

Maine-ly Teachers

Preschool/Elementary
Edition



Spring 06



News and Ideas for Maine-ly Nutrition Teachers

Something New— Changes/Updates for Maine-ly Nutrition

◆ Spring Sign-on for Maine-ly Nutrition!

In the past we have had our teachers sign up for Maine-ly Nutrition in the fall after school starts. However, some teachers have told us it would be easier to sign up in the spring because they are in the process of planning for the following year and would like to know that Maine-ly Nutrition is going to be part of their program. In response to that request, starting next year we will allow teachers to sign on for the 2007/2008 school year (pending funding approval).



◆ Parent Info Sheets

In the focus groups that were conducted during our teacher trainings this year, many teachers told us they would like more resources to send home for parents. USDA, the government agency that funds this program, in their current guidance, has directed us to use funds to include parents, especially single mothers in our nutrition education plans. As a result, we are planning to adapt some current resources into Parent Info Sheets. These will be formatted so that they will be easy for you to use in the classroom and get some parent involvement as well. We foresee these being ready some-time during the 2006/2007 school year.



◆ Jean Blaydes' Make Learning a Moving Experience Materials Now Available!

We now have Jean Blaydes' program available for loan from HERC (Health Education Resource Collection). For those of you who were unable to attend the teacher trainings, Jean Blaydes has developed lessons using movement to help kids remember facts from lessons. The activities are often set to music, which also helps kids retain the information. This program contains a video with examples of how this program can work in the classroom. After you watch it, it is easy to modify and apply to your own lesson plans. To borrow this excellent program, check out HERC's link under the Maine-ly Nutrition icon on our website at www.maine-nutrition.org.



Take Time



◆ **Take Time!** The *Take Time!* program that was offered to schools this past year, is now going to be available exclusively to Maine-ly Nutrition schools. This program uses the Jean Blaydes lessons (mentioned above) in the classroom to integrate physical activity into students' days without losing valuable instruction time. Students are taught the importance of being active as part of overall good nutrition and good health and are provided with opportunities to be active for at least 10-20 minutes during school and outside of physical education classes while being provided with quality, integrated nutrition education.

Some examples of taking time include:

1. Infusing nutrition education and physical activity opportunities into existing lesson plans.
2. Taking 3-5 minutes stretch breaks while discussing the concept of caloric balance.
3. Dancing to music with nutrition-related lyrics.
4. Group walks/talks to discuss the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables as fuel for the body.

◆ An Afterschool Nutrition Education Program

Pending USDA approval, Maine-ly Nutrition would like to pilot an after school nutrition education program in up to five different schools. Team Nutrition's "The Power of Choice" would be the program offered to these schools. This after school program would complement and enhance nutrition education efforts already being implemented during the school day. Teachers who would participate in this pilot would also be eligible to attend the regional teacher trainings offered during the 2006/2007 school year.



Some useful websites:



Connie Evers (author of "How to Teach Nutrition to Kids") has a free newsletter at: http://nutritionforkids.com/Feeding_Kids.htm

The New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches has healthy recipes for schools at <http://healthylunches.org>



Some Good Nutrition Education Websites For Elementary Students

- ◆ Nutrition Explorations: The National Dairy and Nutrition Council provides terrific teacher resources and student games. A free nutrition program can also be ordered from this website. Great information for elementary teachers and their students at: www.nutritionexplorations.org.
- ◆ Verb It's What You Do: This interactive website stresses the importance of physical activity. The site encourages activity as kids design their own activities and games. The directions are then to go outside and experiment with the game. There are some virtual games that can be played on the website as well, but the main message is to get kids moving. Available at: www.verbnow.com/
- ◆ A myriad of nutrition education materials can be found in the Wellness Ways Resource Book on the University of Illinois Extension's website. This website features a wide variety of teacher guides, handouts, recipes, displays, and activities for students. Materials cover a range of topics from healthy snacks and serving sizes to food safety and food labels. A "MyPyramid" link directs the viewer to handouts on each category of the pyramid. These useful materials can all be downloaded and printed at: <http://wellnessways.aces.uiuc.edu/Teaching/html>



When Fresh Fruit is Too

Expensive (Adapted from Environmental Nutrition March 2006)



Many of the students we work with come from families who need to watch what they spend on food. In class we often emphasize that fresh whole foods are the most nutritious. Although fresh is best for us and for the planet, it is not always possible to use fresh locally grown produce. Luckily both canned and dried fruits contain most of the same nutrients as fresh fruit and can help your students meet their goal of approximately two cups of fruits per day.

Canned and dried fruits also make great snacks and are easily carried in a lunch bag. They can be added to trail mix, mixed with cereal or yogurt, and added to baked goods like muffins. You can also team them with granola, nuts or pretzels. For families that are trying to get into the habit of eating more fruit, canned and dried fruits are a good option because they do not spoil as easily as fresh. Families who may forget to eat fresh fruit before it spoils will be more likely to continue to try fruit if they do not feel that they have "wasted" it.

Families should, however, be cautioned to read nutrition labels. Although canned and dried fruits contain similar amounts of potassium, fiber, and phytochemicals as fresh, they also often contain twice as many calories from sugar. Dried fruit does not contain as much water as fresh making it easier to eat more of the dried fruit. Canned fruit is often packed in heavy syrup. Looking for fruit canned in water or natural fruit juice can help control calories from sugar.

To build consumer savvy skills, assign your students the task of comparing several different brands of canned and dried fruits the next time they go shopping. Pool the information in class and make a chart listing the best choices based on their research.

Easy for Kids to make!

One Step Macaroni and Cheese

Makes 5-6 servings

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups uncooked macaroni
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 ½ Tablespoons all purpose flour
- ½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 cup non-fat milk
- 2 Tablespoons margarine
- 1 Cup cubed or shredded cheese, low fat

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients except cheese in 2 or 2 ½ qt. glass casserole.
2. Microwave, covered, 5 to 6 minutes or until mixture boils.
3. Let stand for 5 minutes, then add cheese.
4. Microwave 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture boils and thickens.
5. Let stand several minutes before serving.



Adapted from: Cornell Cooperative Extension in Steuben County.



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