



the movement to make healthy easy

## Tips for Involving Students in School Health and Wellness

Student involvement is critical in making changes in the nutrition environment. When students have an opportunity to provide input and take part in promotional events, they are more likely to support healthy changes at school.

Vending changes, healthier foods in the a la carte line and healthier choices at the school store can all be positives for students if they feel as though they've been a part of the process to make the changes. Many schools have engaged student groups such as a student council or national honor's society, invited student representatives to be part of the planning process, and encouraged students to write about these changes in the school newspapers.

Following is a list of tips for involving elementary and middle/high school students in school health and wellness initiatives:

### Elementary School

1. Host menu naming contests – when featuring a new healthy menu item, invite students to help name the item (i.e., Rosie's Rigatoni) to build excitement for the new healthy option
2. Hold grade level or school-wide poster contests promoting healthy food choices – during Apple Crunch celebrations in October or Go for the Greens celebrations in March, invite students to design their own poster featuring an apple or their favorite green veggie (broccoli, green beans, etc.); use the posters to decorate the cafeteria during that month and feature the winning poster design on the back of the school lunch menu
3. Healthy food taste testing – when considering introducing a new healthy option menu item; invite students to sample the food item and ask them to rate their likability of the item on a scale from 1 to 5
4. Morning announcements – select a healthy tip of the day, week or month and incorporate it into regular morning announcements. When applicable, relate the healthy tip to an activity related to nutrition and activity being hosted by the school (i.e., walk to school day, nrgBalance event, field day, etc.)
5. Seek Student Input – Invite groups of students to meet cafeteria personnel on a regular basis to discuss new ideas for the cafeteria, plus evaluate programs and menu selections

## Middle/High School

1. nrg Powered by Choice – engage teens in the campaign to make healthy easy by working with Student Council, National Honors Society, a sports team or other school group/club to create and lead a healthy change in your school. Visit [www.poweredbychoice.org](http://www.poweredbychoice.org) for more details
2. Healthy food taste testing – when considering introducing a new healthy option menu item; invite students to sample the food item and ask them to rate their likability of the item on a scale from 1 to 5
3. Align health and wellness issues with like-minded school groups and clubs:
  - a. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) – invite students to develop and promote healthy snack, lunch and family meal recipes for other students to utilize
  - b. Future Farmers of America (FFA) – invite students to lead Go for the Greens celebrations and hold monthly taste testings of in-season, local produce
  - c. Student Press Association – invite students to write articles on health and wellness initiatives or simply healthy living tips for the school newspaper and/or school newsletter
  - d. Multi-Media – invite students to communicate school health and wellness initiatives through School Web site and create TV commercials to air during home room
  - e. Key Club – invite students to lead nrgBalance events and/or promote the nrgBalance 12345! message in the community (i.e., host an Apple Crunch event at a local nursing home or work with a local Girl Scout Troop to set-up a hydration station during a community event)
  - f. Student Ambassadors – invite students to share school wellness policies, goals and activities by hosting information tables at parent-events such as back to school night, concerts, sporting events, etc.
  - g. Art/Graphic Design – invite students to create a series of advertisements promoting school health and wellness initiatives (i.e., Neshaminy Middle School did their own version of the ‘Got Milk’ campaign featuring students and teachers)
  - h. English/Literature – invite students to assist with writing grant proposals for new PE equipment, a healthy vending machine, etc.
4. Invite students to serve on the School Health Council
5. Seek Student Input – Invite groups of students to meet cafeteria personnel on a regular basis to discuss new ideas for the cafeteria, plus evaluate programs and menu selections

## Additional Resources

### **Journal of the American Dietetic Association**

*Perceptions of adolescents involved in promoting lower-fat foods in schools:*

*Association with levels of involvement, ScienceDirect, Vol 105, Issue 2 February 2005*

[http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B758G-4F9ST3V-S&\\_coverDate=02%2F01%2F2005&\\_alid=322809498&\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=&\\_orig=search&\\_qd=1&\\_cdi=12926&\\_sort=d&\\_view=c&\\_acct=C000014439&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=209810&md5=6c479abcc2b76325c80f54497cf1776b](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B758G-4F9ST3V-S&_coverDate=02%2F01%2F2005&_alid=322809498&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_qd=1&_cdi=12926&_sort=d&_view=c&_acct=C000014439&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=209810&md5=6c479abcc2b76325c80f54497cf1776b)