

Nutritional Red Light/Green Light

Description:

Students move or freeze depending on whether a healthy or unhealthy dinner food is named.

Objective:

Students will distinguish between "go" (healthy) and "slow" (less healthy) dinner foods.

ACTIVITY

- Ask the students to stand against a wall facing you.
- Review what makes a food a "go" food vs. a "slow" food. ("Go" foods help their bodies go and grow. "Slow" foods are high in added sugar and fat and can slow their bodies down.) Add your own if you would like!
- Remind them that although sugar can make them feel excited at first, it will make them feel very tired after a while. Ask them if they like feeling tired.
- Call out some dinner foods named below, switching between "go" and "slow" foods, and ask the students to identify each.
- Once they have correctly identified some foods, explain that you are going to play "'Go' Food/'Slow' Food" with dinner foods.
- Call out the dinner foods again in a random order. Start the game with a "go" food.
- If the students think a food is a "go" dinner food they should jog (or skip or hop) toward you at the other end of the room. If they think a food is a "slow" dinner food, they should freeze in place.
- If a student moves after a "slow" food is called or freezes when a "go" food is called, they must go back to the start.
- If time permits, review some foods and their "go" or "slow" classifications with the class.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although all foods can fit into a healthy eating plan in moderation, it is important to reinforce that healthier foods give the body more energy to play and grow. "Junk foods," (processed foods high in fat and added sugar), contain a significant amount of calories but add very little nutrition to kids' diets.

It is important to connect kids with their food and get them thinking about food less in terms of "good" and "gross" and more in terms of "healthy" and "less healthy" (or "go" and "slow").

Healthy ("Go") Dinner Foods and Drinks

- asparagus
- avocado
- brown rice
- black beans
- carrot sticks
- corn
- green beans
- mushrooms
- snap peas
- salads
- tofu
- watermelon
- yogurt
- zucchini
- baked potatoes
- steamed broccoli
- steamed cauliflower
- grilled chicken
- grilled turkey
- grilled tuna
- grilled salmon
- low-fat macaroni and cheese
- low-fat milk
- whole-grain (brown) noodles
- low-fat vegetable pizza
- turkey sausage
- corn or whole wheat tortillas
- vegetable burgers

Less Healthy ("Slow") Dinner Foods and Drinks:

- refried beans
- hamburgers
- bacon
- creamy soups
- soft drinks
- cookies
- hot dogs
- fried chicken
- General Tso's chicken
- french fries
- fried fish sticks
- high fat pepperoni pizza
- sweet and sour chicken