

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2008:

Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact

Teacher's Guide

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand that healthful eating includes a variety of foods from all the food groups.
- Name the food groups of the MyPyramid food guide.
- Give an example of a menu that includes foods from all of the food groups.
- Share information about unusual or favorite foods with other students.

Key Messages

See the "Top Ten Facts about Nutrition" handout in the National Nutrition Month® Reproducible Set.

Suggested Classroom Activities

- Create "Food Bingo" cards and play the game at school, church or grandparents' day.
- Invite children to bring their favorite recipes – illustrated with their own food art --and prepare a cookbook. This can be as simple as stapling together or doing a 3-hole punch with rings purchased from an office supply store.
- Encourage children to write and illustrate a story with food as a central part. This can be a fantasy (with foods being characters) or a more serious focus – how do people survive who are not getting enough to eat.
- Have a "blind taste test" for young children, and teach the concepts of sweet, sour, bitter and salt. Take turns blindfolding children to see if they correctly recognize the various tastes.
- Play the alphabet game. One child begins with: "My father owns a grocery store, and he sells apples." The next child says, "My father owns a grocery store, and he sells apples and bananas." The game continues with each child taking a turn reciting the entire list and adding a new item for the next letter of the alphabet.
- Arrange a tour of the school cafeteria so that children can see how the food service staff prepares lunches.
- For young children, display pictures of foods and ask them to name the food group of each.
- Encourage family involvement: Try one new fruit or vegetable each week in March. Everyone in the family should take at least one taste.
- Another family activity: Everyone sets a goal of eating the recommended servings from all five food groups every day for one week. Keep a chart. (See the MyPyramid resources.)
- And one more for families: Ask children to go through the newspaper at home and cut out food ads to plan a nutritious dinner for the family.

Suggested Resources:

- MyPyramid for Kids: www.mypyramid.gov/kids.
MyPyramid for Kids Worksheet and Coloring pages
MyPyramid Blast Off Game – an interactive computer game for children 6 to 11 years old
Tips for Families handout
- USDA Team Nutrition lesson plans: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/popularevents.html>
- USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center Resource Lists: www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/resource_lists.shtml
- Nutrition Explorations, National Dairy Council: www.nutritionexplorations.org
- *How to Teach Nutrition to Kids*, 3rd edition, by Connie Liakos Evers, MS, RD. 24 Carrot Press, 2006

Old Favorites

Activity 1

- Ask the students to tell the class what their favorite foods are and why.
- Ask them to share a story about eating their favorite food with their family or friends.
- Have the class share a story about a food or special recipe that is unique to their family's special celebrations.

Activity 2

- Plan a menu for a day! Split the class into 5 groups. Each group is responsible for planning breakfast, lunch, after-school snack, dinner or bedtime snack. They plan a meal or snack using the MyPyramid for Kids as a resource. Then, each group tells the teacher their meal or snack, and she writes it on the board.
- Together the class decides if they are getting enough servings from each group in the MyPyramid food guide. If not, the class can think of ways to get what they need. See the chart on the next page, and also go online to www.MyPyramid.gov to determine serving amounts for other ages. Amounts for teen boys increase as they get older, while those for teen-age girls remain constant from age 14-18. Children should be encouraged to be physically active as well.

MyPyramid for Kids Food Guide

Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Milk	Meat & Beans
Start smart with breakfast. Look for whole grain cereals. Make sure the first word is "whole" (like "whole wheat").	Color your plate with all kinds of great-tasting veggies: try broccoli, spinach, carrots and sweet potatoes.	Fruits are nature's treats – sweet and delicious. Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.	Move to the milk group to get your calcium. Calcium builds strong bones.	Eat lean or lowfat meat, chicken, turkey and fish. Remember nuts, seeds, peas and beans, too.
For an 1,800 calorie diet, you need the amount below.	For an 1,800 calorie diet, you need the amount below.	For an 1,800 calorie diet, you need the amount below.	For an 1,800 calorie diet, you need the amount below.	For an 1,800 calorie diet, you need the amount below.
Eat 6 oz. every day; at least half should be whole.	Eat 2 ½ cups every day.	Eat 1 ½ cups every day.	Get 3 cups every day; for kids ages 2 to 8, it's 2 cups.	Eat 5 oz. every day.

Activity 3

Working on the Web

- Assign students to go to www.mypyramid.gov, enter their age, sex and physical activity level, then print their MyPyramid plan.
- Handout copies of the MyPyramid for Kids Worksheet. Ask students to fill out the worksheet with the foods they ate and drank for the previous day.
- Ask the students to compare this with their MyPyramid plan. How well do their food choices match up to the MyPyramid plan recommendations?

Activity 4

Investigating and Researching New and Exotic Foods

- Ask older students to work in groups or individually to select one or more of the following foods (or others you may have in mind).
- Assign students to find as much information as they can about the food. For example, the origin or history, where and how it grows, where it fits into the Food Pyramid, and how it is prepared. If possible, bring the foods to the classroom for students to see, feel and taste.

Foods from around the World:

Lychee

Couscous

Kiwi

Star Fruit

Kohlrabi

Plantain

Pomegranate

Basmati rice

Bulgar

Jicama

Kumquat

Bok choy

Foods from the Americas:

Chocolate
Hot peppers

Squash
Beans

Tomatoes
Corn

Turkey

Activity 5

"Fearless About Food"

- Assemble a variety of 20-30 unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. Suggestions: blood oranges, bok choy, edamame, zucchini, papaya and fresh pineapple.
- Formulate questions about these foods, such as "Where is edamame grown?" "What are some good ways to use bok choy?"
- Choose teams. This can be done by grade level, girls vs. boys, students vs. parents, etc.
- Moderator asks a question, and whoever shouts out the answer first gets a point for their team.
- When all questions have been asked, distribute to the participants samples of the foods on small plates. On a given signal, they begin eating. Prizes can be given to everyone who tastes all the foods. (Go to www.eatright.org/nnm and see the catalog for NNM stickers, pencils, etc. which may be used as prizes.)

GAMES: Instructions for the following games are available free upon e-mail request to muhrick@eatright.org

1. "Jeopardy" Game
This game consists of a layout with food group questions and answers, as well as instructions for play.
2. "Fill in the Blanks" Game
A take-off on the old "Hangman," the game includes suggested food-related titles as well as instructions for play.
3. "Test Your Memory" Game
Remember the television show "Concentration"? This game offers children an opportunity to recognize different foods and see if they remember where the matching picture is placed. The game may be adapted for use by children of different ages, depending on the food pictures you provide.
4. "Food Group Password"
Fun for children and adults, this game permits clues of more than one word – it even allows gesturing and jumping around to help the contestant get the word. A good team game.