

# Junior Lesson Plan 2

## Keeping Active

### Objective

To develop pupils' awareness of the importance of physical activity to their health.  
Duration: **30 minutes** (approximately).

### Curricular Links



SPHE:

Myself ⇨ Taking care of my body ⇨ Food and nutrition / Health and well-being

### Words of the Day

**Dairy** – Milk and products made from milk, such as cheese and yogurt.

**Bones** – Hard tissue in our body which makes up the human skeleton.

**Weight Bearing Exercise** – Any exercise which puts the full weight of our body on our feet and legs, for example, running, skipping and most team sports.

**Calcium** – A mineral (a type of nutrient) which is important for our growth. It helps our muscles and bones to develop and is important for our teeth. Milk, yogurt and cheese are sources of calcium.



# Group Discussion

Begin by asking pupils in groups to recall from Lesson 1 (Dairy in my Diet) how dairy contributes to maintaining a healthy diet. Ask groups to share with the class. Inform pupils that physical activity is also important to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Then ask pupils in groups to think and talk about ways in which keeping active is important for our bodies.

## Prompts for discussion:

- An active lifestyle\* is important for healthy bones and muscles.
- Keeping active is important for maintaining a healthy body weight.
- 'Weight-bearing' exercises are important for keeping bones healthy.

*\*Inform pupils that it is recommended that children and young people (aged 2–18 years) should be active for at least 60 minutes every day (at a moderate to vigorous level) and should include muscle-strengthening, flexibility and bone-strengthening exercises three times per week.*

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/physical-activity-guidelines/>

# Class Discussion

Now ask pupils to think about ways in which we can look after our bones. Discuss the following points:

- Our bones grow and get stronger during childhood, so it is important to look after them. We can help build strong and healthy bones by eating the right foods and by being active.
- Calcium is important for the growth of our bones. Milk, yogurt and cheese are great sources of calcium. However, over one third of Irish children are not getting enough calcium in their diets.
- The 'milk, yogurt and cheese' food group can be easily enjoyed as part of a healthy diet. Three servings daily are recommended for children aged 5–8 years. Those aged 9–18 years are recommended to have five servings each day.
- A serving includes a 200ml glass of milk, a 125g pot of yogurt, or a 25g piece of cheese, e.g. Cheddar cheese.
- Vitamin D is also very important for bone health.



# Pair Activity

Explain that weight-bearing exercises are any exercises which put all your weight on your feet and legs, for example, running, dancing, skipping and football. Ask your pupils in pairs to discuss and write / draw:

- 1 A list of more weight-bearing activities.
- 2 A list of ways in which they can enjoy being active, for example:  
I can...
  - Walk / cycle to school (or part of the way).
  - Play games outside with friends.
  - Create new outdoor games with my friends.
  - Take part in after-school activities.
  - Agree a time limit for 'screen time' (TV, computer, phone, tablet etc.) with Mum / Dad / adult at home.
  - Check my school is signed up for the Active School Flag - [www.activeschoolflag.ie](http://www.activeschoolflag.ie)

**Discuss!** Remind your pupils that most of their time in school is spent sitting at a desk, so it's important to get up and stretch their muscles when they can!

*Encourage pupils to make the connection between food and energy needs. Explain that they need to eat to help them to be active during the day.*



# Group Activity

In small groups, ask pupils to design a game based around weight-bearing exercises which are good for their bone health (running, skipping, jumping, ball-games).

For example – design their own hopscotch, invent a new skipping game, create a game which combines jumping and throwing etc.

## Extension Activities

- 1 Ask groups to teach the new game that they have created to their classmates.
- 2 Hold a class sports day using the pupils' own games as part of the activities.
- 3 Do a History project about traditional schoolyard weight-bearing games and display in the school.

## Bring it Home

Encourage your pupils to take home the message of the importance of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. As a homework activity, you can ask your pupils to:

- 1 Organise a family walk.
- 2 Walk their own dog or a neighbour's dog (with an adult).
- 3 Play a team sport with their family.
- 4 Keep a physical activity diary, recording the activities that they and their family do each week.

