

Lesson: Pack a Better Lunch

Supplies Needed:

- 2.8_LV_PACK-A-BETTER-LUNCH-VISUALS
- Writing utensils (pencils, crayons, colored pencils)
- Blank paper or paper plates

Goals:

- Students will know the components of a healthy lunch.
- Students can replace a Slow Food in their lunch with a Go Food.
- Students can make their own choices to put together a healthy lunch.

Lesson:

(Start with two or three minutes of exercises.)

What did you have for lunch today or yesterday? **(Allow two or three students to share.)**

Whether you pack your lunch or eat hot lunch, there are so many foods to choose from! Some food choices can be really great for our bodies giving us lots of energy. These are our Go Foods. Other choices are not so healthy. Slow Foods and can leave us feeling tired. Today we are going to talk about the different parts of a healthy lunch.

MyPlate is a great guide for what a healthy lunch should contain. **(Show slide 1.)**

Raise your hand if you can tell me one thing about building a healthy meal.

(As the students answer, make sure the following points are covered:)

- All five food groups are included. As food groups are mentioned, have the students recall how the food groups help us.
 - Veggies are an excellent source of vitamins, nutrients, and fiber. **(Smile.)**
 - Fruits are a great source of vitamins and antioxidants. **(Make okay sign.)**
 - Grains provide energy. The key here is to pick a whole grain product because whole grains are full of nutrients, fiber, and will help us stay full. **(Pump your arms.)**

- Protein is the building block for our body; you need protein to build strong muscles and maintain a healthy body. **(Flex biceps.)**
 - Dairy is rich in calcium and vitamin D; these nutrients help build strong bones and teeth. **(Point to teeth.)**
- Half the plate is filled with fruits and vegetables.

Within each food group there are many choices available to us. For a healthy lunch we want to focus on Go Foods. Let's quickly review these. Raise your hand and give me some examples.

(Use the information below as a guide when responding to student suggestions.)

Vegetables – Go Foods: Carrots, lettuce, celery, spinach, cucumbers, potatoes, etc.

Vegetables – Slow Foods: The key is how they are prepared. Fried vegetables like French fries or tempura vegetables or vegetables in heavy butter or cream sauces are high in fat and calories, and will leave you feeling sluggish.

Fruit – Go Foods: Apples, oranges, bananas, kiwi, etc.

Fruit – Slow Foods: Some foods may have fruit in them, but they have a lot of added sugar, which can cause you to feel sluggish. Examples include fruit roll-ups, fruit slushies, fruit drinks, fruit pies, etc.

Grains - Go Foods: Whole grains like brown rice, barley, oatmeal, cracked wheat, quinoa and whole grain breads, pastas, crackers, pita, or tortillas are best. Processed grains like white rice, pasta or bread are go foods if they are not high in added sugar, salt or unhealthy fats, but whole grains are preferred. At least 50% of grains consumed should be whole grains.

Grain – Slow Foods: Grains with high levels of added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats like trans fat or saturated fats. For example, Fruit Loops, corn chips, some crackers.

Protein – Go Foods: The key here is to limit proteins that are high in saturated fats. Chicken, turkey, fish, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, peanut butter, lean beef or lean pork.

Protein – Slow Foods: Highly processed proteins like bacon, sausage, salami, pepperoni, and some cuts of meat like ribs, many hamburgers because they have a lot of fat.

Dairy - Go Foods: Cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, and low fat or skim milk are all great options. Milk is super easy to include in our lunch because they sell it at school! The key with some of these dairy Go Foods is portion control. For example, cheese is full of calcium and protein, but it is also high in calories. One serving is about the size of two dominos.

Dairy - Slow Foods: Butter, cream and whole milk because they are high in fat.

So, a healthy lunch contains Go Foods from all five food groups. Are we missing anything? What about a treat?! Is it okay to include a treat in our lunch? Sure! Balance is the key to a healthy diet. When packing a treat, think small portions, such as a small cookie, a two-bite brownie, or a piece of chocolate. If you prefer salty treats, you can pack a handful of chips or pretzels.

Let's break into three or four teams. Each team will have three minutes to plan a healthy lunch. Then each group will share their lunch ideas. As a class we'll review each lunch to make sure it contains foods from all five food groups.

(Show slide 2.) - Don't feel your lunch must look just like MyPlate – food groups can be mixed together. For example, a stir fry could combine the vegetables and chicken, which is a protein, and serve it over brown rice, which is a grain. In this case only the fruit and dairy would have their own space on the plate.

(Give the groups 3 minutes to work, and then have them share their ideas. Go around the room and have each group present their lunches. Let students review if it is balanced with all five food groups and if not what changes can be made.)

Lunch is a great time to fuel up on healthy foods that give you long-lasting energy. If you find that you are sluggish around 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon, take a look at what you ate for lunch. Try packing a few of the foods we talked about today and see how you feel.

Resources:

http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/lunch.html

http://kidshealth.org/kid/nutrition/food/school_lunches.html