



Try It; You'll Like It!

Exposing students to healthy food options and helping to get these foods into the regular food service.

Exposing students (and adults) to healthy food options is one key way to get everyone to choose those options. By increasing access to foods that are nutritious, taste good and students want to eat, you'll pave the way for more of your classmates to select those foods.

These Action Strategies are designed to help you find ways to give your student body more access to healthy foods and show them how those foods can benefit them now and over the long term.

TASTE TEST DAYS

Organize a series of "taste test" days to have students try different healthy food options. Have your classmates test healthy items already on the menu — and organize "taste tests" of new healthy options that might be added to the menu.

- **Plan a series of "taste tests"** with the help of your principal and school nutrition professionals. You might hold weekly or monthly tests that feature foods students need to consume more of, including low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. *Game On: The Ultimate Wellness Challenge* has detailed resources that can help you plan. The goal of this program is to have students sample — and enjoy — foods that they've never tried before, including foods that are already offered in the school meals program and new choices that can be added to the school lunch menu.
- **Decide on a list of foods** to include in "taste tests." Work with a team of classmates and school nutrition professionals to choose the items. Obtain food samples from local stores by checking out *Tools for Engaging Businesses* for tips on getting donations from local businesses.

- **Advertise the "taste tests"** to your entire student body by putting up posters in high-traffic areas, making PA announcements, using the school Web site and distributing flyers.
- **Provide students with nutrition information** and trivia handouts such as *What Foods Can Do for You* and the *Know Your Fuel Trivia Game* during "taste testing".
- **Ask classroom teachers** to integrate nutrition education lessons on "taste test" days and to encourage participation. Encourage teachers to check out nutrition lessons on *Bridges to Wellness* and *Nutrition Expeditions*. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also offers an *index of nutrition education resources*.
- **Ask students to provide feedback** after the "taste testing." They can fill out "comment cards" or take a printed survey. Work with your principal and school nutrition professionals to have foods students like added to the cafeteria menus if they are not already offered.
- **Remind everyone** that they can track their healthy eating behaviors for the *Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition* while trying new foods!

Everyone Can:

- Help plan "taste tests."
- Share resources with the planning team.
- Obtain food donations from local stores.
- Advertise the "taste tests."
- Share nutrition information with students.
- Encourage the school to add foods that students like to cafeteria menus.
- Remind students to participate in the *Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition*.



SALAD BAR TRYOUTS

- Work with students and the school nutrition manager to design and create a salad bar in your cafeteria. Use student input to ensure you include choices they will eat. Hold “salad bar tryouts” to help select the right foods. If you already have a salad bar, hold tryouts to see what might be more popular than what is already there!
- **Form a team** of classmates, teachers, administrators, parents and school nutrition professionals to create or update a salad bar in your cafeteria. The goal of this program is to provide a salad bar featuring a variety of low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grain choices that students will eat. [How to Develop a Salad Bar for School Lunch Menu Programs](#) can help your team plan the salad bar design.
- **Brainstorm a list of possible foods** to offer from each group (low-fat and fat-free dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains). For instance, you might offer raw vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower, low-fat cubed cheeses, dried fruit such as apricots and raisins, and whole grain croutons and crackers.
- **Plan a “salad bar tryout”** so students can sample the different food options and rate them. You may be able to get the community involved by requesting donations of food samples from local stores. See [Tools for Engaging Businesses](#) for tips on getting local businesses involved.
- **Tally the tryout results** to determine which foods will be the most popular on the salad bar. Serve these foods on the cafeteria’s new salad bar, or update your existing salad bar with the student-selected nutritious choices.
- **Remind everyone** to track their healthy eating choices to earn rewards in the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!](#)

Everyone Can:

- Form a planning team.
- Brainstorm a list of healthy salad bar choices.
- Organize a tryout for students to sample foods.
- Tally the results of a survey of favorite foods.
- Request donations of food samples.
- Remind students to track their healthy eating choices.



BUILD YOUR OWN SHAKE-UP

Add a “Build-Your-Own Shake Up Bar” in your school cafeteria, encouraging students at your school to try new smoothie combinations. Encourage your classmates to drink nutritious low-fat or fat-free dairy and fruit smoothies — and to track their activities for the Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!

- **Work with a team of school nutrition professionals** to determine what equipment you'll need for the smoothie bar, as well as the best choices to offer. Information that might help you plan a smoothie bar can be found at Nutrition Explorations. Ingredients might include low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt, fresh or frozen fruits, 100 percent fruit juices and ice cubes.
- **Advertise the new smoothie bar** by making morning announcements, putting up posters in the cafeteria, distributing flyers, placing an article in the school newsletter and using the school Web site. Provide your classmates with information about how nutritious smoothies are by providing handouts such as What Foods Can Do for You.
- **Consider getting the community involved** by requesting donations of food samples or smoothie-making equipment from local businesses. See Tools for Engaging Businesses for tips and ideas.

- **Ask students** to help suggest — and name — different smoothie recipes.
- **Encourage the smoothies** as a delicious and nutritious dessert alternative and remind everyone to track these and other healthy eating choices in the Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition.

Everyone Can:

- Work with school nutrition professionals to identify needed supplies and ingredients.
- Solicit community donations.
- Advertise the smoothie bar.
- Remind students to track their healthy eating choices.



RECIPE CONTEST

Hold monthly "recipe contests" for new breakfast or lunch items and build students' interest in making healthy eating choices. Have everyone taste test the entries and ask the school nutrition professionals to put the winners on the menu for a week or longer.

- **Organize a monthly recipe contest** among students. Working with your school nutrition professionals and administrators, consider having themed contests, such as dairy foods, fruit recipes, breakfast foods or lunch side dishes. Read [how other schools have done this](#) to help inspire your planning.
 - **Decide on rules for the contest** such as focusing the recipes on foods students need to consume more of, including low-fat or fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. School nutrition professionals can provide additional guidelines to keep recipes healthy and set pricing guidelines.
 - **Provide your classmates with information** about the contest and background nutritional information such as [What Foods Can Do for You](#).
 - **Advertise the contests** by making morning announcements; passing out flyers; placing signs around the school and using the school newspaper; Web site and TV channel (if available).
- **After students submit recipes**, work with your school nutrition manager to prepare the recipes and have students taste test them. After taste testing, have students use a ballot to vote for their favorite recipes. Then tally the results and request that the winning entries be offered in the cafeteria breakfast and/or lunch lines. Advertise the winners by placing posters in the cafeteria with the winners' names and winning recipe!

Everyone Can:

- Help organize the contest and decide on rules.
- Provide nutritional information to students.
- Advertise the contest and results.
- Vote for favorite recipes after taste testing them.
- Work with school nutrition professionals to include and promote winning foods as part of the regular cafeteria service.



SUPER BOWL PARTY

Hold weekly or monthly “Super Bowl parties” with different ready-to-serve nutritious snacks or cereals served in bowls. The ready-to-serve snack bowls can be sold to cover costs, with advertising throughout the week to help increase sales of these tasty treats.

- **Create a menu of ready-to-serve nutritious snack bowls** with the help of your school nutrition manager. Consider a variety of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- **Decide on a convenient location to offer bowls**, such as outside the cafeteria or a lobby area. Decide on how often “Super Bowl parties” will be held. Contact local stores who might be willing to donate snack foods and bowls for your parties. Check out the [Tools for Engaging Businesses](#) and this [donor request letter](#) template to contact stores.
- **Advertise the parties** to students, teachers and staff by making morning announcements, posting signs, distributing flyers and using the school Web site. Provide your classmates with information about why these conveniently packaged snacks are nutrient-rich. You can check out [What Foods Can Do for You](#).

- **Ask students to provide feedback** about which snacks they like the best — and what they’d like to see offered in the future. Work to provide new and interesting choices to keep kids interested in healthy snacking. Remind everyone that they can track their healthy eating choices and earn rewards for the school in the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!](#)

Everyone Can:

- Help create a menu with school nutrition professionals.
- Help decide where to hold the parties.
- Solicit donations from local stores.
- Advertise parties to the school.
- Ask for student feedback.
- Remind students to track their healthy eating behaviors.