

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Below are activity ideas to promote nutrition and build food literacy skills for secondary school students. Use these ideas to help build your **Healthy Schools Action Plans** or develop your own.

Good nutrition will help students study, sleep, better manage stress and improve their performance when participating in physical activity.

Promoting healthy eating at school is a great way to help you and your friends understand the importance of nutritious foods and may even help them develop food literacy skills that will support them later in life.

The success of any activity depends on a well-developed plan, where everyone works together to agree on goals, roles, and responsibilities. You can use the **Healthy Schools Action Plan** template to help you figure some of these things out. The words in **UPPERCASE** refer to the Foundation(s) for a Healthy School which is being addressed in the activity.

The first step is to agree on nutrition goals, and then choose activities to support them. The activities listed below are examples from high schools in York Region and other areas. Remember to evaluate each activity so you know whether you have met your goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675
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york.ca/nutrition

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white star or spark icon above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a dark blue background with a light blue wave-like shape behind it.

York Region

Activity & Purpose	Description
<p>Healthy Eating “Speaker’s Corner” contest</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To assess student and staff feedback on what the nutrition and healthy eating priorities are in the school.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND/OR • SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP 	<p>Students create a “Speaker’s Corner” booth where students and teachers voice their thoughts and opinions on what healthy eating means to them. The most interesting video will be played on the school’s TVs. Connect with the AV and Arts departments.</p> <p>This can be used to launch a healthy eating campaign and/or to get ideas on how to proceed with a nutrition campaign.</p>
<p>Celebrate Local Food Week (Usually the first week of June, but you can celebrate any time!)</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To educate on local foods and food systems and provide authentic learning experiences.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING • SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS, AND/OR • HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS 	<p>Local Food Week is a province-wide celebration recognizing all the people who grow, eat, process, package, transport and cook food.</p> <p>Additional ideas and events for Local Food Week at the following web sites Foodland Ontario: I Love Local Food and The Ontario Federation of Agriculture.</p> <p>Partner with your Hospitality, Geography or Family Studies department and feature a few local veggies and/or fruit by hosting recipe contests, “Did you Know” quizzes or get people to post selfies with the featured foods.</p> <p>Visit some local farms and farmer markets, check out York Region’s Farm Fresh Guide.</p>

Activity & Purpose	Description
<p>Iron Chef Competition</p> <p>Purpose: To develop food and cooking skills through experiential learning.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CURRICULUM, TEACHING, AND LEARNING AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Organize an Iron Chef Competition using a specific theme (e.g., Smoothies, Easy Lunches, Ethnic Dishes). Choose three or four judges from various backgrounds (e.g., teacher, cafeteria manager, York Region Dietitian). Create judging criteria that includes a point system, such as how closely it aligns with Canada’s Food Guide and/or creativity points, for example.</p> <p>Ensure the recipe entries are nutritious, easy to follow and contain ingredients that are easy to find.</p> <p>Browse these resources for recipe ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookspiration • Canada’s food guide • UnlockFood.ca
<p>Guess the Mystery Food</p> <p>Purpose: To increase knowledge about different kinds of foods and provide an opportunity to expose students to a variety of foods in a fun and non-threatening environment.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Put a mystery food into a paper bag. Have students and staff guess what the food is without looking at it. Provide hints/clues about the food as participants touch, smell, and even taste it. Make sure to highlight nutritional characteristics of the food(s).</p> <p>Ensure the mystery food aligns with Canada’s Food Guide. Some ideas include kiwi, cottage cheese, squash, pomegranate, tofu and oatmeal. Avoid using foods that are common allergens.</p>

Activity & Purpose	Description
<p>Food Tasting Event</p> <p>Purpose: To increase knowledge about different kinds of recipes and provide an opportunity for students to taste them in a fun and non-threatening environment.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Host a Food Tasting event. Use this as an opportunity to highlight some of the nutritious food and beverage choices in the cafeteria, vending machine or made through the Family Studies and/or Hospitality Classes.</p> <p>Make sure to have ingredient lists and nutrition information readily available for participants. Connect with the cafeteria manager to see if they can provide free samples.</p> <p>Browse these resources for recipe ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookspiration • Canada's food guide • UnlockFood.ca
<p>Frequent Buyer Cards</p> <p>Purpose: To increase consumption of vegetables and fruits.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Promote vegetables and fruit intake by issuing Frequent Buyer Cards where each purchase of a vegetable or fruit from the school cafeteria earns the student a stamp. Have a group of students to support this with each purchase and offer the tenth item for free.</p>

Activity & Purpose	Description
<p>Cafeteria Make-Over</p> <p>Purpose: To develop an eating area in the school students' feel pride in, feel comfortable using and is safe.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Give your cafeteria a makeover and a healthy new look. Work with the Art Department and design murals and posters promoting nutrition to display in the cafeteria.</p> <p>Consider adding some life to your cafeteria by adding plants, painting the walls a bright colour and changing the lighting. Speak to your administration about adding circle tables and chairs. Make your cafeteria comfortable and inviting.</p> <p>Take before and after pictures, promote the redesigned cafeteria through your school's PA system, newsletter and website. Consider giving a name to your cafeteria that reflects your healthy eating messages like the Crazy Carrots or Screaming Avocados.</p> <p>Here is an example of a cafeteria in an Ontario school that focuses on healthy eating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screaming Avocado Blogspot <p>Check out the "Fresh it Up" badge from the Bright Bites website for ideas on how to freshen up your school cafeteria.</p>
<p>Social Media Campaign</p> <p>Purpose: To increase awareness about nutrition topics and how to broadly communicate this information to the school community to advocate for change.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>Choose a food or nutrition topic affecting high school students and make it come alive through sharing through various internet platforms.</p>

Activity & Purpose	Description
<p>Nutrition Month Campaign (March)</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To learn about nutrition and develop food literacy skills.</p> <p>Depending on what you choose to implement, the Foundations can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING, • SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR • STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 	<p>March is National Nutrition Month! Each year, Dietitians of Canada choose a theme to celebrate for the month of March and releases supporting materials such as activity ideas, recipes, and a social media toolkit.</p> <p>Develop a Nutrition Month Campaign calendar for the month of March by incorporating activity ideas found within this document, on BrightBites and from Dietitians of Canada.</p> <p>Check out these badges from BrightBites: Fresh it Up Green Thumb Spread the Word</p>

** These programs can be booked through York Region Community & Health Services Health Connection. Contact your school's Public Health Nurse and ask to be connected with School Nutrition staff at 1-800-361-5653 or email healthyschools@york.ca.*