

What Do Animals Need To Stay Alive? FOOD!

What would you do without food? Could you grow big? Would you be able to run and play?



Eagle photos by Mike Pogue

All animals need food. This young bald eagle is eating a fish from the Hudson River. This food will become part of the bird's bones, muscles, and feathers.

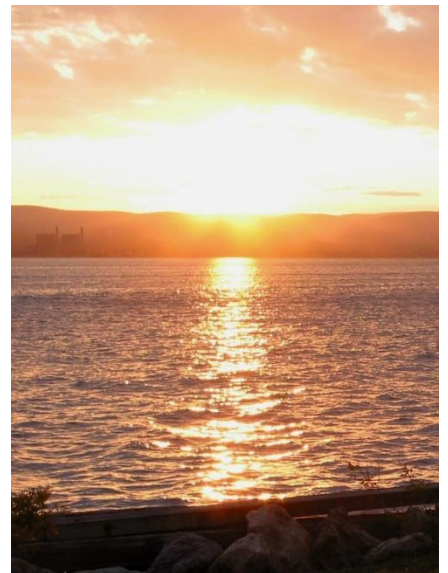


Food also gives animals **energy**. They need energy to move, to make sounds, to see and to hear. The young eagle uses energy to keep watch. When it sees danger, it needs energy to fly away.



Plants need energy too, but they do not eat like animals. Plants get their energy from sunlight.

Green plants make their own food. They use sunlight and ingredients from soil, water, and air to grow.



Different animals eat different kinds of food.



The muskrat eats plants. Animals that eat only plants are called **herbivores**.



The northern water snake is a **carnivore**. Carnivores eat other animals.



Some animals are not picky eaters. They eat plants and animals. They are called **omnivores**. The common carp is an omnivore.

Food chains show where living things get their energy. All food chains start with the sun. Green plants make their own food using sunlight. Animals must eat plants or other animals to live and grow.

In this Hudson River food chain, arrows show where each living thing gets energy. The sun gives energy to the plant. The insect gets energy by eating the plant. The fish eats the insect to get energy. Last, the bird eats the fish to get its energy.



1. Are you an herbivore, carnivore, or omnivore?
2. In this food chain, which animal is an herbivore?
3. How many carnivores are in this food chain?
4. If insects disappeared, what would happen to fish and birds?

Activity 1. Draw a food chain that shows where you get your food and energy. Don't forget to start with the sun!

Activity 2. Create a food chain with real links.

1. Choose four strips from the food chain links sheets. One of the strips should be the sun. Another should be a plant. The strips will be the links in your chain.
2. Arrange your strips in correct food chain order.
3. Glue or tape the two ends of the **SUN** strip together to make a circle. This is your first link.
4. To make the second link, pass one end of the next strip through the **SUN** link. Then glue or tape the ends of the second strip together, connecting two circles.
5. Pass the third strip through the second link. Glue or tape its ends together to make the third link.
6. In the same way, make the fourth link of your chain.
7. Display your food chain by hanging it in your classroom.

Food Chain Links



INSECT



PLANT



SUN



BIRD



FISH

Food Chain Links



PLANT



INSECT



BIRD



SUN



FISH