



Nurture – Adults Session 1

Fruit and Vegetables – The foundation of healthy meals

Agenda

20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete waivers and intake forms • Exercise: See Family Exercise Lessons • Introductions and orient participants to cookbook
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow cookers- how they work and how they help
20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taste Veggie Burrito Bowl • Introduce Recipe Framework – Analyze first recipe, use Sweet Potato Burritos as example • Demo or hands on how to use with ½ recipe of Sweet Potato Burritos
20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taste Three Bean Minestrone • Discuss Fruits and Vegetables
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipe Framework – Analyze Three Bean Minestrone
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete session & recipe evaluations, transfer uncooked Sweet Potato Burritos ingredients into 1 large Tupperware & raffle off, distribute groceries and slow cookers

Additional Materials need for class

Program Management materials - (Waivers and Forms in Nurture Adult Slow Cooker Series Planning Guide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name Tags • Sign-in Sheet • Program Waivers • Health & Behavior Forms • Recipe Evaluation Forms • Session Evaluation Forms 			
Cleaning supplies – Food Serving Supplies – (In Nurture Storage Unit)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipes • Sponge • Dish soap • Dish towels • Paper towels </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plates • Bowls • Spoons • Cups • Water pitcher • Napkins • 3 ladles </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Strip Extension Cord Mixing Spoon Extra slow cooker for demo of Sweet Potato Burritos </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipes • Sponge • Dish soap • Dish towels • Paper towels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plates • Bowls • Spoons • Cups • Water pitcher • Napkins • 3 ladles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Strip Extension Cord Mixing Spoon Extra slow cooker for demo of Sweet Potato Burritos
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<p>Food Needed</p> <p>Demo how to use slow cooker with ½ recipe Sweet Potato Burritos</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow cooker of Veggie Burrito Bowl – 1 recipe • Slow cooker of Sweet Potato Burritos – ½ recipe • Slow cooker of Three Bean Minestrone – 1 recipe • Other ½ of ingredients for Sweet Potato Burritos – prepped and in containers so they can be added to the slow cooker
<p>Teaching Aids</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easel • Pad of paper • 3 Sharpies • MyPlate & MyPlate Spanish
<p>Supplies for Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Slow cookers • Groceries • 1 Large Tupperware for Sweet Potato Burritos ingredients •

Start with Exercise as registration forms are completed. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer if exercises done on floor.

Make introductions

- What Nurture does – family programs, school programs, gardening education
- Goals for program:
 - Participants will know how to use a slow cooker
 - Participants will learn and share ideas for healthier cooking and exercise
 - Participants will feel more confident preparing healthy meals
 - Participants and their families will eat a healthier diet
- Class format, number of sessions, session topics
 - Introduce teachers
 - Start with exercise
 - Try 2 -3 recipes
 - Share ideas among the group for adapting/creating recipes
 - Topics include: how to use a slow cooker, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, portion distortion, breakfast, adapting recipes
- Set expectation of participation:
 - **Do any of you or your children have food sensitivities or limitations?**

- Have participants introduce themselves - Gather Information: find out which participants would like hands-on cooking and which would like cooking demo
- sharing ideas
- try Nurture recipes or develop your own between sessions
- share learning and recipes with the group

Distribute samples of Veggie Burrito Bowl for class to taste as you talk about the slow cooker.

Have participants turn to the first page in their workbooks – slow cooker tips. Encourage them to take notes as you are speaking.

Parts of Your Slow Cooker



Lid with handle



Removable cooking bowl



Main body of slow cooker

(attaches to electric cord—please see safety precautions on following page)

On/off switch
Hi/ Low/ Keep Warm

- The slow cookers provided by Nurture are 6 quarts.
- There are 3 settings on the slow cooker: warm, low, and high. Warm will keep your food warm without cooking it, while low and high are cooking temperatures. In general, cooking a recipe on 'low' takes about twice the time it takes to cook on 'high'.

How to Use Your Slow Cooker – Demo with Sweet Potato Burritos

1	<p>Add foods according to your recipe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always be sure there is liquid in the recipe. This could be salsa or other soft fruits or vegetables which have a lot of moisture. • Drastic temperature changes can cause the slow cooker to crack. Don't place the hot cooking insert on a cold counter, or take a cold cooking insert out of the fridge and put it directly into preheated slow cooker.
2	<p>Plug in slow cooker to safe outlet. (Attach plug to appliance first, then plug cord into the wall outlet).</p>
3	<p>Cover and turn on the slow cooker. Guidelines: Low: for 8-10 hours or overnight High: for 6 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resist the urge to stir. The slow cooker is designed to be left alone, and every time you open the lid you add 15-20 minutes to the cook time.
4	<p>For animal proteins, use meat thermometer to check if done. According to FoodSafety.gov, meats should be cooked to the following minimum temperatures: Poultry: 165 degrees Ground Meat: 165 degrees Pork, Beef Steaks and Roasts, Lamb: 145 degrees</p>
5	<p>Turn to “keep warm” if waiting to serve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steam inside the slow cooker will form condensation on the lid. When taking off the lid, lift it straight up (as opposed to tilting it) to keep the water from getting in the food. It will also be hot, so be careful doing this.

Why a slow cooker will make your life easier:

- Make your dinner in the morning-typically in less than 15 minutes
- Dinner is ready and hot at the end of the day (and your home smells wonderful!)
- Make larger quantities and freeze for the future or use leftovers for lunches or next day's meals

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDS

Safety First: Please read the instructions manual/ user guide included with your slow cooker. It has important safety information you must review.

Use caution when opening, always open lid away from face, to avoid steam burns. Handle the cooking bowl carefully. Use oven mitts.

When using electrical appliances, basic safety precautions should always be followed, including the following:

1. **Read all instructions carefully before use.**
2. Do not touch hot surfaces. Use handles and knobs.
3. To protect against electric shock, do not immerse cord, plug, or any parts of the slow cooker unit (except removable cooking bowl) in water or any other liquid.
4. Close supervision is necessary when this appliance is used by or near children.
5. Do not operate any appliance with damaged cord or plug, or after the appliance malfunctions or has been dropped or damaged in any manner. Return the slow cooker to the nearest authorized service station for examination, repair or electrical or mechanical adjustment.
6. The use of attachments not recommended or sold by the manufacturer may cause fire, electrical shock or injury, and are therefore prohibited.
7. Do not use outdoors.
8. Do not place on or near a hot gas or electric burner, or in a heated oven, or in a microwave oven.
9. Unplug from outlet when not in use and before cleaning. Allow to cool before putting on or taking off parts, and before cleaning.
10. Always attach plug to appliance first, then plug cord into the wall outlet. To disconnect, remove the plug. Always hold the plug, never pull the cord.
11. Do not let the cord hang over edge of table or counter, or touch hot surfaces, Including the stove.
12. Extreme caution must be used when moving an appliance containing hot oil or other hot liquids.
13. Do not use this appliance for anything other than intended use.
14. To reduce the risk of electric shock cook only in removable container.
15. To ensure continued protection against risk of electric shock, connect to properly grounded outlets only.

HOUSEHOLD USE ONLY ADDITIONAL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

GROUNDING INSTRUCTIONS:

This appliance must be grounded. The plug must be plugged into an outlet that is properly installed and grounded.

WARNING:

Improper use of a grounded cord can result in the risk of electrical shock. Consult a qualified electrician if necessary. Do not try and defeat this safety feature by modifying the plug.

A **short power-supply cord** is provided to reduce the hazards resulting from entanglement or tripping over a long cord.

Caring For and Cleaning your Slow Cooker

WARNING: Do not immerse the Slow Cooker unit, cord, or plug in water or any other liquid. Wipe the exterior of the Slow Cooker with a clean, damp cloth. Allow to dry thoroughly. Do not use harsh detergents or abrasive cleansers.

Clean your slow cooker and all of the used accessories after each use.

Unplug before cleaning. NEVER clean the slow cooker while it is still plugged in.

Do not use harsh or abrasive cleansers on any part of the slow cooker. This can scratch it.

Do not immerse the main body in water.

Steps

1	Remove the Removable Cooking Bowl from the main body.
2	Make sure the removable cooking bowl has completely cooled, then wash it and lid in warm/hot soapy water.
3	Do not use any scouring pads on the Removable Cooking Bowl, as they may damage the bowl.
4	Allow to dry thoroughly.

*If for some reason food has cooked onto the bottom of the Removable Cooking Bowl, fill it with hot soapy water and soak. After allowing the bowl to soak, the cooked-on food should be loosened enough to remove.

You can make your own recipes too! Try writing new recipes or converting an old stove-top favorite to a slow cooker preparation. Here are some tips to help:

(show these in cookbook but only discuss these tips if there is time)

Vegetables and Meats

- Softer vegetables like mushroom and zucchini can become mushy if cooked for too long. If possible, it is best to add them during the last 30-60 minutes of cooking time.
- Fresh root vegetables like potatoes and carrots take longer to cook than meats. To ensure even cooking, place these vegetables on the bottom of the slow cooker, followed by meat, then quicker-cooking items. (Items on the bottom cook at a slightly higher temperature than those on top.)
- Remove excess fat and skin from poultry and other meats before cooking. The added fat will make the liquids fatty and increase the cooking time of the meat, often making it dry.
- You can add a little oil, turn the slow cooker on high, and saute/brown items before adding the rest of the ingredients. Try doing this while having your morning coffee, then add the rest of the ingredients when you leave for the day 15-30 minutes later.
- Don't put frozen items into the slow cooker, thaw them in the refrigerator first. Frozen meat can be unevenly cooked and frozen vegetables can add unwanted liquid to the dish.
- **Seasoning and Sauces**
- Seasonings are best added at the end because the cooking process can dull them. If using dried seasonings, add them during the last hour or so of cooking time. If using fresh, add them right before serving.
- Liquids will not evaporate like they will when cooking stove top. If converting a recipe, reduce the amount of liquids added by about half.
- To thicken sauces, try either dredging the meat in flour before cooking or adding cornstarch at the end of cooking. Also, adding a can of beans mashed with the back of a fork can be a nice thickener.

Other/General

- Cut everything (vegetable, meat, etc.) the same size so that each piece takes the same amount of time to cook.
- The slow cooker works best when filled half to two-thirds full.
- Pasta can become sticky when cooked in the slow cooker. If adding pasta like penne or spaghetti, it is better to cook it separately as the directions describe and add when finished. Small pastas (like orzo) can be cooked in the slow cooker, but should only be added during the last hour of cooking time to keep a good texture.
- Milk-based products can curdle in the slow cooker. When practical, add them at the end of the cooking process.
- Dried beans should be soaked before adding to the slow cooker. Also, salt, acids and sugar have a hardening effect on the beans, preventing them from softening. Add any sugars, salts or acids (like vinegar or lemon) after the beans are fully cooked.
- Cooking times vary depending on the individual recipe, but this table can be used as a jumping off point:

Stove Top/Oven Cook Time	Low Heat Setting	High Heat Setting
15-30 minutes	4-6 hours	1.5-2.5 hours
35-45 minutes	6-8 hours	3-4 hours
50 minutes to 3 hours	8+ hours	4-6 hours

Have class turn to **Veggie Burrito Bowl** recipe in their workbooks – recipes are in alphabetical order. Ask class for feedback on the Veggie Burrito Bowl. Encourage them to take notes on the recipe during this discussion.

Example Slow Cooker Recipes: Fruits and Vegetables

Veggie Burrito Bowl - Cuenca Burrito de Verdura y Arroz Moreno

Ingredients:
1 cup frozen corn, thawed
1 - 15 oz. can no-salt added black beans, rinsed
1 jar (15 or 16 oz.) your favorite salsa
1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 zucchini, cut into quarters
1 summer squash, cut into quarters
4 oz. cream cheese, cut into ½ inch cubes
4 cups brown rice cooked

of servings: 8

Directions: Place all the ingredients, except the brown rice, in a slow cooker and cook on low for several hours. Serve cooked veggies over brown rice and sprinkle with cheddar or jack cheese, if desired. To change it up, use quinoa instead of brown rice. For a fantastic fiesta salad, serve veggies over a bed of mixed greens with sliced avocado and cheddar cheese.

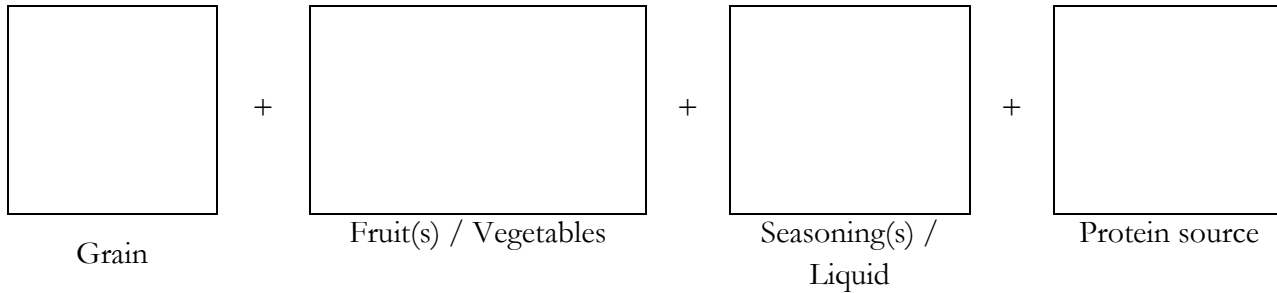
Nutritional Information Per Serving:

Calories: 404		Vitamins/Minerals	
Fat:	18g	Vitamin A:	16%
Saturated fat:	5 g	Vitamin C:	36%
% of daily total:	23%		
Carbohydrates:	50g	Calcium:	9%
Fiber:	9 g	Iron:	16%
Protein:	13g	Good Source of*:	
		Vitamins A, C and E, Iron, Selenium, Copper, Magnesium, B vitamins, Manganese, Potassium and Zinc	
		*10% or more of the RDA	

Based on 2000 calorie diet

How to Use the Recipe Framework[©]

Nurture uses the Recipe Framework to create balanced meals. (Draw diagram on board) **A Slow Cooker Recipe Framework can be found in the first section of your workbook right after the Slow Cooker Tips.**



For example, the Veggie Burrito Bowl looks like:

Brown Rice

Corn, Bell Pepper;
Zucchini, Yellow Squash

Salsa, Cream Cheese

Black Beans

It is also a great way of thinking about how to adapt recipes to better suit your family's tastes. For example, to make this recipe more appealing to your family (Help them brainstorm until they understand how it works.)

- Would you substitute any grains?
- Change the seasonings? Change the vegetables?
- Add any meats or nuts for a different protein?

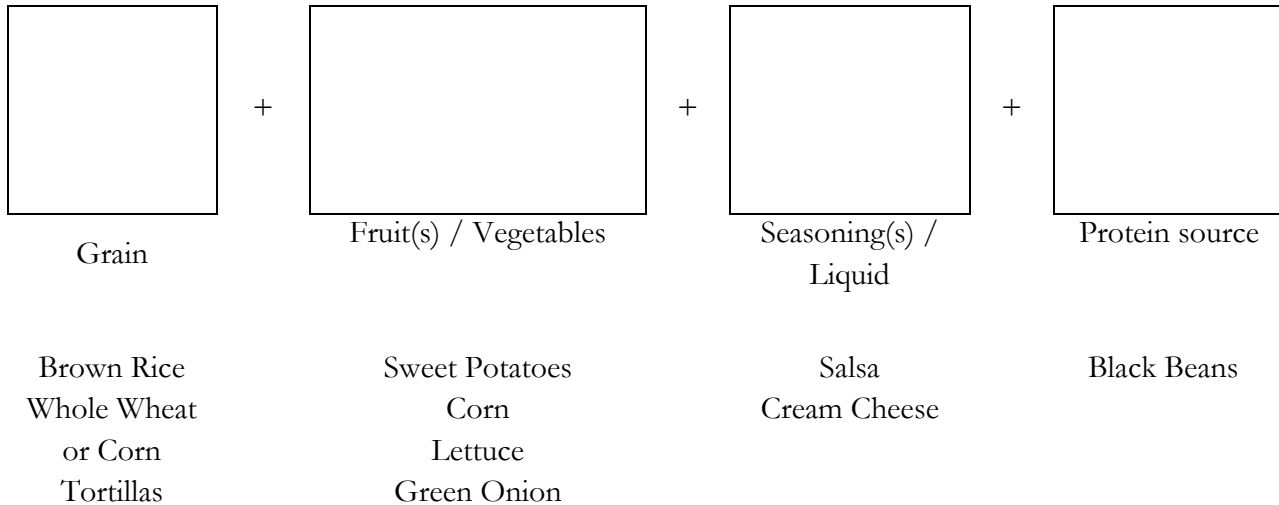
There are no wrong answers. However, bear in mind how long it takes to cook different vegetables. For example, if they want to add Spinach, they should add it at the end so it wilts. It takes so little time to cook; adding it at the end will help it maintain its nutrients. If you added a vegetable that takes longer to cook than the other ingredients, like broccoli in this example, then you'd want to cut it into small pieces so it would take a similar amount of time to cook. This will help ensure good texture for all your vegetables.

Hands-on or Cooking Demo with Sweet Potato Burritos

(Call up some participants who wanted a hands-on cooking class.)

Nurture's founder really loved the Veggie Burrito Bowl, but the kids at the school she taught at didn't like zucchini and yellow squash. She adapted the Veggie Burrito Bowl to create Sweet Potato Burritos. Let's make this recipe to show you how to use the slow cooker. This is a really big recipe so we'll only make half of it. **In the first section of your workbook after the Slow Cooker Recipe Framework is an example of how to adapt recipes using the framework. The Sweet Potato Burrito recipe can be found here. Have participants turn to that page of workbook.**

(Have the participants read the recipe, take an ingredient and say how much they are adding to the slow cooker. Remind them they are only adding half the amount shown below. As they are doing this, record the ingredients on the Recipe Framework as shown below.)



Sweet Potato Burritos – Adapted from Veggie Burrito Bowl – This is a whole recipe

Put the following into slow cooker, stir, cover, cook on high 3 to 4 hours.

- 3 to 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled, sliced
- 16oz frozen corn
- 30 oz black beans, thoroughly washed and drained
- 24oz salsa
- 8oz soft cream cheese

Mix in 3 cups cooked brown rice and salsa to taste. Serve in whole wheat or corn tortillas with veggies of choice (lettuce, green onion, etc) and salsa on the side.

Nutritional Facts for Sweet Potato Burritos: 16 servings

(not including tortillas, veggies of choice or extra salsa)

Calories:	219	Vitamins/Minerals	
Fat:	6g	Vitamin A:	88%
Saturated fat:	3 g	Vitamin C:	5%
Carbohydrates:	36g	Calcium:	5%
Fiber:	7 g	Iron:	10%
Protein:	8 g		

Distribute prepared Sweet Potato Burrito filling – don't prepare as burritos unless tortillas can be properly heated right before use. Using the Recipe Framework, what changes would you make so it better appeals to your family?

Lesson: Importance of Fruit and Vegetables

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables has been shown to: help manage weight, increase satiety, and reduce the risk of many diseases, however, nearly 90% of Americans do not get the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. The purpose of this lesson is to discuss ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our diets.

You may want to take notes on the handout: Fitting in More Fruits and Vegetables found in the last section of your workbook, behind the exercise pages.

Why do we need more fruits and vegetables:

1. Fruits and Vegetables have a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber. They also contain phytochemicals and nutrients that can't be found in any other foods. Phytochemicals help fight off the bad stuff like illness, thus keeping us healthier.
2. The color of a fruit or vegetable tells us what special nutrients it has to offer. Eating a variety of colors covers all the bases for a healthy family.

Reds: Good for the heart, memory and brain function which translates to better test grades and not losing your keys so much.

Oranges/Yellows: These fruits and vegetables may help protect against cancer and are good for our eyes, skin and immune system.

Greens: Good for strong bones and muscles, a healthy heart, and protection against cancer.

Blue/Purples: Rich in antioxidants important for memory and anti-aging so when you get older, you won't forget how good looking you are.

White: Good for heart health and protects your cells.

One of Nurture's main goals is to help you learn simple ways to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables your family eats. Let's talk about how to get your family to eat more fruits and vegetables:

1. Use [My Plate](#) as a guideline: fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal and make them colorful. (SHOW MY PLATE). Your children are learning about MyPlate today. They are learning about the importance of eating balanced meals which contain all five food groups and how half the plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables.
2. **Let your family help cook, plan and shop for meals.** Children who help plan and prepare meals are more likely to eat what they made. Let little ones mix, measure and stir or if they're older, peel and chop fruits and vegetables.
3. **Mix and sprinkle:** Add fruits and vegetables in soups, casseroles, smoothies, eggs etc. Chop them small to disguise them or use a grater to sprinkle them on top if it helps.
4. **Chop, display, snack:** Take the time to wash and cut fruits and veggies for easy access. Make them very visible (put them in clear containers in the front of the fridge)...out of sight out of mind (the same goes for junk food: if it's not there, they won't be tempted to eat it). Need a quick snack, they're ready to go.

5. **Serve produce first:** Start dinner with an appetizer of fruits and vegetables with dip (yogurt ranch, hummus or nut butter) or cheese. This way your family gets some fruits and vegetables before they fill up on other foods. PS, everyone loves dip and fruits and veggies are a great vehicle for dip.
6. **Try, try, repeat:** It can take 10-15 trials before a child will like a new food. Be gently persistent and encourage your child to try new foods but never force her to eat something or to clean her plate. Children have an internal regulating system that tells them when they are full. Save leftovers and try it again tomorrow.
7. **Be a good role model:** Everyone in the family influences what a child eats, but especially mom and dad. If you're not eating fruits and veggies, your child won't either. Turn off the TV and talk with your children during dinner. Not only will this help them see you eating and enjoying your fruits and veggies, it will also help them do better in school as children in families who eat together perform better in school.
8. **Give them super powers and let them play:** Make trees out of carrot sticks and broccoli and give each food a super power: little green trees help you grow tall like the trees outside (broccoli), super 3-D vision (carrots) etc.
9. **Pay attention to texture and smell:** Some children don't like raw fruits and veggies, but will eat them up if they're a little sweeter after roasting them. Others will only eat raw. Experiment to see what your children enjoy. Spinach salad may be too hard for your 2 year old to eat, but he can't get enough if it's blended with bananas in a smoothie.
10. **Don't forbid foods:** If you make something off limits, it only becomes more appealing, right? Have you ever tried giving up chocolate? If you keep mostly healthy foods around the house but serve the occasional treat, you can achieve **balance**, which is what it's all about.

Take a hard look at your pantry. If children are given a choice between salty snacks, granola bars, and sweetened cereal versus fresh fruit and vegetables, which do you think they will choose? Overtime, reduce the amount of processed snacks you keep in the house and stock up on your kid's favorite fresh fruits and vegetables. Get them involved in the grocery shopping. Have them help write out the grocery lists. The key is to start with gradual changes and include them in the process!

(Distribute samples of Three Bean Minestrone. Have participants eat during discussion.)

Q&A:

How many fruits and vegetables do I need (or do my children need) each day?

For children, aim for a minimum of 3 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit per day. A serving is 1/2 cup. Adults need around 5 to 6 servings of vegetables (or 2 1/2 to 3 cups) and 4 servings of fruit (2 cups). The Eat More Fruits and Vegetables Handout provides a great resource for calculating how many servings of fruits and vegetables your family needs (it varies based on age, gender, and activity level).

3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit, that sounds like a lot! How do I meet these requirements?

Start small. Don't try to meet the requirements all at once. Try increasing your fruit and vegetable intake gradually. For example, order additional veggies on your sandwich, add extra veggies to soups and stews, or throw in a few extra veggies in your pasta dish. For fruit, start at breakfast. Add sliced bananas or raisins to your cereal. Pack a piece of fruit such as an apple or pear for a mid morning snack.

My kids eat plenty of fruits, but won't touch vegetables, any advice?

Children's taste buds may be sensitive to texture and taste, especially to more bitter vegetables such as asparagus, brussel sprouts or broccoli. Start with more sweet or neutral vegetables such as carrots, zucchini, lettuce, or squash.

If you are serving a more bitter vegetable, add a touch a lemon or orange juice to help reduce the bitterness, or serve the vegetable with a small amount of dip (such as hummus or salad dressing to help mask the bitterness).

Roasting vegetables helps bring out their natural sweetness. Try roasting carrots, parsnips, and diced sweet potatoes in the oven. Roasting vegetables is very easy. Cut your vegetables into uniform sizes. Toss with a small amount of olive oil or vegetable oil to lightly coat. Season with pepper or other seasonings as desired. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet with some space between the vegetables. Bake at 400° for 30 to 45 minutes until vegetables are soft and lightly browned.

Pair vegetables with foods you know your child likes. For example, mac and cheese with broccoli, or peanut butter with celery. Pairing vegetables with your child's favorite foods increases the likelihood that he/she will like the vegetable- or grow to like it.

Give your child a choice. For example, when planning meals or grocery shopping, ask your child if he/she would like cucumber or carrots. Research shows that when children are given a choice, the more likely they are to consume vegetables.

Fresh produce is so expensive. I have a hard time rationalizing buying it because my children won't eat it! Any suggestions?

Frozen fruits and vegetables are a great alternative. They have the same nutrients as fresh produce and are usually less expensive. Canned fruits and vegetables typically contain added sugar and/or salt, so read labels carefully when selecting canned vegetables.

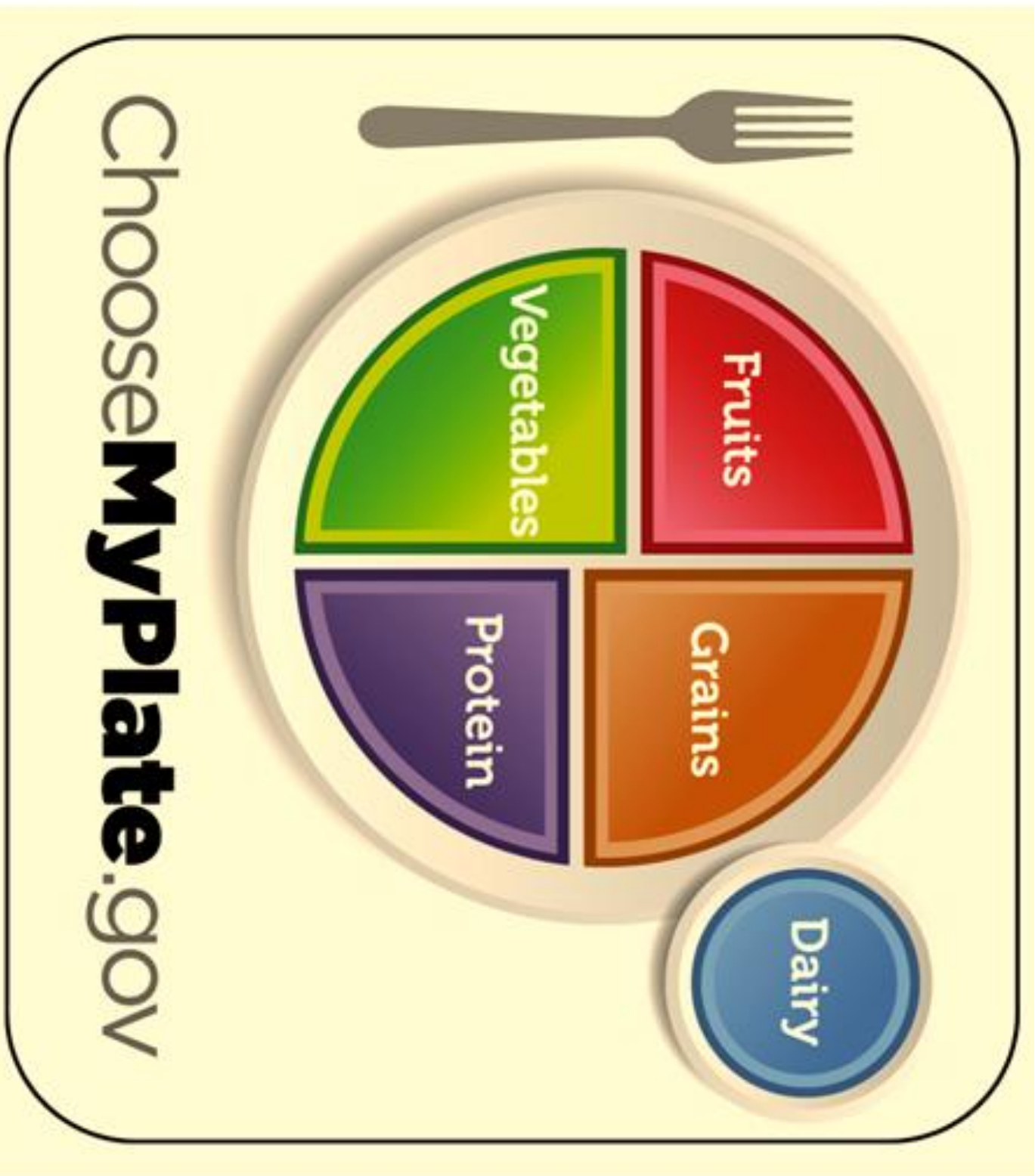
Buy what's in season. You can get great deals on fresh fruit and vegetables when you buy in season.

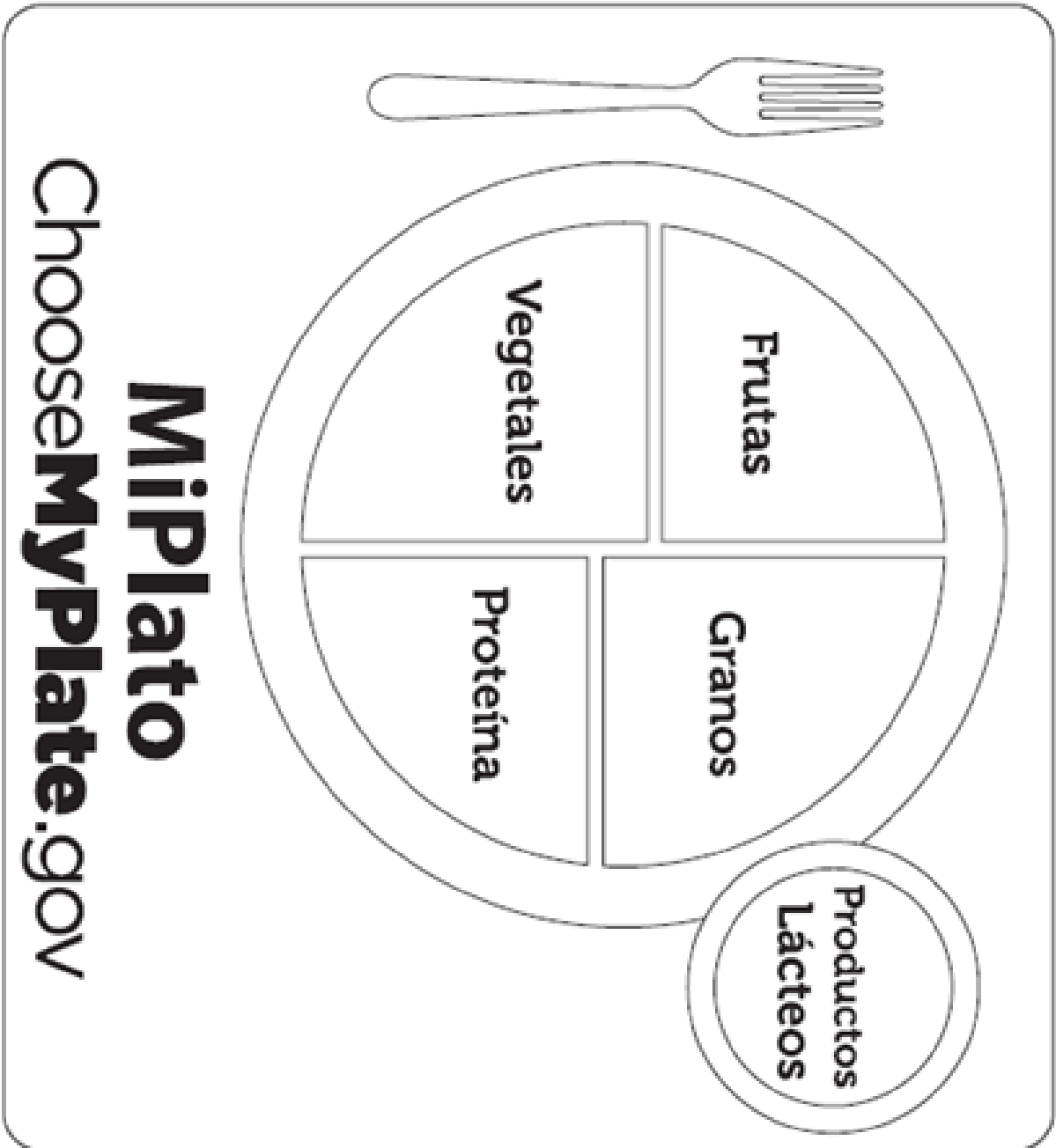
Make it accessible. Children love grab and go snacks. After you grocery shop, ask for their help in washing and drying the produce. Place it in containers and/or bowls that are visible and within their reach.

What about juices that contain both fruits and vegetables?

Fruit/vegetable juice blends are missing essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that are found in the peels of the fruits and vegetables. In addition, they typically contain a lot of sugar. If you do choose to buy juice, make sure to look for what % is juice. There are many drinks that look like juice but actually contain very little fruit juice. Look for 100% juice.

Resources: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>





Example Slow Cooker Recipes: Fruits and Vegetables

Ask for participant feedback on Three Bean Minestrone and analyze using Recipe Framework.

- Softening ingredients in the slow cooker is similar in concept to browning except it takes longer and doesn't develop the same depth of flavor. Browning or skipping the softening altogether are options

Three Bean Minestrone – Minestrone de tres frijoles

Ingredients:
3 Tablespoons canola oil or vegetable oil
1 Spanish (sweet) onion, chopped
3 medium carrots, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 large zucchini, diced
10 oz frozen spinach, thawed
4 cups low sodium chicken stock and 4 cups water
1- 15oz can low sodium red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 - 15oz can low sodium white beans, drained and rinsed
1 - 15oz can low sodium chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 - 15oz can diced tomato, with juice
1 - 15oz can no salt added crushed tomato, with juice
1 Tablespoon Italian seasoning, pepper to taste
2/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
8 oz small whole wheat pasta (orzo, macaroni, mini shells, etc)

Directions: Turn slow cooker to high, heat the oil, and 'saute' the onion, carrot, celery, and garlic for 30-60 minutes (optional, this can be skipped). Add the rest of the ingredients, except for the pasta and cheese, and cook on low for 8 hours (or 4 on high). One hour before serving, add the orzo and Parmesan cheese. Enjoy!

of Servings: 10 Nutritional information per 1 ½ cup serving

Calories: 359		Vitamins/Minerals	
Fat:	8g	Vitamin A:	147%
Saturated fat:	2g	Vitamin C:	55%
% of daily total:	20%	Calcium:	24%
Carbohydrates:	19g	Iron:	32%
Fiber:	13g	Excellent Source of (20% or more of RDA) Vitamin A, C, and K, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Nicacin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium, Copper, Manganese, and Selenium	
Sodium	324mg		
Protein:	20g	Good Source of (10% or more of the RDA): Zinc	

Based on 2000 calorie diet