

MyPyramid

Goals:

- Student will be able to categorize food based on the 5 food groups
- Student will be able to identify the essential macronutrients of each of the food groups
- Student will understand the importance of eating a well-balanced diet

Audience: K thru 2nd grade

Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:

- Perfect Plates

Materials:

- MyPyramid poster
- MyPyramid Food Cards (available at www.nurtureyourfamily.org)

Lesson:

Leader: (Hold up poster) Many of you have probably seen this picture before. This pyramid is called Mypyramid and it was created to help teach us what a balanced diet consists of! 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 the pyramid to find out what foods we should be eating!

Leader: There are 5 major food groups highlighted on the food pyramid. Each color represents a different food group:

Orange: Grains group. The grain group includes foods such as oats, rice, pasta, and bread. Remember that half of your grains should be whole grains.

Green: Vegetable group. The vegetable group consists of foods such as cucumbers, lettuce, broccoli, and carrots.

Red: Fruits. The fruit group includes foods such as bananas, apples, oranges and berries.

Blue: Milk group. The milk group contains foods such as yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese.

Purple: Protein group. The protein group consists of foods such as meat, fish, eggs, nuts, and seeds.

If you notice, there is also a **yellow-strip** on the pyramid, but it is not a food group; this is the healthy oils category. It includes foods such as olive oil and other healthy oils found in nuts, oily fish and even coconuts! The reason this strip is so small (and is not a food group) is because it should only and make up a small amount of your diet.

Leader: Let's start with the grains or orange group. Grains are carbohydrates that give your body energy! Without carbohydrates, you could not function or think clearly. Can you think of some healthy grains that give your body long lasting energy?

Leader: Why is the grain group important? Grains provide us with energy!

Leader: Next, let's look at the vegetable group. Many kids (and adults) are not consuming enough veggies! Vegetables are an excellent source of fiber. Fiber helps you feel full and promotes a healthy digestive tract. Vegetables are also a great source of vitamins and minerals. Why is the vegetable group important? Vegetables provide us with fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Leader: Next is the fruit group. Fruits also contain vitamins and minerals. 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. Fruits also contain water and minerals that help our body stay balanced and hydrated. Why is the fruit group important? Fruits have vitamins and minerals that help us stay healthy!

Leader: Next, let's look at the dairy or 'calcium rich' group. Dairy products contain calcium and vitamin D, which helps build strong bones and 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. Why is the milk group important? Milk helps us build strong bones and teeth!

Leader: Finally, the protein group. The protein group includes a variety of foods: meats, beans, legumes, seeds, and nuts. Even if you choose not to eat meat, there are a variety of ways to get protein into your diet. Protein is necessary to build muscles. Raise your hand if you can think of a tasty food from the protein group. Why is the protein group important? Protein helps us build strong muscles!

Leader: Eating a balanced diet helps our bodies grow strong! When we eat, we should try to balance our plate with all five food groups because each food group provides us with different nutrients. Eating a balanced diet is one component of a healthy lifestyle. The other component is exercise! The pyramid recommends 60 minutes of physical activity each day! Riding your bike, walking the dog, shooting hoops, ice skating, it all counts!

Conclusion: *Eating foods from all the foods groups helps our bodies get the nutrients it needs to stay healthy and grow strong. We'll end our lesson today with a fun game. I am going to hold up a picture of a food, you raise your hand and tell me what food group it belongs to!*

(Download and cut out pictures from the MyPyramid Food Cards Powerpoint File—Laminate them for repeated use).

Optional: If time and space permit, you can create a relay game with food cards. Set up 5 bins with a food group labeled on the outside.

Divide the class into 3-4 equal teams. Give each child one food card, their job is to place the food card in the correct bin. You can vary the movement for the relay (run, skip, hop, bear crawl).

Resources:

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/resources/mpk_coloring.pdf