



## Market Basket of the Month Fact Sheet

### Goal & Objectives

The goal of **Market Basket of the Month** is to bring together the school cafeteria, classroom, home and community through a strategic effort to promote healthy habits for students.

Objectives include increasing student:

- Knowledge of, familiarity with and preference for a variety of fruits and vegetables; and
- Participation in daily physical activity.

### Program Overview

**Market Basket of the Month** features a different fruit or vegetable each month. Participating schools will include the selected produce on the school cafeteria menu; and use program resources to give students hands-on opportunities to explore, taste and learn about the importance of eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and being active every day.

The Community Health Improvement department of WellSpan Health will provide schools with FREE resources, including a coordinator tool kit, educator tool kits and a variety of promotional resources. Program strategies are based on the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and designed to promote behavior change by engaging students in the learning process, building their skills in accessing information, analyzing influences, decision-making, self-management and advocacy.

### Program Components

#### Coordinator Kit

The coordinator kit provides school districts with suggestions and tools to implement **Market Basket of the Month**. The kit includes a CD with a wide variety of “turn-key” items in a format that can be easily modified by individual coordinators. Resources include morning announcements, trivia questions, memos to teachers/PTA volunteers and letters to local businesses. Kits also include program specific posters promoting the featured fruits and vegetables.

#### Educator Resource CD

The educator CD contains a variety of teaching resources, such as mini-posters of featured produce, bulletin board materials, pictures of fruits and vegetables, botanical diagrams, student activity sheets and monthly educator newsletters. Newsletters are scientifically accurate and provide hands-on activities and ideas for open-ended study by students in grades K-12, including taste testing and classroom cooking. The newsletters also provide sample physical activities to help energize students and support developmental skills such as listening, reflexes and hand-eye coordination.

#### Family Newsletters

The full-color monthly newsletter reinforces what kids learn at school and provides parents with ideas for being physically active, nutrition information, healthy eating tips, recipes, and tips for selecting and storing the featured produce.

### Why Market Basket of the Month?

Healthy eating and daily physical activity have a profound impact on body and mind, including:

- Increased concentration
- Improved math, reading, and writing test scores
- Reduced disruptive behaviors
- Reduced susceptibility to stress
- Fewer absences due to illness
- Increased energy
- Healthy body weight
- Reduced risk of chronic disease

Numerous large-scale initiatives designed to promote healthy habits among children have clearly demonstrated that coordinated messages between the cafeteria, classroom, physical education and home are critical to positively impacting student knowledge and behavior.

## A Coordinated Approach

**Market Basket of the Month** includes a strategic, coordinated approach with standard resources and allows for maximum flexibility of implementation by individual schools.

### Food Service Staff

Food service directors coordinate implementation of **Market Basket of the Month** within school districts - communicating program reminders and updates on a monthly basis, and including the featured fruit or vegetable on the school menu. Additional promotional activities may include:

- Cafeteria-based activities such as displays or taste testing opportunities for students; and
- School-wide activities such as morning announcements and distribution of the family newsletter.

### Educators

Participating schools will receive a CD that should be loaded onto the school's internal website to assure all staff has access to program resources. Health/physical education teachers, food & consumer science teachers, and elementary level classroom teachers and school nurses also receive a hard copy of the first month's newsletter and a guide for use of the newsletters. Level of participation in **Market Basket of the Month** is at the discretion of school staff. At a minimum, teachers are encouraged to:

- Remind students to try tasting featured fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and at home; and
- Encourage students to be physically active for at least 60 minutes daily.

Teachers can have an even greater impact on the outcome of this initiative by utilizing activities from the educator's newsletter to:

- Integrate information about featured produce with core curriculum;
- Conduct classroom taste testing and/or cooking activities; and
- Engage elementary students in brief classroom "energizers."

### Parents/Community

Parent/guardians are encouraged to participate in **Market Basket of the Month** by reviewing the family newsletter with their child; purchasing and serving the featured produce at home, and; encouraging their child to accumulate 60 minutes of daily activity. PTA/PTO groups and local businesses can support **Market Basket of the Month** by donating produce and/or assistance for classroom or cafeteria activities.

### School Clubs/Organizations

Students in high school clubs and organizations have the opportunity to participate in the implementation of **Market Basket of the Month** through a variety of activities such as morning announcements, articles/recipes in school newspapers and taste testing events.



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