

Lesson: MyPlate

Supplies Needed:

- EP_5-Minute-Fitness-Ideas
- 2.2_LV_MYPLATE-VISUALS

Goals:

- Student will be able to identify the five components of MyPlate.
- Student will be able to give examples of food from each of the food groups.
- Student will understand how each food group helps their bodies stay healthy.

Background:

MyPlate was created by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help Americans understand the foundation of a healthy diet. To learn more about MyPlate, please visit: www.choosemyplate.gov

The Nurture curriculum reinforces general nutrition guidelines as set forth by the USDA 2010 dietary guidelines. It does not promote the exclusion of any food group, or strict consumption of select super foods. The Nurture nutrition message is broad; its primary goals are to emphasize balance and promote a healthy relationship with food.

Children have a hard time remembering the benefits of the various food groups. To help them remember, Nurture uses specific food group actions every time a food group is mentioned. We encourage the students to use these symbols as well.

Vegetables – Smile because they make our bodies happy

Fruits – Okay symbol with hand because fruits keep us feeling okay

Grains – Pump arms like your running in place because grains give us energy

Protein – Flex your bicep muscles because muscles are made of protein

Dairy – Point to your teeth because dairy helps build strong teeth and bones

Lesson:

(Start with two or three minutes of exercises from 5 Minute Fitness Ideas.)

Who remembers what we talked about last month?

(Go foods, slow foods, and fruit and vegetable wannabes.)

Who can tell me why it's important to eat mainly Go Foods?

(They keep us healthy, strong and energized.)

What is a fruit or vegetable wannabe?

(A food or drink that seems like it would be made of mainly fruits and vegetables but it really isn't)

This month we're going to talk about MyPlate. **(Show slide 1.)** MyPlate is a great tool to remind us how to eat a balanced diet. Eating a well-balanced diet helps us stay healthy, grow strong, and helps us perform at our best! Let's take a closer look at MyPlate to find out which foods we should be eating.

MyPlate is divided into four sections. Each section represents a food group. There are four food groups represented on the plate: vegetables, fruits, grains, and protein. The fifth food group, dairy, is off to the side; it represents a glass of milk, but can be any food from the dairy group.

Today we are going to take a look at each of the food groups.

(Show slide 2.) First, let's look at the vegetable group. Many kids and adults don't eat enough veggies. Vegetables are an excellent source of fiber. Fiber helps you feel full and helps keep your stomach and intestines healthy. Vegetables are also a great source of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals, which are all very important to feel healthy and strong. We want to help you remember how vegetables help our bodies. Because vegetables make our bodies happy and healthy I want everyone to **(Smile.)** each time we say the word vegetable or the name of vegetable.

MyPlate recommends that we fill over a quarter of our plates with vegetables.

(Make sure everyone is smiling.)

Can you think of examples of vegetables?

(Let children brainstorm and make sure they smile.)

(Recap.) Why is the vegetable group important? Vegetables provide us with fiber, vitamins and minerals. When we eat vegetables, our bodies feel happy!

(Show slide 3.) Next is the fruit group. Fruits also contain vitamins. Many fruits, such as strawberries, are a great source of vitamin C. Vitamin C helps boost our immune system so we don't get sick, and it helps us heal if we get a cut or bruise. Fruits also contain water and minerals that help our body stay balanced and hydrated. Fruits help keep us feeling okay-- let's represent fruits by making the okay sign with our hands! **(All together, make okay sign.)**

Can you think of fruits that we could put on our plate?

(Let kids brainstorm and make okay signs.)

What about fruit juice? Would that fit on MyPlate? (*100% juice is often missing the fiber and nutrients found in whole fruit, so it is best to limit juice to no more than one cup per day.*)

(Recap.) Why is the fruit group important? Fruits have vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, and fiber that help us stay healthy. **(Make okay signs.)**

If you look at MyPlate, over half of what we eat should be fruits **(Make okay sign.)** and vegetables **(Smile.)**.

(Show slide 4.) Next is the grain group. Grains are carbohydrates that give our body energy. Let's represent the grain group by pumping our arms, like we're running in place. **(Pump arms.)** Without carbohydrates, we could not function or think clearly. MyPlate recommends that we fill a little more than a quarter of our plates with grains **(Pump arms.)** and whole grains **(Pump arms.)**. Whole grains should be your first choice.

Can you think of some healthy whole grains **(Pump arms.)** that give our body long lasting energy?

(Brown rice, whole wheat bread, oatmeal, cereal, pasta, etc.)

(Recap.) Why is the grain group important? *(Grains provide us with energy.)* **(Pump arms.)**

(Show slide 5.) Let's move on to the protein group. The protein group includes foods like meat, fish, nuts, seeds, eggs, soy, and chicken. Protein provides the building blocks for our body. Our skin, hair, fingernails, muscles, and organs are made of protein. It is important to include protein in our diet so our body can repair and build new tissue. Think of protein as a building block, it sets the foundation for a strong body. Let's represent protein by flexing our muscles **(Flex biceps.)** because our muscles need protein to be strong.

Raise your hand if you can think of a tasty food from the protein **(Flex biceps.)** group.

(Chicken, beans, eggs, nuts, seeds, beef, etc)

(Recap.) Why is the protein group **(Flex biceps.)** important? *(It provides the foundation for a strong body.)*

(Show side 6.) Off to the side of plate is a circle. This represents the dairy group. Dairy products contain calcium and vitamin D, which helps build strong bones and teeth. Let's represent the dairy group by showing off all of our beautiful sets of teeth. **(Point to teeth.)** Many dairy products are also a good source of protein. Some people are unable to tolerate cow's milk, but there are other types of milk that contain calcium and vitamin D, such as soy milk, rice milk or almond milk. **(If this becomes a big discussion point, show slide 7. Otherwise, skip it.)**

MyPlate recommends at least three servings of dairy **(Point to teeth.)** per day. A carton of milk from the cafeteria is one serving of dairy. **(Point to teeth.)** Can you think of other foods that belong to the dairy group **(Point to teeth.)**?

(Yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese)

(Recap.) Why is the dairy group **(Point to teeth.)** important?

(Dairy helps us build strong bones and teeth.)

Eating foods from all five foods groups helps our bodies get the nutrients we need to stay healthy and grow strong. **(Depending on how much time you have left, do either Activity 1 or Activity 2.)**

Activity 1

Now we'll see what you've learned! I am going to show a picture of a food, raise your hand and tell me what it is called, what food group it belongs to, the symbol for the food group and one way that food group helps our bodies.

(As you go through the remaining slides and show the different foods, make sure the students make the appropriate gesture when identifying the food group.)

- **Apple = Fruit: okay sign**
- **Chicken = Protein: flex bicep muscle**
- **Broccoli = Vegetable: smile**
- **Eggs = Protein: flex bicep muscle**
- **Cereal = Grain: pump arms in place as if running, Blueberries = Fruit: okay sign, Milk = Dairy: point to teeth**
- **Salsa = Vegetable: smile**
- **Yogurt = Dairy: point to teeth**
- **Beans = Protein: flex bicep muscle**
- **Pasta = Grains: pump arms in place as if running**
- **Cheese = Dairy: point to teeth**
- **Almonds = Protein: flex bicep muscle**
- **Rice = Grains: pump arms in place as if running**

Activity 2

Now let's make this fun! I'm going to read you a short story. When you hear the name of a food, make the right action for that food group! For instance, if you hear broccoli, you'll remember that broccoli belongs to which food group:

(Vegetable)

And you'll make what action?

(Smile!)

Great! Now let's listen carefully as I read you the story.

(Foods are in BOLD. Pause when it's time to make a symbol and give the students a chance to make the symbol before you do.)

(Read story.) One day a young girl named Maddie was on her way to visit her grandmother. She lived in the country and passed many farms. As she walked along the dusty road, she smiled as she watched beautiful fields of golden **wheat (Pump arms.)** blowing in the wind. As she walked further, she saw a farmer **milking (Point to teeth.)** a **cow (Flex bicep.)** named Moo Moo. **(Vs. Getting MILK from Moo Moo the cow.)** The farmer's son was feeding the beautiful horses **carrots (Smile.)**. They had many **chickens (Flex bicep.)** running around the farm eating **corn (Pump arms.)**. Maddie looked up at the **corn (Pump arms.)** growing in the field: it was almost twice as tall as she was!

On another farm she saw the farmer, skillfully balanced on the top of an old ladder, gently picking juicy red **apples (Make okay sign.)** from his trees. Some of the trees even had bright green and shiny golden **apples (Make okay sign.)**, too! That farmer's wife and children were picking **blueberries and raspberries (Make okay sign.)** from bushes-- and Maddie noticed the children were occasionally eating a few as they went.

The next farm had a beautiful garden filled with **tomatoes, broccoli, lettuce, cucumbers, peas, potatoes, cauliflower, and green peppers (Smile.)**. It almost looked like a rainbow!

As Maddie came to the next farm, she saw a huge barn and began to hear all sorts of animal noises! The **cows (Flex bicep.)** in the field gently mooing started to blend into the clucking of **chickens (Flex bicep.)** as they pecked the ground. As Maddie got closer to the barn, she heard grunting, and saw some very round, shiny, and happy **pigs (Flex bicep.)** trotting around in their muddy pen.

Seeing all of those neat plants and animals was so exciting! What a day! When she got to her grandmother's house she was so tired and hungry. Her grandmother gave her a **yogurt (Point to teeth.)**, a **piece of toast (Pump arms)** and a big glass of water.