.

Discuss general ideas on how diet can be improved:

- A healthy low-sugar cereal with milk and a piece of fruit is a good start to the day.
- Grill or bake instead of fry, steam instead of boil. Burgers, fish fingers and sausages are just as tasty when grilled, but have a lower fat content. Oven chips are lower in fat than fried chips.
- Fill up with fibre. Starchy foods which are rich in complex carbohydrates, such as potatoes, yams, pasta, rice and noodles are all filling and nutritious.
- Instead of snacks like chocolate, biscuits, cakes and crisps, choose healthy alternatives like fresh fruit, dried fruit or tinned fruit in natural juice, plain pop-corn, crusty bread or crackers.
- Avoid fizzy drinks that are high in sugar. Substitute them with fresh juices diluted with water or sugar-free alternatives.

Extension

This activity could be adapted to form part of a daily diary that could be recorded on the computer as a healthy blog where the children document their fruit, vegetable and drink consumption and how many minutes of physical exercise they have each day.

Section Three

Activity 3

What do we eat?

Name _____

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Snacks							
Exercise							

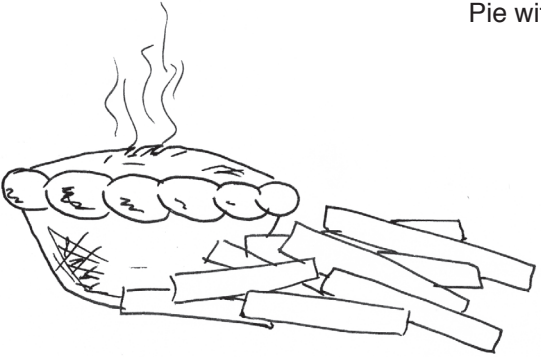


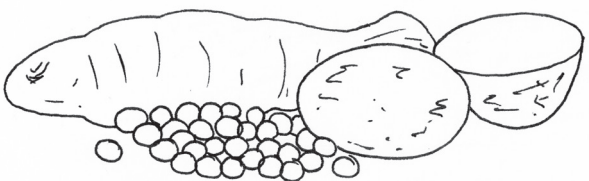
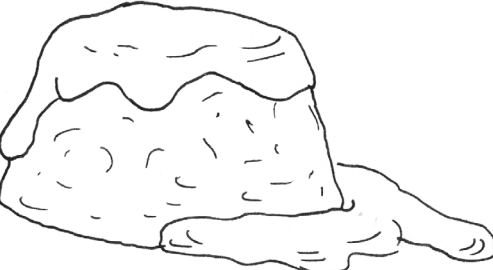



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What do we eat?

Activity 2

Name _____

- Put a tick by the foods you think are healthy and a cross by the ones you think are not healthy

<p>Pie with chips</p>  <input data-bbox="694 683 782 772" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Spaghetti bolognaise</p>  <input data-bbox="1380 683 1468 772" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fried breakfast</p>  <input data-bbox="694 1097 782 1187" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Fish, new potatoes and vegetables</p>  <input data-bbox="1380 1097 1468 1187" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Teacle sponge pudding</p>  <input data-bbox="694 1512 782 1601" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Fruit salad</p>  <input data-bbox="1380 1512 1468 1601" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fruit jelly</p>  <input data-bbox="694 1926 782 2016" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Slice of chocolate cake</p>  <input data-bbox="1380 1926 1468 2016" type="checkbox"/>

Section Three

What do we eat?

Name _____

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Snacks							
Exercise							