

# Taste Test

## Purpose

Youth will be exposed to new foods.  
Youth will participate in snack selection.

## Materials

Water  
Small drinking cups  
Napkins  
Small plates or cups

## Ahead of Time

Prepare bite size food samples using small cups or plates.

## What to Do:

1. Have participants wash their hands thoroughly before the activity begins. Distribute napkins and cups of water. Explain that when participating in a taste testing, one needs to drink water in between tasting foods. The water “cleanses” the palate so that you get the full flavors of the food.
2. Review the *Taste Test* Sheet. Explain the rating scale and criteria. For the % Daily Value, choose a nutrient to compare (e.g., for dairy foods compare % Daily Value of calcium, for breads and grains look at % Daily Value of fiber). Emphasize that samples should be chewed slowly and between each sample, they should take a sip of water.
3. Distribute the food samples. For each sample ask: What is this food sample made from? Have you ever tasted it before? Is it sweet? Salty? Bitter? Ask participants to describe the food’s smell, flavor, and texture and complete the *Taste Test* Sheet. Repeat the process for each type of food sampled.

## Taste Test Ideas:

Low-fat frozen desserts  
Fruits  
Crunchy vegetables (carrots, jicama, celery)  
Soft snacks (rice pudding, tapioca, flan)  
Smoothies with 1% milk (try different fruits)  
Healthy cookies (oatmeal, graham crackers, fig bars, ginger snaps)  
Bean dips: hummus, black bean, non-fat vegetarian “refried” beans with salsa  
Fat-free salad dressings

## Tips

This activity can be incorporated as the snack of the day

Taste tests work better when foods of the same type are used. For example: instead of tasting regular chocolate ice cream against fat-free chocolate ice milk, taste 2 or 3 different chocolate, fat-free frozen desserts together to see which youth prefer. Never taste test a “junk food” with a “healthier version.”

### **Sample Activity: Grain-Tasting Test**

A grain is a single seed of a cereal grass. Some of the cereal grains grown in the United States are wheat, corn, rye, rice, barley, and oats. Wheat is the most common cereal grain used for the production of foods. Grain-based foods provide complex carbohydrates that are an important source of energy and dietary fiber. They also provide other nutrients such as B vitamins and iron.

### **General Discussion Questions:**

Do you know what grains are?

What foods are made from grains?

What are your favorite foods made from grains?

### **Grain Ideas**

Compare multi-grain breads (read the label to assure that bread contains grains as first 4 ingredients and includes at least 3 different grains).

Compare crackers: matzo (a flat, cracker-like bread), rice crackers, rice cake, rye crackers (e.g., Rye Krisp), wheat (e.g., Triscuit) crackers, Pappadam (Indian bread made from lentil flour), graham crackers.

Compare different types of “ethnic breads:” corn tortillas, rye bread, pumpernickel bread, chapatis (a flat bread eaten in India and in East Africa), pita bread (a flat bread also known as “pocket bread”), lavosh (a paper-thin Russian bread used for wrapping food), corn bread (a bread made from cornmeal).

Compare different “healthy” (no added sugar and at least 2.5 grams of fiber) whole grain cereals.

# grains

Grain products belong in the Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta Group of the Food Guide Pyramid. The following are examples of grain-based foods categorized by their main ingredient.

## Wheat

white bread  
wheat bread  
noodles  
spaghetti  
biscuit  
fry bread  
flour tortilla  
wonton wrapper  
cracker  
waffle  
graham cracker  
scone  
pita bread  
matzo  
pancake  
crepe  
wheat flakes  
popover  
couscous  
tabbouleh  
cream-of-wheat cereal

## Rice

wild rice  
white rice  
basmati rice  
texmati rice  
jasmine rice  
brown rice  
Spanish rice  
risotto  
sticky rice  
rice noodles  
rice cake  
rice pudding  
rice balls  
popped wild rice  
cream-of-rice cereal  
ready-to-eat rice  
cereal  
rice paper wrappers  
rice crackers

## Corn

corn bread  
corn tortilla  
popcorn  
hominy  
grits  
corn flakes  
cornmeal mush  
pupusas  
sopas  
polenta

## Oats

oatmeal  
oatmeal cookie  
oatmeal muffin  
ready-to-eat-cereal  
granola  
muesli  
oat topping

## Rye

rye bread  
rye flatbread  
pumpnickel bread  
rye crackers  
rye cereal

Miscellaneous: (Used as “breads” or cereals but actually made from beans.)

papadams  
(Indian bread made from lentil flour.)

bean thread noodles (Clear or “cellophane” noodles made from beans.)

**Recommended daily servings from the Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta Group: 6-11 servings (i.e., 1 slice bread, 1 oz of dry cereal, 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, 1/2 cup of rice).**

# TASTE TEST SHEET

**RATING SCALE:**

- 1= Excellent
- 2= Good
- 3= Neutral
- 4= Fair
- 5= Poor

**NAME:**

**DATE:**

| <b>FOOD ITEM</b>      | <b>A:</b> | <b>B:</b> | <b>C:</b> | <b>D:</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>TASTE</b>          | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>TEXTURE</b>        | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>APPEARANCE</b>     | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>COLOR</b>          | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b> | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |

**COMMENTS:**