

4 April Lesson: Pack a Better Lunch

Goals:

- Students will know the components of a healthy lunch

Audience: 4^h grade

Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:

- Brown Bag Checklist

Materials:

- Pack a Better Lunch Visuals
- Paper and pencils

Common Core Standard Taught:

- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 4.1
 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
 - Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Lesson:

What did you have for lunch today (or yesterday)? *(allow 2-3 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; other choices are not so healthy, and can leave us feeling tired. Today we are going to talk about the components 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 you notice about building a healthy meal. *(As the students answer, make sure the following points are covered.)*

- All 5 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.
 - Fruits are a great source of vitamins and antioxidants.
 - 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.
 - Protein is the building block for our body; you need protein to build strong muscles and maintain a healthy body.

- Dairy is rich in calcium and vitamin D; these nutrients help build strong bones and 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 within each food group. Let's quickly review these. Raise your hand and give me some examples of *(let the students come up with examples. Correct or supplement their answers as appropriate.)*

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 grain breads, pastas, crackers, pita, or tortillas! Brown rice, barley, oatmeal, cracked wheat, quinoa.

Grain – Slow Foods: Processed grain products like white breads, pastas, crackers, pita, tortillas. Processed grains like white rice,

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 pork (doesn't have a lot of fat)

Protein – Slow Foods: Highly processed proteins or those high in saturated fats like bacon, sausage, salami, pepperoni, ribs, many hamburgers.

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 2 dominos.

Dairy - Slow foods: Butter, cream, whole milk.

So a healthy lunch contains Go Foods from all 5 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 2-bite brownie, or a piece of chocolate. If you prefer salty snacks, you can pack a handful of chips or pretzels.

Let's break into 3 or 4 teams. Each team will have 3 minutes to plan a healthy lunch. Then each group will share their lunch ideas. As a class we'll grade each lunch on whether it contains foods from all 5 food groups. Bonus points will be earned for lunches with Go Foods and for meals the majority of the class feels are delicious.

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 protein and serve it over 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, then have them share their ideas. Use Slide #2 to grade the lunches.)

- All 5 food groups = A
- 4 food groups = B
- 3 food groups = C
- 2 food groups = D
- 0 or 1 food group = F

- 2 or more food groups only have slow foods = Drop one grade
- All food groups contain Go Foods = Raise a grade
- Majority of class finds it delicious = Raise a grade

- Best grade = A++

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