



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume VI: Evolutionary Medicine

Nutritional Adaptations and Nutritional Choices

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.06.05, published September 2010

by Laura Kessinger

Students will be introduced to the effects of nutritional choices on their personal health. We will look at the evolution of human food habits, preservation and their effect on human health.

This unit is meant to immediately follow a basic curriculum unit on evolution that covers the basics of inherited traits, mutation, variation, and basic evolutionary biology.

Students will begin on a journey of human evolution. Looking to the past to describe and sketch the physical and mental changes that occurred from *Ardipithecus ramidus* to modern human. Students will utilize their imaginations and provided fossil evidence to track the changes and notate what makes humans unique. After which students will embrace the dietary habitual changes that happened when some men made steps from a hunter gatherer society to an agricultural based society. Students will begin by tracking their own eating habits and analyzing their chances of being impacted by a nutritionally reliant disease. Students will utilize case studies to determine gene transmission of specific dominant and recessive disease mutations as well as personal and environmental choices that led to diseases. They will create their own preservation laboratory and study the effects of additives, drying, and canning on foods.

(Developed for Science, grade 7; recommended for Science, middle school grades)

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