



For The Teacher

Upper Primary 5 & 6

Week 15

Title: Understanding Food Packaging

Theme: Healthy Eating

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn about the different components of food packaging.
2. Students will be able to understand some of the nutritional information on food packaging to allow them to make healthier choices.

Time Required

50 min

Teacher preparation: Food packaging should be provided by the teacher, so as to make sure that a variety of products with differing components are provided. It is best to provide two packages of the same type of food, one that is clearly a healthier choice than the other. This will enable the students to develop an understanding of how two similar products can differ in their nutritional value. The most suitable packages for this lesson are:

- milk
- bread
- breakfast cereal
- rice or pasta
- confectionary or lollies/chocolate
- yoghurt
- tinned fruit
- snack bars

Throughout the lesson notes, the most appropriate food example will be shown in brackets and italics, and this food should be discussed by the children who have this particular product.

Overview

Many of the foods we buy at the supermarket come in packaging. Packaging helps us to identify brands we like. Bright packaging might be appealing, so we are more likely to buy that product. Packaging also helps to keep food safe from contamination, and also extends the shelf life of the food. The information on food packaging can be confusing. Let's work out what it all means.

Learning Activity 1 – Scan The Packet

Discuss the following information and have students complete their worksheets as they progress through the discussion.



There is a wide range of information on the labels of packaged food that can make it easier for you to make healthier choices about what you eat. A nutrition information panel must be listed on nearly all packaged foods. These panels will list how much energy (kilojoules), protein, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugar and sodium (salt) is in the product.

Ask the students to locate the nutrition information panel on their food packaging (*all packaged foods will contain this*). There might be other nutrients listed on the nutrition information panel, aside from the required nutrients already discussed. Ask the students to identify if their product lists any additional nutrients. For example milk and yoghurt products will list how much calcium they contain (*milk, yoghurt, any other dairy products*). Bread will list how much fibre is in it (*bread, dry biscuits, rice, breakfast cereal; most of these products MAY list fibre*). The students may identify thiamine and folate in bread products, and breakfast cereals. These additional nutrients are not naturally found in these particular foods, however manufacturers will add them to their food to boost the nutritional value of the food (*breakfast cereals are often very heavily fortified with additional vitamins and minerals*). Folate however, is required to be added to bread by law.

The food packaging will also have an ingredients list. Ask students to find the ingredients list. The ingredients are listed in order of weight from the greatest to the smallest that is in the food. The first ingredient is the most abundant by weight, and the last ingredient is in the smallest amount. Generally, foods with only a small number of ingredients are healthier as they haven't been as processed as foods with more ingredients (*compare pasta, milk to confectionary and snack bars*).

Listed as part of the ingredients, there is information on food additives, which are represented by numbers. Lots of numbers and letters in the ingredients section may mean that the food has many additives. These are included to help keep the food longer, add flavour, and colour. It is important to try to avoid as many additives as you can from your everyday foods. Ask students if their food contains any additives (generally represented by numbers), and if so how many additives their food contains.

Finally, don't forget that some of the healthiest foods do not come in packaging and are not labelled – fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts, fresh meat, chicken and fish are all extremely important foods that contribute to good health. These are the types of foods we should include every day in our diets.

Ask the students to comment whether they believe that their food is a healthy choice or not, based on the packaging information?

Not all foods have to be labelled. As a group, discuss some reasons where foods are not required to have a nutrition panel. Here are some examples:

- Fresh food, like fruit and vegetables that are in clear packaging where you can see the produce inside.
- Food made and packaged on the premises from where it is sold, for example at a bakers.
- Food sold in a restaurant.
- Food packaged in the presence of the customer, for example at a delicatessen or a take-away food shop.
- Food delivered packaged at the customer's request, for example home delivered pizza.
- Food sold at a fund raising event for charitable purposes like a school fete.





- Individual serve packages that are sold in a large package such as a 12 pack of corn chips, although the information has to be on the outer package.
- Also, nutrition information panels do not have to be on very small packages that are smaller than about the size of a box of matches.

Learning Activity 2 – Poster Power

In groups, design and prepare an educational poster to advise fellow students what the information on food packaging means. Use the food packaging, nutrition information panels, and pictures from magazines to help tell the story.

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/labellingoffood/>

Support materials and references

For Kids

1Seven article: [Kitchen Clean Out](#)

For Parents & Teachers

1Seven article: [Sneaky Parents, Healthy Kids](#)

1Seven article: [Develop a Taste for Home-grown](#)

Lesson Authors: Emma Rippon and Lee Anton-Hem

Thinking Strategies

Bloom's Taxonomy

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyse	Create	Evaluate
•	•	•	•	•	•

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Verbal/ Linguistic	Bodily/ Kinesthetic	Musical	Logical/ Mathematical	Interpersonal	Visual/Spatial	Intrapersonal	Naturalist
•			•	•	•	•	

Edward De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

White Hat Information	Red Hat Feelings	Black Hat Judgement	Yellow Hat Benefits	Blue Hat Thinking	Green Hat Creativity
•		•	•	•	•