

Lesson: MyPlate Portions

Supplies Needed:

- 2.4_LV_MYPLATE-PORCTIONS-VISUALS
- 2.4_LW_MyPlate-Portions-Worksheet
- Red, green, orange, purple and blue crayons or colored pencils for students
- Red, green, orange, purple and blue markers/chalk/board markers for teacher

Goals:

- Student will be able to identify the five components of MyPlate.
- Given a blank plate, students will be able to design a balanced meal.
- Student will understand how each food group keeps them 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 – Make 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 three minutes of exercise ending with yoga or deep breathing to calm the class.)

Let's review from last month. Can you tell me some reasons why it is important to eat a rainbow?

(Each color offers different vitamins and minerals our bodies need to be healthy.)

What do red fruits and vegetables do for us?

(Healthy heart, memory, brain function)

Who can give some examples of blue/purple fruits and vegetables?

(Blueberries, grapes, eggplant, plums, etc.)

Raise your hand if you can list all five food groups. See if you can remember how they help our bodies also.

- *(Vegetables **[Smile.]** because they are full of nutrients, phytochemicals and fiber that keeps our bodies happy.)*
- *(Fruits **[Make okay sign.]** because they are full of nutrients, phytochemicals and fiber that keep us feeling okay.)*
- *(Grains **[Pump arms.]** give us energy.)*
- *(Protein **[Flex bicep.]** because they help build and repair body tissues like muscles.)*
- *(Dairy **[Point to teeth.]** because the calcium in dairy helps build strong teeth and bones.)*

(Show slide 1.) Do you remember MyPlate? MyPlate divides a dinner plate into different sections. Each section represents a different food group.

Every time we eat a meal, we should fill half of our plates with fruits and vegetables. The remaining half should be filled with grains and proteins.

(Teacher draws a circle on the board or show slide 2 on a Promethean board.)

Raise your hand if you could divide this circle in half? **(Have a volunteer divide the circle in half.)** Now, what if I wanted to divide my plate into quarters or four equal parts? **(Ask a volunteer to divide the circle into quarters.)**

MyPlate is divided into four parts but these parts aren't exactly equal. The vegetable group (**Smile.**) and the grain group (**Pump arms.**) are slightly bigger than the protein (**Flex bicep.**) and fruit group (**Make okay sign.**). (**Shade the vegetable group using green if possible and grain group using orange if possible.**)

Today, we are going to draw our own MyPlate. (**Distribute blank MyPlate Worksheet, ask students to take out red, green, orange, purple, and blue crayons or colored pencils, and show slide 3.**)

First, I want everyone to draw a line down the middle of the plate so you have two equal halves. On the left side, we are going to have fruits and vegetables (**Cover the right side of the plate.**). Now, looking only at this half of the plate, I want you to draw a line and divide the left side of the plate. The vegetable section will be slightly bigger than the fruit section. Think of this as half of a pie that you are sharing with a sibling and you cut a slightly bigger piece for yourself. Outline your vegetable section in green and your fruit section in red.

It is important to eat both veggies (**Smile.**) and fruit (**Make okay sign.**), but our bodies need a few more veggies as they contain different vitamins and minerals that we need to stay healthy and grow strong.

Let's move to the other side of the plate (**Cover the left side of the plate.**). Just like we divided the fruit and vegetable section into two parts, we are going to divide the right side of the plate into two parts. These two parts will be for the grain group and the protein group.

The grain group is going to be slightly bigger than the protein group. Grains (**Pump arms.**) provide our bodies with energy. Who can give me some examples of grains?
(*Bread, pasta, oatmeal, rice, crackers*)

Who remembers which type of grains are the healthiest?

(*Whole grains*)

Outline the grain section in orange.

The last portion of our plate is for protein. Who remembers how protein (**Flex bicep.**) helps our bodies?

(*Helps build strong muscles*)

What are some examples of proteins?

(*Chicken, fish, meat, nuts, beans, seeds*)

Outline the protein section in purple.

Finally, the dairy group is the small circle in the right hand corner. What are some foods from the dairy group?

(Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese)

Dairy **(Point to teeth.)** provides our bodies with calcium and vitamin D which helps build strong bones and teeth. There are some people who can't eat dairy, but there are other alternatives such as soy or almond milk. Outline the dairy section in blue.

Now that our plates are portioned, let's talk about what types of food you like that go into each pie shape. Remember the Go Foods? Let's fill in each pie shape with your favorite Go Food for each of the food groups. What is your favorite Go vegetable (Smile.), fruit **(Make okay sign.)**, grain **(Pump arms.)**, protein **(Flex bicep.)** and finally dairy **(Point to teeth.)**?

(Slides 4 – 9 can be used to help guide this discussion. Have the student draw in their favorites during the discussion.)

MyPlate makes it simple to eat a healthy diet. Instead of counting serving sizes or measuring our food, we can just use our plate as a guide. Sometimes you may look at your plate and not see all the food groups there. Say you are having a bowl of oatmeal with blueberries for breakfast and you don't want to add vegetables to it. That's OK! Think about that at snack time and have some carrot sticks or another veggie snack to make up for it.

Next time you eat a meal, look at the foods on your plate.

- Is half of your plate filled with fruits **(Make okay sign.)** and veggies **(Smile.)** - - a few more veggies than fruit?
- Is the other half filled with grains **(pumping arms)** and protein **(flex bicep)** - - a few more grains than protein?
- Did you include a serving of dairy **(point to teeth)** or dairy-substitute?