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Today's teens are more obsessed with diet and weight than any other generation. Girls and boys alike are trying to gain or lose pounds and inches. While we are reaching epidemic proportions of adolescents who are overweight or obese, most 11 to 14 year olds are a healthy weight, with a small percentage being underweight. The question of weight change may come up in class, students are interested in the topic. Most have some knowledge of fad diets and basic nutrition, however skewed it may be. But weight loss is not a focus of the EatFit program.

Adolescents are inundated with messages telling them to be thinner or stronger. Television, commercials, magazines, newspapers, movies, music, and even comics, focus on the image of a thin woman and the image of a strong man. Students need adults who are accepting of all body shapes and sizes, and who accept them the way they are. Each and every student is special, wonderful and gifted. They possess the power to make their own decisions and grow to be healthy, happy and productive members of society. That is our focus.

Adolescence is a time to begin exerting independence, finding out where to fit in with peers, and learning life skills needed as an adult. Making healthy eating and fitness choices is one of these life skills. If the seeds can be planted now, then they can grow over time.

Goals give students motivation to strive towards their potential. This may be a more fit body (meaning healthier, more toned, and improved physical condition, regardless of weight), more energy, an improved appearance, or a sense of more independence. These are motivators of behavior change and can be a catalyst to get students working. Long term, abstract concepts, such as cancer prevention, increased longevity or better health generally do not prompt students to want to change their eating and fitness habits.

Cultural sensitivity is also a concern. America is a diverse nation. We have people from nearly every country, speaking many different languages. While this is a wonderful asset, it can also be a challenge. Many teachers have classrooms filled with students speaking many different languages, representing diverse experiences and cultures. This curriculum was developed to be sensitive to these differences. You may need to adjust the curriculum to better fit the individual needs of your students. We encourage you to make those changes.

It is our hope that with the tools and activities in the EatFit curriculum, you will be able to improve the lives of the adolescents with whom you work, one step at a time.

*Marcel Horowitz, M.S.,
the EatFit Team, Cooperative Extension,
and University of California - Davis, Department of Nutrition*
EatFit is designed to improve the eating and fitness choices of middle school adolescents. National surveys show that a high prevalence of nutritional deficiencies occur during adolescence and that physical activity declines steadily beginning at this age. Some of the consequences of unhealthful eating and fitness choices are poor school performance, low energy levels, obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease and cancer. According to McGinnis and Foege (1993), physical inactivity and unhealthful eating are the second leading causes of death among adults in the United States.

According to the 1999 Center for Disease Control's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance and the 1998 California Teen Eating, Exercise, and Nutrition Survey (CalTEENS):

• Teens spent twice as much time watching television or playing video games as being physically active.
• Only 29 percent of adolescents reported getting the recommended minimum of one hour of vigorous physical activity daily.
• Almost half of all teens reported eating no vegetables on a typical day.
• Over three-quarters of high school students reported not eating the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
• Ten percent of students were overweight and 16 percent were at risk for becoming overweight.
• Eighty-two percent of students drank less than the recommended three glasses of milk a day.
• One-third of adolescents reported eating at least one meal or snack at a fast food restaurant daily.
• Forty-three percent of students were trying to lose weight.

It is clear that our adolescent population would benefit from improved eating and fitness choices. The lessons in this curriculum were carefully selected to include issues most important to this age group. The lessons include nutrition basics, web-based diet analysis, information about energy and calories, label reading, exercise, fast food, breakfast, and media influence.

In this curriculum, students are given feedback on their eating and fitness habits. After analyzing their personal eating and fitness levels, students have the freedom to choose which aspects they would like to change. Based on current nutrition and physical activity research, the following are the major eating and fitness goals students are offered from which a goal can be chosen:

Students may choose eating goals that:
• improve eating habits
• increase calcium
• increase iron
• increase fruits and vegetables
• reduce fat
• reduce sugar.

Students may increase their fitness by choosing goals to:
• increase aerobic activity
• increase lifestyle activity
• increase strength training activity
• increase stretching activity.

Goal setting is used as a strategy to promote dietary and physical activity behavior changes. Setting and accomplishing a goal increases motivation and confidence to perform a particular behavior. When students set dietary and physical activity goals, effort, persistence and concentration are elicited. Students who set goals are less distracted and often persevere in their effort longer than students who do not set goals. The goal setting skills learned in the EatFit program can be transferred to academic and personal life.
The EatFit program consists of:
- a curriculum
- a student workbook
- a website with a dietary analysis and goal setting program

The curriculum consists of nine lesson plans, lesson enhancements, recipes, educational standards, references and workbook answer sheets.

The student workbook is a 20-page, magazine-style booklet that contains activity sheets for students. Each student is to receive their own copy at the beginning of the program.

The website address is www.eatfit.net. The electronic eating analysis is available on this site, as well as the winners of the EatFit recipe contest and success stories.

The eating analysis is a program for students that will analyze their eating record and determine which areas are the weakest. The area they choose to improve will be the their goal for the rest of the program. The analysis is also available in a paper version for students without access to a computer.
This curriculum will be most effective when lessons are taught consecutively. Lessons may be adapted to fit individual needs, space restrictions, timelines and resource constraints. The lesson plan and additional materials contain the following components.

**Lesson Plan**

**Overview**
There are specific reasons each lesson is included in the EatFit curriculum. The overview will highlight the main reasons and justification for each topic.

**Timeline**
This quick reference shows how each lesson should flow and approximately how long the sections will take.

**Objectives**
By the end of each lesson, students should be able to accomplish the competencies listed.

**Getting Ready**
This section provides a before class review or checklist of items that need to be prepared or obtained.

**Standards**
This section summarizes how the lesson meets California educational standards. Refer to the standards section in the back of the curriculum for a more thorough explanation.

**Lesson Question**
Each lesson starts with a question, which becomes the focus of the class period and supports student goals. The question can be written on the board or presented verbally. Students should be informed that they will be given an activity to investigate the answer to the question. Repeat the question throughout the class period to keep students on track. This reinforces the inquisitive nature of the activities.

**Goal Tracking**
Feedback on the progress toward goal achievement is an important step. After students have set goals, they should track how they are doing. This should be done during each lesson.

**Opening Discussion**
This step is very important to the success of the program. The opening discussion section provides guidelines for engaging students in an initial discussion of the lesson question. This will prompt students to think about how to find the answer to the lesson question based on what they already know. A few questions with plausible answers are provided as a guide.

**Activities**
Activities are the focus of each lesson and the primary method by which students will discover the answer to the lesson question. They are hands-on, experiential, investigative activities. Students will learn the objectives for the lesson through games, explorations and experiments, which will help them to reach their EatFit goals.

**Closing Discussion**
After completion of the activity, students should be brought together for a closing discussion. This will tie together all that was learned and reinforce the concepts that will impact the students' lives and goals.

**Take Home Activities**
Okay, homework, but it doesn’t sound as bad. These activities are intended to help students overcome the nutrition and fitness challenges and hurdles in their environment and lives. The activities are “fun” and help keep students thinking about EatFit. Teachers’ encouragement of students to work on goals is beneficial to students overall success. After students complete their take home activities, it is useful to review their responses and facilitate a discussion.

**Background Information**
Any additional information needed to successfully teach the lesson is included in this section.
Additional Materials

Lesson Enhancements
If the students are to successfully achieve their personal goals, continuous reinforcement of EatFit goals is extremely important. Success is judged by the degree to which behaviors are actually changed. The rationale behind this section is reinforcement of goals through the integration of eating and fitness issues into other subject areas, such as science and literature. Suggested lesson enhancement activities are listed in the lesson plan. Instructions are in the lesson enhancements section and can be integrated into each lesson.

Recipes
Each lesson contains a recipe that has been “kid-tested and nutritionally approved” to support the eating goals. Recipe suggestions are made in the lesson, but the recipes are found in the back of the curriculum. These can be moved into the lesson section if you prefer, and do not necessarily need to be prepared only with the suggested lesson. Preparing these recipes will give students the skills they need to continue to meet their eating goals outside of the classroom. At the bottom of each recipe is the nutrient breakdown for each goal nutrient. These are based on percent daily value (see Background Information in lesson 5). Discuss what the numbers mean with students. Highlight how preparing food will help them reach their eating goals. Also included is a shopping list for each recipe. It is our hope that the these lists will make shopping for in-class food preparation easier.

Check with the cafeteria or home economics class to see if a cooking environment is available. A few recipes are included that can be done in any environment and with minimal equipment (such as Fast Mix).

References
This curriculum is theory and research driven. References used to support the information are listed in the references section by lesson.

Standards
A ratings sheet is provided to review the ways in which EatFit meets the California Department of Education’s content standards, challenge standards, and frameworks.

Workbook Answer Sheets
The last section of the curriculum contains the answer sheets for the workbook. Some are examples of how the pages should be completed; others are correct answers. You can use them as a reference for correcting student workbooks, or as a guide to clarify how to complete the activities.
These tips are offered as ways to increase the effectiveness of the program.

- Introduce each lesson by posing the lesson question. These questions are designed to spark interest and encourage students to find their own solutions. To create a highly motivating environment, interact with students as they track their goal progress. Remember to encourage their efforts, as well as, cheer their successes.

- Discuss goals on days when the lessons are not taught to keep students on track.

- Hands-on, real life problem-solving improves future ability. Use real foods, have taste testings of new foods, and practice the exercises as often as possible.

- Students learn by watching. Choosing smart foods for yourself at lunchtime, walking to school in the morning and stretching during the day can’t hurt their learning process. Students will be looking to see if you practice what you preach or, as they say, whether or not you “walk the talk.” Positive role models are critical to success.

- Look at the messages you are sending. Are you teaching them to cook biscuits and cookies? Why not choose healthier fare, such as lower fat rolls and fruit salad. Do you get upset when students get squirmy? Add five-minute exercise breaks to your class period. Do you watch the students jog laps? Run a lap with them. The best way to encourage changes within students is to make changes around them.

- Work with your students to work with the school to create a positive and healthy environment by making smart foods available on campus. Discuss ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into school meals, add 100 percent fruit juice to vending machines, and encourage students to have an active lifestyle.

- Make a big deal about this program. Nutrition and fitness skills are as critical as any other skills to the success and well being of the child. Give an award at a ceremony for the child with the most improvement or most effort. Notify parents of the child’s success. Submit a success story to us about an outstanding achiever. Talk to a newspaper about what your class has achieved.


Coming Soon