



Network for a Healthy California—Retail Program

Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Guide



Table of Contents

Introduction	1	Handouts	
Portrait of a Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour.	2	Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading	21
Retailer Concerns	3	Use the Nutrition Facts Label to Eat Healthier.	22
Planning Your Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour.	4	Appendices	
Creating Your Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour.	6	Grocery Store Definitions	A
Implementation and Follow-Up	11	Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Planning Checklist	B
Activities		Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Confirmation Letter.	C
Activity One: How Much Do I Need?	12	Media Advisory.	D
Activity Two: Touring the Produce Department	14	Thank You Letter	E
Activity Three: How Do You Cook That?	15		
Activity Four: Frozen, Canned, and Juiced Fruits and Vegetables	16		
Activity Five: Help Mom Shop.	18		
Activity Six: Taste Test	19		
Activity Seven: Receiving Room Tour	20		

Introduction

The *Network for a Healthy California—Retail Program (Retail Program)* implements merchandising and promotional activities for supermarkets, small chains, and independent stores in an effort to influence the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables among low-income Californians.

The *Retail Program* uses a combination of in-store merchandising, such as point-of-sale signage and recipe cards; and promotional activities, such as food demonstrations and store tours to educate consumers about selecting and preparing fresh, canned, frozen, and juiced fruits and vegetables at the point-of-sale.

The *Retail Program* works closely with each *Campaign* and *Program* in the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* to train representatives from community-based organizations, schools, churches, and health care agencies to conduct effective food demonstrations, store tours, and other promotional activities held at local food retailers. As a result, the *Retail Program* has become an invaluable partner for local retailers concerned about the health of the community they serve.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This fruit and vegetable store tour guide is designed to provide partners of the *Network* with the knowledge and resources to effectively conduct a fun, interactive, fruit and vegetable store tour at a local grocery store that empowers consumers to purchase, prepare, and consume more fruits and vegetables. If you are not a *Network*-funded project, this guide will still provide valuable information that you'll need to conduct fruit and vegetable store tours in your community.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Building and maintaining a partnership with a retailer in your community is critical to an effective fruit and vegetable store tour. For help on beginning a retail partnership, please review the partnership building materials available on the *Retail Program* Web site at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail. Once you've formed a partnership with a retailer, this tour guide will provide information on how to plan, promote, prepare, and implement an interactive and effective fruit and vegetable store tour.



Portrait of a Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour

Grocery store fruit and vegetable tours are an excellent way to educate consumers about nutrition and its link to good health. A successful tour should increase fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption.

An effective fruit and vegetable store tour will convey the following information:

- How to select and store a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables
- The health benefits of fruits and vegetables
- How to prepare and serve fruits and vegetables
- Ideas on how to include more fruits and vegetables into a family's meal plan
- Ideas on how to involve family members in preparing and eating more fruits and vegetables

A fruit and vegetable store tour may also include:

- How to select frozen, canned, and juiced varieties of fruits and vegetables.
- A taste test of various produce items seen on the tour.
- A tour of the receiving room where retailers receive and prepare produce for display in the produce department.



The number of participants in a fruit and vegetable store tour depends on the size of the store, how you've formed your tour group (from a local school, a field trip for an adult nutrition class, etc.), and the time of the store tour. Fruit and vegetable store tours vary by the number of staff available, the amount of time the retailer allowed for the event, and the size of your retail partner's produce department. While your fruit and vegetable store tours will vary due to these factors, one thing that should remain the same is your ability to engage, educate, and empower consumers while letting them see, touch, and taste how wonderful fruits and vegetables can be.

Retailer Concerns

While discussing your fruit and vegetable store tours with retail partners, be prepared to address a variety of concerns that they may have. By allowing you to conduct a fruit and vegetable store tour at their store, they are giving you access to their customers/livelihood, and what you do and say during your tour will reflect on them long after you have packed up and gone home. Understanding this responsibility will enable you to become a greater asset to your retail partner. Likewise, they will value your role in providing their customers with a professional, interactive, and beneficial service.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY RETAILERS

How much will fruit and vegetable store tours cost me?

- Reassure your retail partner that you are offering a free service and that your main objective is to increase fruit and vegetable sales at their location.
- This would be a good time to mention or show your retail partner the free Nutrition Education Reinforcement Items (NERI) (like aprons, recipe cards, vegetable brushes, kitchen timers, etc.) that you will give to store tour participants to increase fruit and vegetable sales.
- Ask if the store can donate fruits and vegetables for the participants to taste test during the tour. If the store cannot provide donations, you may buy fruits and vegetables for your group to sample or you may choose not to offer a taste test during the tour.

Tour tip:

- Before you ask for food donations, estimate how much you'll need. Tell your retail partner how many people will attend the fruit and vegetable store tour and how many items you would like to sample. If your retail partner can not donate the food you'll need, ask if you can purchase it at a discount.

Will fruit and vegetable store tours add to my staff's workload?

- Gauge your retailer's interest. If they have a staff member that they would like to have trained to conduct fruit and vegetable store tours, invite the person to attend or lead part of the tour. If they seem to be very busy, be prepared to conduct your fruit and vegetable store tour with minimal involvement from their staff.
- Be very clear with your retailer what their responsibilities will be on the day of the fruit and vegetable store tour (answering participant questions about the store, donating fruit and vegetable product samples, etc.).

My store's produce department is small. Will you have room for your fruit and vegetable store tour?

- Explain to your retail partner that the tour would include the produce department as well as canned, frozen, and juiced fruits and vegetables. If this question comes up while you are meeting with the retailer on site, this would be a good time to walk him/her through the store the way you plan to take your tour group.

Planning Your Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour

To be successful, effective planning is crucial. You will be responsible for securing a date, time, tour group, store tour activities, and confirming the final details of the store tour with your retail contact. To help you stay on track with your planning efforts, you may also use the *Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Planning Checklist* provided in [Appendix B](#).

SECURING A DATE AND TIME

Before selecting a date and time, you will have to arrange your tour group. The total number of people you can take on a tour may vary according to the size of the store. Confirm with the retailer that the size of your group is acceptable at the store location you've selected.

If you are planning a store tour for a group of adults:

- Select a time and date that is convenient for your group of adults. If this group meets regularly as part of a series of nutrition classes, it is best to hold the tour at the same time and day they normally meet. While slow times and days of the week are optimal times for a store tour, you'll need to find a compromise between the times that your adult group is available and when your retail partner will allow a tour.
- When securing a date, avoid major holiday shopping days, such as before Christmas or Thanksgiving, when customers may be in a hurry and your presence may be a burden to retail staff.

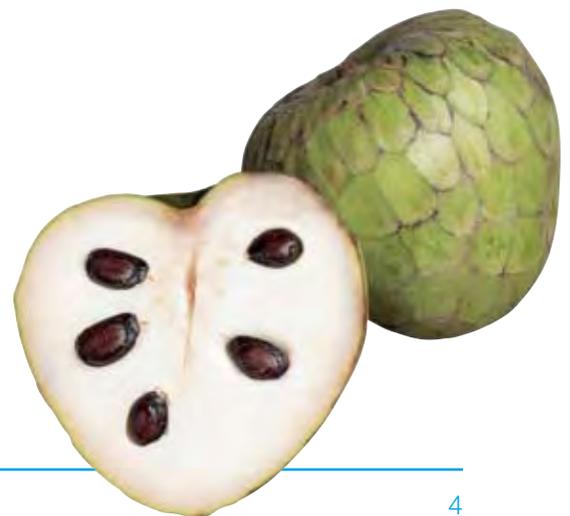
If you are planning a tour for a school group:

- Ideal times for a class tour tend to be from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Monday or Tuesday because these are usually the slowest times and days of the week for a grocery store. Always confirm if these general guidelines hold true for your retail partner.
- Check with the school you are working with to pick a day that does not interfere with other school activities or holidays.

If you are planning a store tour for your retail partner's customers:

- Talk with your retailer about who they are trying to serve (weekend shoppers, evening shoppers, etc.) and which times would be the best to host a tour without obstructing too much foot traffic.
- Arrange fruit and vegetable store tours during the prime dates to reach Food Stamp participating families (i.e., the first week of the month).

Once the dates are confirmed, follow-up in writing. This ensures both you and your retail contact understand what will be provided and when.



CONFIRMING WITH THE RETAILER

It is important to confirm any changes or additions you make with your retail contact, preferably in writing. To help you with this step, a sample *Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Confirmation Letter* is provided in [Appendix C](#) and available on the *Retail Program* Web site at:

www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.

Some things to consider as you approach the activity date include:

- Confirm the name of the produce clerk scheduled to work during the time you will be conducting your tour.
- Confirm the store policy on fruit and vegetable taste tests. If the store's policy is to offer samples, confirm if preparing and serving samples will be the responsibility of the produce clerk or yours, and how much food will be donated for sampling.
- Ensure your contact is fully informed of the fruit and vegetable store tour activity format, including the tour route, tour activities, and any food sampling or receiving room tours.
- Call your retail partner one week in advance as a reminder. It may also be beneficial to call the day before your fruit and vegetable store tour to be sure there have been no last minute changes on the part of the retailer.
- Confirm all communication with the retail contact in writing. Ask if he/she prefers an email or fax that includes the agreed upon details. Request a written confirmation and ask when you can expect to receive it. Provide your fax number and/or email.



Creating Your Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour

A fruit and vegetable store tour is an opportunity to provide participants with hands-on experience that will empower them to choose more fruits and vegetables every time they shop. To create that experience, it is important that you prepare fruit and vegetable store tour activities and materials by completing the following tasks:

- Before your tour, order a set of Produce Quick Tips. To order this item, contact your nearest *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/m. These cards will provide selection, preparation, and nutrition information for a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Visit the store so you know your way around the produce department. Find out where customer bathrooms are located as well as fire exits in case of emergency. Use this time to match your Produce Quick Tips to the produce available at the store.
- Determine which of the following activities will be included in your store tour.
 - Activity One: How Much Do I Need? (Page 12)
 - Activity Two: Touring the Produce Department (Page 14)
 - Activity Three: How Do You Cook That? (Page 15)
 - Activity Four: Frozen, Canned, and Juiced Fruits and Vegetables (Page 16)
 - Activity Five: Help Mom Shop! (Page 18)
 - Activity Six: Taste Test (Page 19)
 - Activity Seven: Receiving Room Tour (Page 20)



When creating your fruit and vegetable store tour, keep the following recommendations in mind:

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATIONS		COMMENTS
	ADULT GROUPS	SCHOOL GROUPS	
Activity One: How Much Do I Need?	X	X	Highly recommended for all groups. When leading school or youth groups, modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate.
Activity Two: Touring the Produce Department	X	X	Highly recommended for all groups. When leading school or youth groups, modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate.
Activity Three: How Do You Cook That?	X	X	Appropriate for both groups. When leading school or youth groups, modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate.
Activity Four: Frozen, Canned, and Juiced Fruits and Vegetables	X		Recommended for adult groups and older youth groups only.
Activity Five : Help Mom Shop!		X	Recommended for elementary school children only.
Activity Six: Taste Test	X	X	Recommended for both groups if your retail partner agrees to donate produce samples or if you are able to purchase the food for your group. With school groups, permission slips that alert you to any possible allergies are necessary.
Activity Seven: Receiving Room Tour	X	X	Recommended for both groups if your retail partner can conduct this portion of the tour.

- Remind your group about the tour – confirm date, time, location of the store, and where the group should meet. Tell participants that they will be on their feet throughout the tour and that they should wear non-slip shoes as floors in produce departments may be slippery. Depending on the number of activities you select and the number of participants, a store tour may last 60 to 90 minutes. We recommend that you limit tours to no more than 20 participants per tour leader.

FOOD SAFETY AND SANITATION

It is necessary to follow food safety and sanitation guidelines when preparing and serving food to the public. If you choose to conduct taste tests, we highly recommend that at least one of your staff receives a food handler certification from Servsafe or your local Department of Environmental Health. Servsafe is a nationally recognized food safety training and certification program administered by the National Restaurant Association. The program trains food service workers how to select, store, and prepare food in a manner that lowers the risk of spreading foodborne illness and communicable disease among the general public.

Servsafe requirements vary from county to county. Up to eight hours of instruction may be required before taking the exam. Examination fees may be free or cost as much as \$40, and the certification may last from two to four years. To find out about your county's certification requirements, contact your County Health Department or check the Servsafe Web site at: www.servsafe.com/FoodSafety/regulations/.

To find training classes and exam dates in your region, visit the California Restaurant Association at: www.calrest.org/edfoundation/foodsafety.asp or check with your local Department of Environmental Health.

The following are several tips to prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses and communicable diseases. This brief review, however, does not replace an actual food handler certification.

Personal Hygiene

- All staff must be free from illness or disease. This prevents passing germs to the public through food handling, sneezing, or coughing.
- Confine hair in a ponytail, hair net, or under a hat when serving food. This prevents stray hairs from making their way into food.
- Wash hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds before preparing and offering recipe samples to participants. Wear gloves if hands will be in contact with food during slicing or serving.

Tour tip:

- Liquid sanitizer is good if you have to clean your hands during the tastings, but thoroughly washing your hands in water is preferred.



Food Preparation

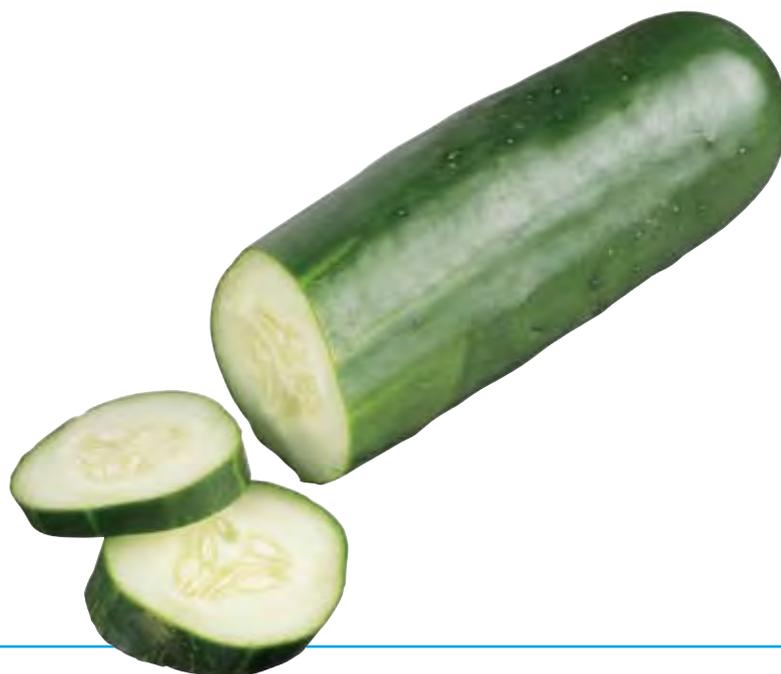
- Thoroughly rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables in water, even if you don't eat the outside of the fruit or vegetable (such as oranges, melons, or potatoes).
- Cut away damaged or bruised parts of the fruits or vegetables.
- Only use pasteurized juices.
- Wash the lids of canned foods before opening. Washing lids keeps dirt from getting into the food. Remember to clean the can opener blade after each use as well.
- Use clean utensils and wash them between cutting different foods. Do not use the same utensils for the preparation of uncooked meat that you use for the preparation of fruits and vegetables.
- Use smooth cutting boards made of hard wood or plastic with no cracks. Always wash and sanitize cutting boards after using them for raw foods and before using them for ready-to-eat foods.
- Machinery should be washed as soon as possible. Tools such as food processors, juicers, and blenders should be taken apart and cleaned soon after they are used.

Serving Safety

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid food spoilage by ensuring temperature consistency.
- Never let someone "double dip" and contaminate clean product with their stick or spoon. It's always better to serve individual servings rather than have one bowl for dipping.
- Do not let participants pick a sample directly or to serve themselves. This will help to reduce contamination.

Taste Testing Area Safety

- Be careful with electricity. If electrical appliances are used, locate the tasting table near an outlet and tape down the cord or cover it with a flat mat.
- Be prepared to wipe up spills so that participants do not slip.



RESOURCES FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION MESSAGES

In case your retail partner carries fruits and vegetables that are not part of the Produce Quick Tips, you may have to do some background research on fruits or vegetables that you would like to highlight. For more information on the benefits of fruits and vegetables and information similar to that found on your Produce Quick Tips, visit:

- The Harvest of the Month Web site for selection and preparation information at: www.harvestofthemonth.com.
- The National Fruit and Vegetable Program Web site for information about their highlighted fruits and vegetables of the month at: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month.
- The National Fruit and Vegetable Program Web site for information about the link between fruits, vegetables, physical activity, and chronic disease at: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/benefits.
- The USDA Mypyramid Web site to find out about the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables for better health at: www.mypyramid.gov.
- The *Retail Program* Web site for preparation tips and nutrient information for a variety of fruits and vegetables at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/retail.
- The Produce for Better Health Foundation Web site for preparation tips at: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

NUTRITION EDUCATION REINFORCEMENT ITEMS (NERI)

Educational materials help reinforce the nutrition information you share with store tour participants and provide them with resources they can use in their daily lives. Depending on your target audience, you can order goodie bags stuffed with materials for Latino, African American, or general audiences through the *Regional Networks* (find your local *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn). These bags contain nutrition education brochures, a fruit and vegetable shopping notepad, and a cookbook. To customize these bags, you can add a NERI item specific to topics discussed during the tour. For example, you could distribute colanders to remind participants to rinse some of the sodium off of canned green beans before preparing them.



Implementation and Follow-up

Once you have your store tour activities planned, note the following implementation and follow-up tips to ensure that your tour runs smoothly and that your retail partner is pleased with the event.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Thirty minutes before your group arrives, locate the store manager and introduce yourself as the organizer of the fruit and vegetable store tour. Confirm the name of the produce clerk on duty.

Tour tip:

- *It shouldn't happen, but it may.* If the store manager says that he/she doesn't know about the tour and refuses to let your group enter, be prepared to provide your signed confirmation and the name and phone number of the contact person who set up the tour for you.

- Walk through the produce department at least once to make sure all your Produce Quick Tips are in order and that there are no obstacles on the route you plan to take your participants.
- Assemble your group outside the store. Provide nametags to help keep the group together.
- Once the group is inside the store, proceed directly to the produce department and begin conducting the activities you prepared in advance (see the [Planning Your Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour](#) section).
- As a last step to your tour, offer a goodie bag to each participant and describe how the items inside can be used at home to help prepare fruits and vegetables.
- When the tour is complete for the day, it is important to ensure that the location is left clean of trash and debris. These extra efforts will be appreciated by the store and further reinforce your value to them in reaching their customers with important fruit and vegetable information.
- Thank the store manager and any staff that may have helped you along the way before leaving the store.

FOLLOW-UP

Upon returning to your office, send a thank you note to all of the retail contacts that worked with you. Include a summary of the success of the tour and a picture of the tour participants. Be sure to mention how much your organization appreciates their support. This is a very important step to help maintain or improve your relationship with your retail partner.



ACTIVITY ONE:

How Much Do I Need?

PURPOSE

Before you start a fruit and vegetable store tour, your participants should know why fruits and vegetables are so important. Activity One will describe the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, and help each participant find out how many cups of fruits and vegetables they need for better health. By accomplishing this, participants will be more interested in the information that will be provided to them during the tour. If you are leading a group of elementary school children, modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate.

MATERIALS

Fruit and Vegetable Slide Guide
(to order this item, contact your nearest
Regional Network office at:
www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).



ACTIVITY

- Ask participants why they think fruits and vegetables are important.
- Explain why the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients found in fruits and vegetables are necessary for better health (refer to the Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables Produce Quick Tip Card).
 - *Vitamins and Minerals* — They are necessary for a healthy life. For example, vitamin A promotes healthy skin and eyesight, and vitamin C helps the body heal wounds and resist infection; calcium is necessary for strong bones, and potassium helps maintain normal blood pressure levels.
 - *Fiber* — Fiber found in fruits and vegetables promotes good digestion and helps lower blood cholesterol and reduces the risk of heart disease.
 - *Phytochemicals* — They are natural substances found in fruits and vegetables that may help prevent diseases such as cancer and promote healthy aging.
- Explain that vitamin pills and supplements cannot replace eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables needed for better health. Fruits and vegetables have hundreds of phytochemicals that work together with naturally occurring vitamins and minerals in a way that cannot be duplicated in supplements. Pills and supplements are also missing the fiber in fruits and vegetables that help you feel full at the end of a meal or snack.

- Explain that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is also healthy because of what they do not have.
 - *Fats* — Most fruits and vegetables have no fat, making them low in calories. The few examples of fruits that have moderate amounts of fat (olives and avocados) have the types of fats that help your body make “good cholesterol,” which lowers your risk of getting heart disease.
 - *Sugars* — Vegetables have little to no sugar making them low in calories. The natural sweetness of fruits makes them excellent choices for snacks and desserts that are packed with vitamins and minerals and lower in calories than foods that have a lot of added sugars.
- Explain to participants that they need to eat a certain amount of fruits and vegetables every day to get the most benefits from them.
- As you pass out a Slide Guide to each participant, explain that the amount of fruits and vegetables they need is based on their age, gender, and physical activity level. Give examples of why this is true:
 - A small child does not need as much food as an adult.
 - A person who exercises a lot needs more food than someone who does not.
- Ask participants to use the Slide Guide to find out how many cups of fruits and vegetables they need every day.
- Ask participants if they think they can eat their recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.
- If any participants voice concern about not being able to eat their recommended amount of fruits and vegetables (cost, availability, preparation time, etc.), use [Activities Two](#), [Three](#), and [Five](#) to address their concerns.



ACTIVITY TWO:

Touring the Produce Department

PURPOSE

Activity Two describes specific selection tips, nutritional benefits, and seasonality of various fruits and vegetables available in your retail partner's produce department. This activity also serves as an ideal time to address concerns some of your participants may have raised about how they can meet their daily fruit and vegetable recommendations. If you are leading a group of elementary school children, modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate.

MATERIALS

Produce Quick Tips (to order this item, contact your nearest *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).

ACTIVITY

- Pick and choose which produce items to discuss during the tour.
- Customize your deck of Produce Quick Tips to match the variety of produce available at your retailer.

Tour tip:

- Organize your Produce Quick Tips so that they are in the order of the fruits and vegetables you will pass on your tour route.
- If your retailer has items that are not part of your Produce Quick Tips, see the [Resources for Nutrition Education Messages](#) section (page 10) for Web sites that provide information on a wide variety fruits and vegetables.

- As you visit each fruit and vegetable, use the information from your Produce Quick Tips to:
 - Describe how to select the item
 - Describe the nutritional benefits of each item
 - Have a brief discussion on how the item can be included in the participants' next meal
 - Explain when the item is in season and how seasonality affects cost and flavor
 - Explain how to store the item so that it lasts longer
- Remember to address participant concerns about eating more fruits and vegetables whenever possible. For example:
 - *Cost* — Produce that is in season and grown locally may cost less than produce that has been shipped from other regions. [Activity Four](#) will point out affordable frozen and canned produce options as well.
 - *Taste* — Proper selection reduces the risk of buying immature produce, which may lack flavor or over-ripe produce, which can take on bitter flavors and a bad texture.
 - *Preparation* — [Activity Three](#) will help participants identify a variety of ways to prepare produce items so that they can find the ones that are best for them.
 - *Waste* — Proper storage helps produce last longer. The storage guidelines on the Produce Quick Tips provide estimates on how long produce items can be stored. This helps shoppers plan when they should use the produce they have purchased to avoid spoilage.

ACTIVITY THREE:

How Do You Cook That?

PURPOSE

A common reason for not meeting the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables is not knowing how to prepare them. Activity Three provides an opportunity for participants to discuss different ways to prepare a variety of fruits and vegetables. The goal of this activity is for participants to learn about simple cooking techniques from their peers since recipes can be intimidating to people who do not cook.

MATERIALS

Produce Quick Tips (to order this item, contact your nearest *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).

ACTIVITY-ADULT GROUPS

- Have each participant walk through the produce department and pick up one item that they would like to buy and try to prepare at home (alternatively, you can ask each participant to pick up an item they have never tried before).
- As each participant presents the item they have chosen, start by providing preparation and serving tips described in the Produce Quick Tips.
- Next, ask other participants for their preparation and serving suggestions based on their past experience with the item.
- How did they add flavor without adding a lot of fat, sugar, or salt?
 - Did they discover any time saving tips?
 - How did they get their kids to eat it?
- Make sure that all the participants return their items to the correct produce bins.

ACTIVITY-ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GROUPS

- Create groups of 4 to 5 children.
- Have each group of children stand in front of a fruit or vegetable in the produce department.
- Give each group 5 minutes to come up with as many different ways as they can to prepare their assigned fruit or vegetable, either for a snack or as part of a meal.
- Before beginning, give the following example:
 - Banana—plain, on cereal, in a yogurt and fruit smoothie, on a sandwich with peanut butter, with a yogurt dip, in banana bread or banana muffins.
- When time is up, ask each group:
 - Which fruit or vegetable did your group have?
 - Is it a fruit or vegetable?
 - How many different ways did you come up with to prepare your fruit/vegetable?
 - Can you name the healthy ways to prepare the fruit or vegetable?
- Discuss some things that the children should think about when they are deciding if something is healthy. Is there a lot of fiber in the item? Does it have a lot of added fat or added sugar?

Tour tip:

- If a participant describes a negative experience with a fruit or vegetable, just ask other participants if they have found a way to overcome the described challenge. If neither you or the other participants can think of a solution, just remind your group that tastes vary, and trying new things will help them discover which fruits and vegetables they like the best.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

Frozen, Canned, and Juiced Fruits and Vegetables

PURPOSE

Common reasons why people do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables are cost, preparation time, and fear of spoilage. Participants may not realize that many of these concerns can be addressed by making frozen, canned, and juiced fruits and vegetables part of their daily eating habits. Unfortunately, many people believe that frozen, canned, and juiced fruits and vegetables are not healthy choices. Activity Four teaches participants about reading nutrition labels on frozen, canned, and juiced fruits and vegetables so that they can make healthy choices.

MATERIALS

Produce Quick Tips (to order this item, contact your nearest *Regional Network* office at: www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/rn).

Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading Handout (page 21)

Nutrition Facts Guide (page 22, optional)

ACTIVITY

- If you are leading a school group or group of adults that meet regularly, provide the *Nutrition Facts Guide* before the day of the tour to prepare them for reading nutrition labels. If this is not an option, you may provide the *Nutrition Facts Guide* handout at the beginning of this activity.

PART I: FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Bring participants to the frozen food section and pass out the *Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading* handout as a resource.
- Explain that the nutritional value of frozen fruits and vegetables is very similar to fresh varieties. Fruits and vegetables are frozen soon after harvest, which helps maintain their nutrients.
- Discuss the difference between plain frozen vegetables and vegetables with sauces or seasonings (added fat and sodium).
- Have participants read labels and compare plain varieties with varieties that have sauce or seasonings.
- Discuss the difference between unsweetened frozen fruit and sweetened frozen fruit (added sugars).
- Have participants read labels and compare unsweetened frozen fruit with sweetened varieties.
- Discuss the benefits of frozen fruits and vegetables (storage, time, simple preparation).
- Discuss different ways that children can help prepare frozen fruits and vegetables.

PART II: CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Bring participants to the canned food section and refer back to the *Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading* handout.
- Explain that the nutritional value of canned fruits and vegetables is not as good as fresh, because of the heat used in the canning process. But they still provide many of the beneficial nutrients found in fresh varieties.
- Discuss the sodium found in canned vegetables and ways to decrease it (selecting “low,” “reduced,” or “no sodium added” varieties and rinsing vegetables before cooking to remove some of the added sodium).
- Discuss the difference between fruit canned in juice and fruit canned in syrup (added sugar).
- Have participants read labels and compare the amount of sugar in juice-packed varieties with varieties that are canned in syrup.
- Discuss the benefits of canned fruits and vegetables (storage, time, simple preparation).
- Discuss different ways that children can help prepare canned fruits and vegetables.

PART III: JUICED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Bring participants to the juice and beverage section and refer back to the *Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading* handout.
- Explain that juiced fruits and vegetables contain the vitamins and minerals found in whole fruits and vegetables, but lack the natural fiber that helps you fill full after a snack or meal.
- Discuss the difference between 100% fruit or vegetable juice and beverages with added sugars.
- Have participants read labels and compare the amount of sugar in 100% juice varieties with other beverages.



ACTIVITY FIVE:

Help Mom Shop!

PURPOSE

Activity Five is an excellent opportunity to help children get more excited about choosing fruits and vegetables by talking about their different characteristics. Modify this activity as needed to make it age appropriate for your school group.

MATERIALS

None

ACTIVITY

- As you call out the following clues, have children *walk* through the produce department and stand in front of the appropriate fruit and vegetable.
 - Stand in front of a fruit or vegetable you have to peel.
 - Remind children to rinse fruits and vegetables before eating them even if they have a peel.
 - Stand in front of a fruit or vegetable that is the same color as your shirt (remember, bananas count as white fruits).
 - Remind children about the importance of eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables.
 - Stand in front of a fuzzy fruit or vegetable.
 - Ask children if they like to eat fuzzy skin or if they peel it off.
 - Stand in front of a fruit or vegetable you would like to bring to school for lunch.
 - Ask children why the fruit or vegetable they picked would make a good choice for lunch.
 - Stand in front of a fruit or vegetable you would like to eat after school for a snack.
 - Ask children why the fruit or vegetable they picked would make a good snack.

- Stand in front of a fruit or vegetable you have never tried.
 - Ask children to share experiences with fruits and vegetables that other children have not tried.

Tour tip:

- Try to keep the conversation positive. If a child mentions not liking a certain food, ask how it was prepared and if they would try it again if it was prepared a different way.
- Bring children together in a single group and ask the following:
 - Do you help your parents cook at home?
 - Can you think of ways that you can help prepare fruits and vegetables at home?
 - Can you think of a food that has two or three different colored fruits or vegetables in it (salad, sandwiches, stir-fry, etc.)?
 - Are there any fruits and vegetables that you are going to ask your parents to buy the next time they go shopping?
 - Are there any fruits and vegetables that you would like to eat for lunch at school?
- If children name fruits and vegetables they saw on the tour, ask them what they can tell their parents about them.



ACTIVITY SIX:

Taste Test

PURPOSE

A taste test is a perfect ending for a fruit and vegetable store tour. Activity Six provides participants with a sample of fresh produce, a comparison tasting of a fresh produce item and its canned or frozen counterpart (see [Activity Four](#)), or an opportunity to showcase a very simple preparation method that you mentioned in [Activity Three](#).

MATERIALS

Fruits and vegetables to sample

Sampling supplies (napkins, plates, forks, toothpicks, etc.)

Cooking supplies (knives, serving utensils, blender, skillet, etc.), optional

ACTIVITY

- Set up as much of your taste test activity as possible before your fruit and vegetable store tour begins.

Tour tip:

- This activity will flow better if you have an additional staff person, or the assistance of retail staff to help prepare the samples while you are giving the tour.

FRESH PRODUCE TASTE TEST

- Prepare samples of a highlighted fresh produce item for participants to sample. This can be an opportunity to introduce participants to an exotic food they have never tried before, or to remind them of old favorites that are in season (grapes, oranges, etc.).
- Discuss the flavor and texture of the sample.
- Is the highlighted food something they would bring home to their family?

- This type of taste test works best with fresh fruits and vegetables that are often eaten with little or no preparation (providing a light yogurt to accompany fruit or a light dressing to accompany vegetables is optional).

COMPARISON TASTE TEST

- Prepare a sample of a fresh produce item and a canned or frozen version of the same item (i.e., fresh pineapple and canned pineapple).
- Discuss the flavor and texture differences between the two samples.
- Discuss preparation methods that can alter certain textures and flavors (i.e., frozen varieties often have a softer texture than fresh varieties because they were lightly cooked before being frozen, but various preparation methods can often minimize this difference).
- Discuss situations where one variety of produce is more convenient than another (i.e., it may be easy to bring a small can of fruit to work, but children can help their parents make a fresh fruit salad for dessert at home).

PREPARATION METHOD TASTE TEST

- Highlight a simple preparation method mentioned during the tour (e.g., sauté a vegetable, blend a fruit with yogurt).
- Discuss the preparation method. Is it simple? Is it fast?
- Prepare samples for your participants, and discuss the flavor and texture of the sample.
- You may also add a comparison element to the taste test by preparing a fresh and a frozen version of the same item and asking participants which sample they prefer.

ACTIVITY SEVEN:

Receiving Room Tour

Ask your retailer if they can provide a tour of the area where they receive and prepare fresh produce for display. The tour should cover the following topics:

- Where the produce is shipped from
- How the retailer knows that the produce is safe to eat
- Safe handling procedures and quality standards

If a receiving room tour is not provided by your retail partner, you might have a produce department representative give your participants a brief explanation on how fresh produce is kept safe and how often it is delivered and rotated to meet their quality standards.



HANDOUT:

Fruit and Vegetable Label Reading

Need a quick snack on the go or a healthy side dish that is easy to prepare? How about a small can of fruit for a treat? Why not heat up some frozen vegetables for a quick addition to your meal? Many people think that frozen or canned fruits and vegetables are not healthy choices, but they can be a great way to reach your recommended amount of fruits and vegetables every day.

FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The nutritional value of frozen fruits and vegetables is very similar to fresh varieties because fruits and vegetables are frozen soon after harvest, which locks in the nutrients. When choosing frozen fruits and vegetables, remember these tips:

- To avoid added fat, choose frozen vegetables without sauce.
- To avoid added sodium, choose frozen vegetables without added seasonings.
- To avoid a lot of added sugar, choose unsweetened varieties of frozen fruit.



Compare the amount of fat in frozen corn to frozen corn in butter sauce.

Compare the amount of sodium in frozen vegetables to vegetables with seasonings.



CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Canned fruits and vegetables may provide many of the beneficial nutrients found in fresh varieties. When choosing canned fruits and vegetables, remember these tips:

- To avoid added sodium, choose "low" or "no added sodium" varieties of canned vegetables. You can also rinse canned vegetables to remove some of the added sodium.
- To avoid added sugar, choose fruit canned in 100% juice.

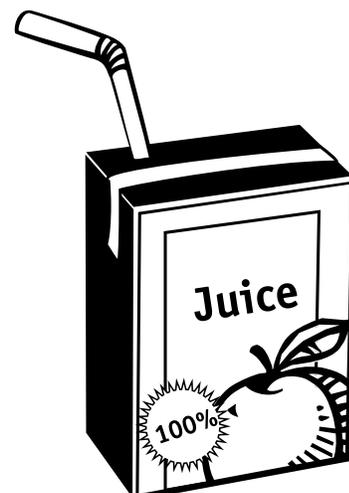
Compare the amount of sugar in fruit canned in juice to fruit canned in heavy syrup.

JUICED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Juiced fruits and vegetables contain the vitamins and minerals found in whole fruits and vegetables, but lack the natural fiber that helps you fill full after a snack or meal. When choosing fruit and vegetable juices, remember these tips:

- To avoid added sugars, choose 100% juice.
- One cup of your recommended amount of fruits and vegetables can come from 100% juice. The rest of your daily amount should come from fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.

Compare the amount of sugar in 100% fruit juice to the amount of sugar in other fruit flavored drinks and punches.



HANDOUT:

Use the Nutrition Facts Label to Eat Healthier

THE % DAILY VALUE (DV) IS A KEY TO A BALANCED DIET.

The % DV is a general guide to help you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient — 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high. The * is a reminder that the % DV is based on a 2,000-calorie diet. You may need more or less, but the % DV is still a helpful gauge.

CHECK THE SERVING SIZE AND NUMBER OF SERVINGS.

- The Nutrition Facts Label information is based on ONE serving, but many packages contain more. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming.
- When you compare calories and nutrients between brands, check to see if the serving size is the same.

CALORIES COUNT, SO PAY ATTENTION TO THE AMOUNT.

- This is where you will find the number of calories per serving and the calories from fat in each serving.
- Fat free does not mean calories-free. Lower fat items may have as many calories as full-fat versions.
- If the label lists that 1 serving equals 3 cookies and 100 calories, and you eat 6 cookies, you have eaten 2 servings, which is twice the number of calories and fat.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Serving Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving Calories from Fat 110
Calories 250 % Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g **18%**

Saturated Fat 3g **15%**

Trans Fat 3g

Cholesterol 30mg **10%**

Sodium 470mg **20%**

Potassium 700mg **20%**

Total Carbohydrate 31g **10%**

Dietary Fiber 0g

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your
calorie needs

	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	30g	37.5g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

CHOOSE LEAN SOURCES OF PROTEIN.

- Most Americans get plenty of protein, but not always from the healthiest sources.
- When choosing a food for its protein content, such as meat, poultry, dry beans, milk and milk products, make choices that are lean, lowfat, or fat free.

KNOW YOUR FATS AND REDUCE SODIUM FOR YOUR HEALTH.

- To help reduce your risk of heart disease, use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol.
- Trans fat does not have a % DV, but consume as little as possible because it can increase your risk of heart disease.
- Limit sodium to help reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

REACH FOR HEALTHY, WHOLESOME CARBOHYDRATES.

- Fiber and sugars are types of carbohydrates. Healthy sources, like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains, can reduce the risk of heart disease and improve digestive functioning.
- Whole grain foods cannot always be identified by a brown color or names, such as multi-grain or wheat. Look for the “whole” grain listed first in the ingredient list below the nutrition label, such as whole wheat, brown rice, or whole oats.
- Limit foods with added sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn or maple syrup), which add calories but not other nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few items in the ingredients list.

LOOK FOR FOODS THAT ARE RICH IN THESE NUTRIENTS.

- Use the label not only to limit fat and sodium, but also to increase nutrients that promote good health and may protect you from disease.
- Some Americans do not get enough vitamins A and C, potassium, calcium, and iron, so choose the brand with the higher % DV for these nutrients.

Adapted from the *Eating Healthier and Feeling Better Using the Nutrition Facts Label* brochure provided by the United States Department of Agriculture at: www.cfsan.fda.gov/~acrobat/nutfacts.pdf.

Grocery Store Definitions

STORE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FOOD DEMONSTRATION CONCERNS
Supermarket Chain	A series of 11 or more stores offering a wide variety of groceries, meat, and produce.	In order to conduct store tours in supermarket chains, a partnership may need to be established with the corporate offices before you can work with the local retailer. Large supermarkets are likely to offer a receiving room tour.
Independent Markets	A small “neighborhood” or “mom and pop” grocery store offering limited staple foods and other convenience goods. An independent retailer can own up to 10 stores before it is considered a chain.	Take into consideration the size of the market. If the market’s produce department is not very large, have the tour include a canned and frozen produce label reading activity.
Convenience Stores	A small grocery store that customers normally use to make small purchases in between trips to the market.	Convenience stores are usually too small to host a fruit and vegetable store tour.
Wholesale or Warehouse Stores	A “no frills” supermarket offering reduced variety, lower service levels, minimal decor, and a streamlined presentation with aggressive low pricing.	In order to conduct store tours in warehouse stores, a partnership may need to be established with the corporate offices. Warehouse stores are likely to offer a receiving room tour.

Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Planning Checklist

SECTIONS AND STEPS	Target Completion Date	Check When Complete
Store Tour Planning		
Secure a tour group	_/_/_	
Secure a date and time at a qualifying retail location	_/_/_	
Confirm verbal details in writing using the Confirmation Letter (Appendix C)	_/_/_	
Confirm food donations from the retailer for taste tests (if applicable)	_/_/_	
Follow-up to confirm receipt of the confirmation letter and taste test donation list (if applicable). Follow-up regularly until the confirmation is returned	_/_/_	
One week before the tour, remind the retailer of the upcoming date, time, and a description of the store tour	_/_/_	
Store Tour Activity Preparation		
Complete appropriate promotional activities announcing the upcoming store tour	_/_/_	
Identify and order Produce Quick Tips, NERI, and goodie bags	_/_/_	
Prepare store tour activities and nutrition education information	_/_/_	
Store Tour Implementation & Follow-up		
Meet retail contact at least 30 minutes before the start time and set up taste testing area (if applicable)	_/_/_	
Leave the tour route cleaner than the way you found it	_/_/_	
If applicable, ensure that the taste test area is left as clean or cleaner than when you found it	_/_/_	
Send a Thank You Letter to the retailer	_/_/_	

Fruit and Vegetable Store Tour Confirmation Letter

DATE

(Name)

(Title)

(Store Name)

(Store Address)

(City), (State) (ZIP)

Dear (Name),

The following is confirmation of your participation in the (Project Name) fruit and vegetable store tour on (Date) from (Start Time – Finish Time).

1. Our staff will be arriving at (Time) to set up for the fruit and vegetable store tour.
2. Our staff will highlight your selection of fruits and vegetables by touring your produce department (if applicable, list other aisles of the store that will be visible during the tour such as canned, frozen, or juiced fruit and vegetable aisles).
3. As agreed, the food for the taste tests at the conclusion of the tour will be provided free-of-charge. A list of the requested food donations and quantities will be provided to you by (Date).

or

As agreed, the food for the taste tests at the conclusion of the tour will be purchased (at cost, with a 30% discount, etc.) by (Project Name) staff on (Date).

If this information is correct, please sign below and return to (Name) at (Fax Number) by (Date). This will be important in ensuring accuracy and success for the upcoming activities. If you have any questions, call me directly at (Phone Number). Thank you for supporting the health of our community.

First Name

Last Name

Signature

Media Advisory

A Healthy Life Starts with Your Shopping Cart: Network for a Healthy California Offers Healthy Food Tastings in the (Region) Area

- WHAT: The (Project Name), in an effort to encourage community members to select and prepare more fruits and vegetables, will host a fruit and vegetable store tour on (Date).
- WHEN: (Day, Date). *For example: Saturday, July 13*
- WHERE: (Store Name) located at (Store Address).
- NOTES: According to the *Network for a Healthy California*, only one in four Americans eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables daily. Eating fruits and vegetables and getting physical activity every day may help to reduce the risk of serious problems like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer.
- CONTACT: (Contact Name)
(Program Name)
(Area Code and Phone Number)

For more information about the *Network for a Healthy California*, please visit www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net or call 1-888-328-3483.

Thank You Letter

DATE

(Name)

(Title)

(Store Name)

(Store Address)

(City), (State) (ZIP)

Dear (Name):

On behalf of the (Project Name), I would like to personally thank you for hosting a *Network for a Healthy California* fruit and vegetable store tour. I truly appreciate the time and effort you have taken to provide the space, support, and food donations (if applicable) that allowed us the opportunity to share helpful tips that benefit the health and well being of the community you serve. Thanks to your participation, the (Project Name) was able to directly reach (Number) of your customers with important nutrition information and we look forward to continuing this success in the future.

We thank you for your generosity and look forward to building a strong partnership for a long time to come.

Cordially,

(Your Contact Name)

(Program Name)



Please visit us at
www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net
or call 916-449-5400.

California Department of Public Health
Public Health Institute

Principal funding is from the USDA Food Stamp Program through the *Network for a Healthy California*, which is an initiative of the California Department of Public Health. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers.

The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with limited incomes that can help them buy nutritious foods for a better diet. For information, call 1-888-328-3483.