

Educator Guide: Nourishing Body and Mind

NationalDayClassroom.com

Week of Focus: Week Two of June

Target Community: Grades K–8

Theme: Wellness, Collaboration, and Everyday Science

Introduction for Educators

Welcome to week two of June! This week's selected National Days provide a brilliant opportunity to pivot toward **personal wellness, agricultural science, and social bonds**. While these five days seem entirely random at first glance, they weave together into a beautiful narrative about taking care of our bodies, exploring our senses, and appreciating the people who keep us healthy and happy.

By connecting medical self-care, culinary botany, and collaborative teamwork, this unit teaches students that health and happiness are built from everyday choices, shared meals, and strong friendships.

The National Days Involved (And Their Educational Value)

- **National Best Friends Day**: Emphasizes social-emotional health, conflict resolution, and the value of a supportive peer network.
- **National Call Your Doctor Day**: Demystifies healthcare, promotes preventative medicine, and encourages personal advocacy for physical well-being.
- **National Herbs and Spices Day**: Serves as a hands-on botanical and sensory science lesson, exploring how small plants drastically alter food chemistry and human history.
- **National Corn on the Cob Day**: Connects history, indigenous agriculture, math patterns, and nutrition through a seasonal favorite.
- **National Movie Night**: Celebrates storytelling, cultural analysis, media literacy, and collective relaxation as a community.

Lesson Plan: Nourishing Body and Mind

Day 1: Wellness & Self-Care Advocacy

National Day: National Call Your Doctor Day

- **Objective:** Students will understand the importance of preventative healthcare, learn how to identify bodily needs, and practice communicating with health professionals.

Grade-Specific Activities:

- **Grades K–2 (Community Helpers):** Demystify the doctor's office to reduce anxiety. Set up a "Bear Clinic" dramatic play center where students practice telling a "doctor" where their stuffed animal hurts using clear descriptive words.
- **Grades 3–5 (The Check-Up Checklist):** Discuss preventative care—why we see doctors *before* we are sick. Have students design a personalized "Daily Wellness Passport" tracking the foundations of health: sleep, hydration, nutrition, and movement.
- **Grades 6–8 (Medical Literacy & Advocacy):** Teach students how to advocate for their own health. Have them practice drafting a list of three proactive questions they should ask a doctor at their next annual exam (e.g., questions about growth, sleep habits, or mental well-being).

Day 2: The Science of Flavor & Sensation

National Day: National Herbs and Spices Day

- **Objective:** Students will explore plant biology and geography through sensory analysis, learning how plants use essential oils to survive and how humans use them to season food without relying heavily on sodium.

Grade-Specific Activities:

- **Grades K–2 (Sensory Exploration):** Set up a blind smelling station with fresh herbs (mint, rosemary, basil). Students use descriptive adjectives to describe the scents and draw the shape of the leaves.
- **Grades 3–5 (Botany—Roots vs. Leaves):** Teach the botanical difference: *Herbs* come from the green leafy parts of a plant; *spices* come from roots, bark, seeds, or berries. Have students classify a collection of samples (e.g., cinnamon bark vs. oregano leaves).
- **Grades 6–8 (The Spice Trade & Global Geography):** Map the historical trade routes of a chosen spice (like black pepper or nutmeg). Students research the geopolitical impact of these plants and present how a single spice altered global history.

Day 3: Agricultural Math & Nutrition

National Day: National Corn on the Cob Day

- **Objective:** Students will analyze corn as a crop, investigating its biological structure, mathematical Fibonacci patterns, and its historical role in indigenous agriculture.

Grade-Specific Activities:

- **Grades K–2 (Texture & Life Cycle):** Give students corn husks and kernels. Have them describe the textures and learn the basic lifecycle of a corn plant from seed to stalk.
- **Grades 3–5 (Mathematical Rows):** Did you know an ear of corn almost always has an even number of rows? Give students ears of corn (or images of cross-sections) to count the rows and calculate the average row count of the classroom sample, practicing fractions and multiplication.
- **Grades 6–8 (The Three Sisters Ecosystem):** Introduce the indigenous companion-planting technique known as "The Three Sisters" (Corn, Beans, and Squash). Students sketch or model how these three plants mutually support one another biologically: corn provides a trellis, beans fix nitrogen in the soil, and squash leaves protect against weeds.

Day 4: Social Bonds & Media Literacy

National Days: National Best Friends Day & National Movie Night

- **Objective:** Students will celebrate positive relationships, practice active collaboration, and evaluate how friendship and conflict resolution are portrayed in film.

Grade-Specific Activities:

- **Grades K–2 (The Friendship Portrait):** Pair students up. Have them interview each other about their favorite things, then draw a portrait of their partner incorporating those elements. End the day with a short, educational animated film about sharing.
- **Grades 3–5 (Recipe for a Best Friend):** Combining yesterday's herb/spice theme, have students write a "Recipe for a Perfect Friendship." What ingredients do you need? (e.g., *2 cups of loyalty, a pinch of silliness, 1 tablespoon of forgiveness*).
- **Grades 6–8 (Cinematic Analysis):** Turn "Movie Night" into a media literacy lesson. Watch short film clips highlighting famous dynamic duos. Have students analyze the dialogue and character actions: How do these cinematic friends handle disagreements? Is it realistic or idealized?

Weekly Writing Prompts

Grades K–2

- **Prompt 1 (Health):** Draw a picture of a doctor or a nurse. Write one sentence explaining how they help keep your body strong.
- **Prompt 2 (Senses):** Close your eyes and imagine the smell of your favorite food cooking. What is it? What makes it smell so good?
- **Prompt 3 (Friendship):** Draw a picture of you and a friend playing. Finish this sentence: *"A good friend always..."*

Grades 3–5

- **Prompt 1 (Botany/Cooking):** If you were a chef inventing a brand new signature dish using corn and three secret spices, what would you make? Describe the flavors.
- **Prompt 2 (Wellness):** Your body is like an engine that needs fine-tuning. Write a paragraph about what your body specifically needs when you feel tired, cranky, or stressed out.
- **Prompt 3 (Friendship):** Think about your closest friend. Describe a time when you had a disagreement but managed to fix it. What did you both do to make things right?

Grades 6–8

- **Prompt 1 (Agriculture/History):** Corn (maize) is one of the most dominant crops on earth, used in everything from food to fuel. Write an essay examining how our reliance on a single crop impacts either modern economic systems or global health.
- **Prompt 2 (Media Literacy):** Movies often portray friendships as either perfectly effortless or filled with massive drama. Write a critique of a movie you have seen recently. Does it accurately reflect how real-world middle school friendships function?
- **Prompt 3 (Healthcare Ethics):** Access to regular medical care is a cornerstone of public health. Why do you think some people avoid calling the doctor even when they are sick? What barriers exist, and how can communities help solve them?