

Name _____

Fruit and Veggie Power: Why Kids Should Eat More of Them

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The persuasive piece mentions that fruits and vegetables are like superheroes of the food world because they contain essential nutrients like vitamins (such as vitamin C and vitamin A), minerals (like potassium and magnesium), and antioxidants (such as flavonoids and carotenoids). These nutrients benefit kids by strengthening their immune systems, supporting healthy growth, and protecting their bodies from harmful molecules called free radicals. For example, vitamin C in fruits like oranges and strawberries helps boost the immune system, while antioxidants in vegetables like carrots and spinach protect cells from damage. These superhero nutrients contribute to kids' overall well-being by keeping them healthy and strong.
2. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables can improve a child's overall health and well-being in several ways. Firstly, these foods provide a wide range of essential vitamins and minerals that are necessary for growth and development. For instance, the vitamin C in citrus fruits helps heal wounds and fight infections, while calcium in leafy greens and dairy products supports strong bones. Additionally, the colorful pigments in fruits and vegetables, such as the red in tomatoes and the purple in blueberries, often signify the presence of powerful antioxidants. These antioxidants help protect the body's cells from damage caused by harmful molecules known as free radicals. By consuming a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, kids can ensure they get the full spectrum of nutrients and antioxidants they need for optimal health. Overall, this dietary variety contributes to better physical and mental health, stronger immunity, and improved energy levels.
3. Fruits and vegetables provide a steady supply of energy because they contain a combination of natural sugars and dietary fiber. Natural sugars found in fruits, such as fructose, and in some vegetables provide a quick source of energy. However, unlike the rapid energy spike and subsequent crash associated with processed sugars, these natural sugars are accompanied by dietary fiber. Fiber helps slow down the absorption of sugars in the bloodstream, leading to a more gradual and sustained release of energy. This steady supply of energy helps kids maintain focus, stay alert, and avoid the ups and downs associated with sugary snacks or drinks. Additionally, the vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables play a role in converting the energy from food into a form the body can use, further contributing to sustained energy levels throughout the day.
4. It's mentioned that certain fruits and vegetables are beneficial for strong bones. The specific nutrients highlighted are calcium and vitamin D. Calcium is essential for building and maintaining strong bones, and it's found in foods like dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese), leafy greens (kale, broccoli), and fortified foods (such as fortified orange juice). Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium efficiently, and it can be obtained from sunlight and certain foods like fatty fish (salmon, mackerel), egg yolks, and fortified cereals. When kids consume foods rich in both calcium and vitamin D, they support the development of strong and healthy bones, which is crucial for activities like running, jumping, and playing.

