

Food and Nutrition



It is important now, more than ever, that adolescents understand that everything they put into their bodies impacts their well-being, for good or for ill. While teenagers have more choice over what they eat than they have ever had, they are also exposed to intense social and commercial influences that can undermine their health. A wide range of problems—including sugar addiction, anorexia, orthorexia, bulimia, and obsessions over weight and body image—affect teenagers at disproportionate rates. The heightened sensitivity that people between the ages of 14 and 21 have to societal messages and feedback makes this an especially important time to build a healthy relationship to food and nutrition.

At Nova High, students will be nourished on a regular basis so they have the opportunity to experience in their bodies what healthy eating routines feel like. This may include a daily breakfast and lunch option. Students will learn to cook, and will develop practical skills and self-sufficiency for keeping themselves nourished as they enter adulthood. Through studying the science of food and cooking, students will learn about macronutrients (fats, proteins, and carbohydrates) and how to balance these from meal to meal, and the sources of micronutrients that human bodies need to thrive. In addition, students will learn the art, science, and cultural aspects of fermentation, which not only preserves foods but promotes good digestion and supports a healthy gut microbiome.

Nova High students will also learn about the cultural roots of foods and cooking traditions. They will learn how indigenous people around the world nourished themselves from vastly different landscapes—from the arctic circle to the African savannah. They will learn where common foodstuffs were originally bred and cultivated and how they were traditionally processed. They will understand the basic tenets of sustainable agriculture and their environmental implications. They will learn to read scientific studies related to food and nutrition, and be empowered to analyze messages around food to build self-confidence. By the time students leave Nova High they will have learned to trust themselves to make healthy decisions, and to feed themselves well for the rest of their lives.

The study of food and cooking incorporates math, science, history, culture, artistry, ethics, economics, politics, and more, as well as the development of the senses and social and emotional skills. Nova High's food and nutrition program will support and help integrate all aspects of our students' learning, while nourishing our students minds, hearts and bodies at the same time.

