



Activity Station : Food Detective

Activity Description

Students will:

- Understand how to assess the credibility of the nutrition information in the media.
- Learn where to find reliable nutrition information.

Key Messages

- Include a variety of healthy foods from [Canada's Food Guide](#) to help you get all the nutrients needed to maintain a healthy body.
- Fad diets and many nutrition supplements can be harmful to growing bodies. Many of these have no evidence that they work.
- Not all nutrition information in the media is accurate. Be consumer savvy!

Materials

- **Student Pre-work:** Before completing the station, ask students to search for a website or ad that provides some nutrition, diet, or food advice. Examples might include weight loss supplements, food or nutrition supplements, or fad diets.
- Food Guide Snapshot (order [here](#))
- Station Title (print x 1)
- Station Instructions (print x 1)
- Worksheet: Food Detective Worksheet (print x 1 per student)
- Handout: [How to find food and nutrition information you can trust](#) (print x 1 per student)

Set-Up

- Ensure students have been given the opportunity to complete the pre-work (see above). Alternatively the teacher can provide examples of ads or websites including weight loss supplements, food or nutrition supplements, or fad diets.
- Place station title, instructions, worksheets, and handouts at station.
- Students can work individually or in small groups to answer the questions on the worksheet provided.

Consider sharing the table below with students to help show the importance of eating a variety of foods.

Some Important Nutrients in the Canada's Food Guide Eat Well Plate				
Key Nutrient	Vegetables and Fruits	Whole Grains	Protein Foods	
			Milk Products	Meat and Plant Protein
Protein			✓	✓
Fat			✓	✓
Carbohydrate	✓	✓	✓	
Fibre	✓	✓		
Thiamin		✓		✓
Riboflavin		✓	✓	✓
Niacin		✓		✓
Folate	✓	✓		
Vitamin B6	✓			✓
Vitamin B12			✓	✓
Vitamin C	✓			
Vitamin A	✓		✓	
Vitamin D			✓	
Calcium			✓	
Iron		✓		✓
Zinc		✓	✓	✓
Magnesium	✓	✓	✓	✓
Potassium	✓	✓	✓	✓

Health Canada, 2007. Table adapted from: [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide A Resource for Educators and Communicators](#).

Supplementary Information and Resources

- [Be Aware of Food Marketing, Canada's Food Guide](#)
- To find credible nutrition information, students could explore these websites:
 - Alberta Health Services
 - Dietitians of Canada
 - Canadian Cancer Society
 - Diabetes Canada
 - Centre for Science in the Public Interest
 - Health Canada
 - Heart and Stroke Foundation

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Instructions:

- Discuss with your group what type of diet, product, or supplement your advertisement is selling or recommending.
- Complete the questions on the worksheet.

Food Detective Worksheet

- 1) What claims does the supplement, product, or diet make?

- 2) Use this checklist to help you spot inaccurate nutrition information.

Question	Yes	No
Do they promise a quick fix or does it sound too good to be true?		
Are they trying to sell you products or supplements?		
Do they promote any unhealthy habits? (examples: skipping meals, restricting food groups, “cleansing” supplements)		
Do they provide information based on personal stories or testimonials rather than on facts?		
Is their promise or claim based on one single study?		
<i>If you answer yes to any of the above questions, the information you have found may not be true.</i>		
Is the information provided by a RD (Registered Dietitian) or PDt (Professional Dietitian) or a government health institution (Health Canada) or professional organization (Dietitians of Canada)?		
<i>If you answer no to the last question, the information may not be true</i>		

- 3) Would you use this product, supplement, or diet? Why or why not?

Remember: If it sounds too good to be true it probably is! There are no quick fixes or magic products when it comes to health. A healthy diet does not have to be complicated and you do not need to buy expensive supplements, health products, or follow restrictive fad diets to be healthy.