



Tomatoes

Teacher Guide: 3rd - 5th Grade




Tomatoes


They are technically a fruit, but we call them a vegetable because they are not sweet.



They have a lot of lycopene, which is a natural plant chemical makes tomatoes red. Lycopene can also help prevent heart disease and cancer.




Chop them up with onions and peppers and put them in a salsa!



How to use this guide:

This guide breaks down the three sections on the slide and gives you background information and a "script" to prompt discussion with your students.

They are technically a fruit, but we call them a vegetable because they are not sweet.



Who has ever argued with anyone about whether a tomato is a fruit or a vegetable? What is the difference between a fruit and a vegetable? (Technically, a fruit is the part of a plant that has seeds and comes from a flower. Vegetables are the other parts of plants, like roots, leaves, or stems.) If a tomato comes from a flower, does that make it a fruit or a vegetable? They do come from a small yellow flower, so technically tomatoes are a fruit. However, when we talk about food and nutrition, we call tomatoes a vegetable because they are not sweet.



They have a lot of lycopene, which is a natural plant chemical makes tomatoes red. Lycopene can also help prevent heart disease and cancer.

Who can tell me what vitamins are? (Vitamins are things that our body needs to grow, but we can't make them on our own, so we get them from our food.) Tomatoes have a natural plant chemical that is kind of like a vitamin but it isn't. It is called lycopene (lie-co-peen). Lycopene is what makes tomatoes red, and when we eat tomatoes, lycopene can help prevent heart disease and cancer in our bodies.

Chop them up with onions and peppers and put them in a salsa!



You can chop of tomatoes and mix them up with onions and peppers to make a salsa! What are some other ways we can eat tomatoes? (Examples: tomato sauce, diced on tacos, sliced on a sandwich, etc. Encourage the children to be creative.)

References:

Bjarnadottir, A. Tomatoes 101: nutrition facts and health benefits. Healthline website. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/tomatoes>. 2019. Accessed April 5, 2019.
Link, R. What's the difference between fruits and vegetables? Healthline website. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/fruits-vs-vegetables>. 2017. Accessed April 3, 2019.