



Taste Testing in the Cafeteria

Successful cafeteria taste tests involve sampling new foods in the cafeteria during lunch, but at a separate tasting table. With some teamwork, and advertising of your efforts, this can build school-wide excitement. A committee of people can share the responsibilities and make taste testing a regular event. As students become familiar with the taste tests, they will become more open to trying new and healthy foods!

Keys to successful taste tests in the cafeteria:

- Start with regular taste tests (monthly is usually not too overwhelming to organize) and focus on simple preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Find parents or community volunteers who can coordinate the classrooms with cafeteria activities. Remember to involve food service staff from the beginning in deciding what food to test, where to get it, and how to prepare and serve it.
- Involve students in any way you can to foster their relationship with food service staff.
- Get teachers to involve some students in preparing the food to be tested. It can be as simple as cutting up cabbage or mixing a vegetable and rice casserole. This gives students a chance to become acquainted with the food and the cafeteria staff, and to spread the word about the new food.
- Have someone announce the taste testing on the day it occurs (make posters, flyers, speaker announcement, etc.)
- Offer the taste tests during regular lunch on a table that looks appealing (a tablecloth shows that something special is happening!).
- The students who prepared the food often can help serve the samples, at least for some of the lunches.
- It is important to survey students who try the new foods so that students feel involved in what could be served in school.

Survey

Hand out the survey after doing the taste testing activity to students to get their input.

- When the taste testing is finished, have someone announce the results of the survey to the whole school, along with plans for featuring the food in the regular menu.