**N-20: Comparing Nutrient Densities**

**Nutrient Density** refers to the amount of nutrients in a food, compared to its Calories. The healthiest foods are “nutrient dense” and have the most nutrients for the least amount of Calories. “Junk food” is the opposite, having a lot of Calories with very little nutrients; or, having a lot of the nutrients that most people already eat too much of anyway.

**Step 1: CHOOSE** at least 2 nutrition labels to compare. *Choose items that make sense to be compared (different drinks,*

*different snacks, different meats). For example, comparing white bread vs. wheat bread makes more sense than*

*orange juice vs. chicken. You could also compare possible snack foods like Chips vs. Apples.*

**Step 2: EXPLAIN** why you chose these items to compare, which you expected to be healthier (before looking at the

nutrition label), and for what reason(s).

**Step 3: COPY** the nutrition facts into the chart.

* Some labels will show you total fat and saturated or trans fat but not unsaturated fat. In that case, subtract the amount of saturated or trans fat from the total fat and use the result to fill in the unsaturated fat section.
* Ignore any nutrients that have zero’s for all items (e.g. if all items have 0% Vitamin C listed, you can ignore it).
* There is space at the bottom of the chart to add any nutrients found on the labels that are not already listed.

**Step 4: CALCULATE** the number of servings to get 1,000 Calories. In order to fairly compare nutrient density, you will

want to compare the nutrients found in an equal amount of Calories. (Round to the second decimal, e.g. 8.26)

Use the following equation and solve for **X**: (# of Calories / 1 serving) = (1,000 Calories / ***X*** servings)

**Step 5: MULTIPLY** each of the amounts of nutrients by **X** and write the answers on your chart’s last two columns.

(*If you multiply* ***X*** *by Calories and get a number that isn’t approximately 1,000 Calories, check your math*).

**Step 6: COMPARE** the nutrient contents of the two foods (only look at the 1,000 Calories charts).

* Most people need to eat foods with **LESS** saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar. Circle or highlight the boxes with the smaller amounts for each of these nutrients.
* Most people need to eat foods with **MORE** fiber and a greater variety of nutrients (including vitamins/minerals). Circle of highlight the boxes with the larger amounts for each of these nutrients

**Step 7: WRITE** a paragraphusing **Claim/Evidence/Reasoning** as follows**:**

**Claim** (*Topic Sentence*): Make a specific statement about which of your chosen foods is healthier.

**Evidence 1** (*Concrete Details*): Describe a specific difference between your chosen foods that supports the claim.

**Reasoning 2** (*Commentary*): Explain how the evidence supports the claim. That is, you must explain why that

nutrient you used as evidence is healthier or unhealthier (how does it help/harm the body?).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evidence 2**  **Reasoning 2**  **Evidence 3**  **Reasoning 3** | *Write about 2 more differences and explain how they each support the claim. It’s okay if there are good and bad things about both foods you’re comparing, as long as you can explain your decisions.* |

**Conclusion** (*Concluding statement*): Restate your claim, pointing out how you decided that one was healthier

than the other, overall. Also, explain the real world application of your findings. That is, what should

people do or think, now that you’ve convinced them of your claim?

**Step 8: REFLECT** on your experience.

* Was your guess accurate (explain)? Did anything surprise you?
* Does this information affect your food choices at all (explain)?
* What did you learn when doing this assignment?
* What new thoughts or questions do you have now?