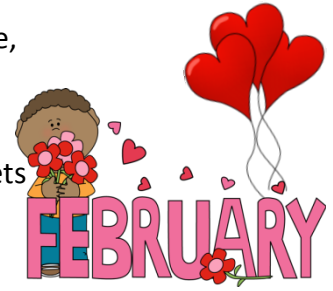


Host a Healthy Valentine's Day Celebration at School

Holiday celebrations and family events are great opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle, provide consistent messages and create excitement around nutritious choices and physical activity at school. Valentine's Day celebrations are usually focused around sweets: Boxes of chocolates, conversation hearts and "fun size" candy bars. On this holiday, switch out sweets and emphasize the importance of healthy foods. Share ways students can eat healthy and stay active.



Eat Better at School on Valentine's Day

Whenever possible, focus on fun rather than food. However, if you plan to incorporate food into your school's Valentine's Day celebration, considering trying one of these yummy and healthy snack ideas:

Fruit & Vegetable Bouquet Use heart and floral-shaped cookie cutters to cut fresh fruits and vegetables such as melon and bell peppers. Fill green skewers with cut fruits and vegetables and arrange into a bouquet. Tie together with red and pink ribbons. Students may enjoy with low-fat yogurt, hummus, salsa, or low-fat ranch!

Heart Sandwiches Have students create healthy sandwiches using whole grain bread and strawberry fruit spread. Use heart-shaped cookie cutters to cut out mini heart sandwiches.

Valentine's Day Taste Test Host a taste test at your party using red fruits and vegetables. Pomegranate, cranberries, apples, blood oranges, raspberries, red peppers and cherry tomatoes are great options. Have students vote on their favorite red fruit and vegetable!

Berry Yogurt Looking for a healthy and simple snack? Have students add fresh or dried strawberries, blackberries or raspberries to low-fat strawberry yogurt.

Nutrition Education and Promotion Tips

- ♥ February is Heart Month! Teach students about nutritious foods that support a healthy heart. Learn about heart healthy foods from the [American Heart Association](#).
- ♥ Incorporate nutrition education into classroom lessons. Find Valentine's Day-themed activities in the [Game On program](#).
- ♥ Plan food tastings that give students the opportunity to try healthy foods. Use [these tips](#) to host a successful taste test at your school.

Extend Eating Better to Home

Importance of Healthy Eating At Home

Eating healthy is important for the growth of children. Children who eat healthy perform better in school. Better eating habits are formed when healthy eating takes place at home.

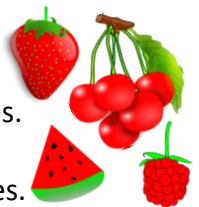
Try these healthy snacks at home:

Cherry Cocktails¹

- ♥ Mix water with 100% cherry juice and freeze to create ice cubes.
- ♥ Add ice cubes and frozen berries to a cup.
- ♥ Pour sparkling water into the cup with frozen fruit and ice cubes.
- ♥ Mix and enjoy! Experiment with other red juices (choose 100% juice)!

Fruit Lollipops

- ♥ Cut watermelons, cantaloupes, apples or pineapples into heart shapes.
- ♥ Place onto popsicle sticks and freeze for a sweet treat!



¹<http://www.superhealthykids.com/cherry-cocktails/>

Move More at School on Valentine's Day

Classroom

Valentine's Day Exercise Cards²

- ♥ Allow students to create Valentine cards with directions of their favorite exercise written on the back. They may draw a picture to match.
- ♥ Have students share their Valentine card with another student and they can have fun performing the exercises.

Cupid Says...

- ♥ Played like Simon Says, have students complete the exercises that Cupid says. If the leader doesn't say "Cupid says" before saying the action, students shouldn't complete the action.
- ♥ For example, Cupid says..."jog in place while touching your nose!"

Gym/Playground

Feel the Beat²

- ♥ Teach students how to measure their heart rates.
- ♥ Have them measure their heart rates at rest and after they complete exercises such as running or jumping jacks.



Valentine Scavenger Hunt

- ♥ Use paper hearts to spell out the letters of Valentine words such as "love", "heart", and "flowers".
- ♥ Hide the paper hearts around the gym or playground.
- ♥ Have students run around to search for the letters and work together to figure out what they spell.

At Home

Heart Healthy Bean Bag Toss

- ♥ As a family, create an exercise game board using a poster board.
- ♥ Paste or draw 5-10 exercise pictures such as jumping, stretching or pushups on the board.
- ♥ Toss a bean bag on the board and complete 10 reps of the exercise on which the bag lands.

²https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Valentine_Celebration_Ideas_368815_7.pdf

Additional Resources

- ♥ Game On is a no-cost online guide that provides all the information and resources you need to host a successful school wellness program. Login today for more healthy & active celebration ideas and more!
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on>
- ♥ Follow Action for Healthy Kids on Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

Action for Healthy Kids® partners with teachers, students, parents, school wellness experts and more to fight childhood obesity, undernourishment and physical inactivity by helping schools become healthier places so kids can live healthier lives. Our programs, tools and resources make it possible for everyone to play their part in ending the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

www.ActionforHealthyKids.org

The websites listed in this document are provided as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas and resources for creating healthier school cultures. Action for Healthy Kids is not responsible for maintaining these external websites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content.