



KidsHealth.org/classroom

Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

- Standards
- Related Links
- Discussion Questions
- Activities for Students
- Reproducible Materials

Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Students will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Your state's school health policies:
nasbe.org/HealthySchools/States/State_Policy.asp

When teens drop their money into a vending machine or onto a fast food counter, most aren't thinking about the Nutrition Facts food labels of what they're about to buy. But they should. Food companies spend a lot of time and money marketing to teens, so it's important that your students learn to think critically about what they eat. The following activities will help your students learn to use Nutrition Facts food labels to make healthier choices.

Related KidsHealth Links

Articles for Teens:

Food Labels

KidsHealth.org/teen/food_fitness/nutrition/food_labels.html

Figuring Out Fat and Calories

KidsHealth.org/teen/food_fitness/nutrition/fat_calories.html

Vitamins and Minerals

KidsHealth.org/teen/food_fitness/nutrition/vitamins_minerals.html

The Food Guide Pyramid Becomes a Plate

KidsHealth.org/teen/food_fitness/nutrition/pyramid.html

Supermarket Shopping

KidsHealth.org/teen/food_fitness/nutrition/grocery_shopping.html

Discussion Questions

Note: The following questions are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

1. How often do you read Nutrition Facts food labels? What information do you look for?
2. Why is serving size such a crucial piece of information on the food label? Do you pay attention to serving size when you're drinking a can of soda or eating a bag of chips?
3. Unless you grow all of your own food, you probably eat food that's been processed. What does "processed" mean? How can you tell if a food is fresh, minimally processed, or highly processed? Can you think of an example of each?
4. If nutrition information were available on restaurant menus, would it affect what people order? Would it make a difference to you?
5. While food labels are helpful to everyone, why are they necessary for people with food allergies or certain health problems, like diabetes or heart disease?



Activities for Students

Note: The following activities are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

The People vs. Sugar

Objectives:

Students will:

- Examine the amounts of added sugar in their favorite foods and beverages
- Practice writing a persuasive argument

Materials:

- “The People vs. Sugar” handout
- Pen or pencil

Class Time:

- 1 hour

Activity:

All rise for the honorable Judge Hugh R. Sweet!

Judge Sweet has an important case to hear today: The People vs. Sugar. The people allege that sugar has been sneaking its way into more and more of our foods and beverages – things like soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks, breakfast cereals, and packaged snacks. You are the prosecuting attorney representing the people. Use “The People vs. Sugar” handout to outline your thoughts. Then write an essay presenting your most convincing argument against added sugar, making sure to include:

- Health problems associated with consuming too much sugar
- Words and images used to market sugary products to kids and teens
- Sugar’s “aliases” (sugar can hide under at least 50 other names on an ingredient list, including high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, lactose, maltose, dextrose, syrup, and cane juice, to name a few)
- How teens can increase their awareness of added sugar and make healthier food choices

Extensions:

1. Complete this demonstration to submit as “evidence”: Bring in a 20-oz. soft drink. Note the grams of sugar per serving (for example, some colas have as much as 65 grams). If 4 grams of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon, measure out the amount in the bottle into a clear cup (16¼ teaspoons). What if you drank two of those every day (32½ teaspoons)? Or three (48¾ teaspoons)? Discuss how empty calories really add up.
2. Now be sugar’s defense attorney. Your position is that sugar is not to blame at all; rather, it’s all a matter of personal responsibility. Have a mock trial presenting both arguments.



Honest Abe Advertising Agency

Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze food companies' marketing tactics
- Create more truthful information on food packaging

Materials:

- Food packages
- Art supplies (paper, colored pencils, markers, etc.)

Class Time:

- 1 hour

Activity:

You've just been hired by the Honest Abe Advertising Agency. Its motto: "We tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Your first assignment is to revise the packaging for a popular food product of your choice. It can be a product you find in the grocery store or a fast food item. Notice the words and images on the package. Does it claim to be 100% pure, all natural, or use "premium" ingredients? Does it claim to be low fat, light, or low carb? More important, does any of this necessarily mean the product is healthy for you? Check the food label to learn what's really inside. Then design a more truthful version of the food packaging. Be as creative – and as honest – as you can! Then discuss: If people saw your package, would they buy the product?

Extension:

Notice the recommended serving size on your food package. Is that the amount you would typically eat or drink at one sitting? For most people it's not – we eat much larger portions, and therefore more calories, sugar, and fat. Keep track of your portion sizes for 1 day. Are they over, under, or about even with the recommended serving sizes?

Reproducible Materials

Handout: The People vs. Sugar

KidsHealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/safety/food_labels_handout1.pdf

Quiz: Food Labels

KidsHealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/safety/food_labels_quiz.pdf

Answer Key: Food Labels

KidsHealth.org/classroom/9to12/personal/safety/food_labels_quiz_answers.pdf



Name: _____

Date: _____

The People vs. Sugar

Instructions: As the prosecuting attorney in the case of The People vs. Sugar, write a persuasive argument against added sugar in products marketed to kids and teens. Use this handout to outline and organize your thoughts before you start writing.

Your Position

Supporting Evidence

How common is added sugar in your favorite foods and beverages?

What are some health problems associated with consuming too much sugar?

What are some of sugar's "aliases" on ingredient lists?





Name: _____

Date: _____

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question.

1. On a Nutrition Facts food label, sugar is listed separately under:
 - a. dietary fiber
 - b. total carbohydrates
 - c. protein
 - d. cholesterol
2. If you see the words “partially hydrogenated” in the ingredient list, you know that food contains _____.
3. True or false: If a food contains 1 gram of dietary fiber, that food is a good source of fiber.
4. You drink a 20-ounce bottle of your favorite soft drink. The food label says the serving size is 8 ounces and there are 35 grams of sugar per serving. How many grams of sugar did you consume?
 - a. 55
 - b. 70
 - c. 87.5
 - d. 280
 - e. 700
5. About _____% of all the calories you eat in a day should come from fat.



Quiz Answer Key

1. On a Nutrition Facts food label, sugar is listed separately under:
 - a. dietary fiber
 - b. total carbohydrates
 - c. protein
 - d. cholesterol
2. If you see the words “partially hydrogenated” in the ingredient list, you know that food contains trans fat.
3. True or false: If a food contains 1 gram of dietary fiber, that food is a good source of fiber.
4. You drink a 20-ounce bottle of your favorite soft drink. The food label says the serving size is 8 ounces and there are 35 grams of sugar per serving. How many grams of sugar did you consume?
 - a. 55
 - b. 70
 - c. 87.5
 - d. 280
 - e. 700
5. About 30 % of all the calories you eat in a day should come from fat.