Balance My Plate

Lesson Description

In this lesson, students review how to organize foods into the 5 food groups of the MyPlate model and practice creating balanced meals with choices from all 5 groups. They are also introduced to the nutritional value of each group and the major nutrients: protein, vitamins, minerals, sugars and fat.

- Time required: 60 minutes
- Location of lesson: Classroom

Learning Objectives

- Describe how food choices can affect health.
- Use **MyPlate** to create a balanced meal containing choices from all 5 food groups.
- Be introduced to major nutrients (protein, vitamins, minerals, sugars and fat).

Attitude and Behavior Goals

- Eat a balanced diet by making healthy choices from each of the 5 food groups.

Materials and Preparation

- Crayons; at least 1 per student
- **My Native Plate**
- **MyPlate**
- **My Plate** (Blank)
- **My Plate** (Divided)
- **Nutrients: Making Your Body Strong**
- Extra copies of blank **MyPlate** in case some students wish to draw more than 1
- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)

- Review the evaluation questions from last week's lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook 🕮.

- **Warm-up activity (5 minutes)**
  - Ask some warm-up questions about today's topic:
    - *Does anyone remember the names of some of the food groups?*
  - Ask the students to think about and draw their favorite meal on the blank 🕮 **MyPlate** page of their workbook.
    1. Have the students draw the meal as they usually eat it even if it does not include all 5 food groups.
    2. Ask a couple of students to share their meal with the class and discuss if the meals have different food groups.
    3. Set the drawings aside and come back to them after the class discussion.

Class Discussion: MyPlate (10 minutes)

Show students the 🖐 **MyPlate** and the 🖐 **My Native Plate**. Refer them to the divided 🕮 **MyPlate** page in their workbooks. *We can use **MyPlate** as a tool to help us plan balanced meals. There are 5 basic food groups. They are grains, vegetables, fruits, proteins and dairy.* Ask students some questions about the **MyPlate**. *Are all the sections on the plate the same size? How are they different? What do you think this means? Which sections are the biggest?*

Fruits and vegetables contain many different vitamins and minerals which protect us from diseases and help us to look and feel our best. We need colorful fruits and vegetables like dark green, red and orange. We must eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. What are your favorite vegetables to eat? What are your favorite fruits? What are some examples of colorful fruits and vegetables?

Grains give us energy, vitamins and minerals and fiber - which helps with digestion and helps us to feel full longer. Foods made from wheat, rice, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain are in the grain group. Some healthy whole grain examples are whole wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, corn tortillas and grits.

Protein helps us grow and build strong muscles. The protein group includes fish, chicken, red meat (hamburgers, steak, mutton), beans, eggs and nuts. Who likes eating fish? Chicken? What other foods from the protein group do you like to eat?

The dairy group is important because milk products contain an essential mineral – calcium. Milk yogurt and cheese are part of this group. Some people's bodies are lactose intolerant and can't digest milk products. This is because traditionally, humans didn't drink milk past infancy. There are other foods that contain calcium including lactose free milk, non-dairy milks like soymilk or almond milk, fortified breakfast cereals and orange juice and fruits and vegetables that are also included in this group. What are your favorite dairy foods?

Activity (10 minutes)

- 📖**"Is My Meal Balanced?" (10 minutes)**: Students will work together to determine if a favorite meal includes all 5 food groups.
    1. Work in groups of 2.
    2. Ask students to review the meal they drew in the warm-up activity.
    3. Ask students if it contains all 5 food groups.
    4. Encourage students to help each other make their meal closer to the 🖐**MyPlate** model including all 5 food groups.

Class Discussion: Nutrients (10 minutes)

Food provides our body with many different nutrients - chemical substances that give our bodies energy, help us grow and keep us healthy. We can't actually see nutrients because they are so small. There are 6 different types of nutrients: vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, proteins, fat and water. Each food contains a different mix of nutrients. And each nutrient has a special job that it does for the body. That is why it is important to eat a variety of foods from each food group to get all of the nutrients your body needs. The following activities will help us learn more about nutrients.

Activities (15 minutes)

- 📖**"Nutrients: Making Your Body Strong" (5 minutes):** Ask for a student volunteer to read the different nutrients found in the 📖 **Nutrients: Making Your Body Strong** workbook page.

- **"What Nutrients Do for the Body" (10 minutes):** Students perform activities together as a class to illustrate nutrient functions.
    1. *Vitamins:*
        a. *Vitamin A: Turn off the lights and look around the room. Are you still able to see a little? Vitamin A helps our eyesight.*
        b. *Vitamin C: How many people have colds? Vitamin C helps our immune system to fight off germs.*
    2. *Minerals:*
        a. *Calcium: Clench teeth together. Did anyone's teeth break? Calcium is essential for building strong teeth.*
        b. *Iron: Take a deep breath. Iron takes oxygen from the lungs to other cells in the body.*
    3. *Carbohydrates: Do 5 jumping jacks. The body uses carbohydrates for energy to do this activity.*
    4. *Fats: Do 10 jumping jacks. If we keep doing jumping jacks for a long time, our bodies burn fat for energy.*
    5. *Protein: Do a push up (on the floor or with hands on a desk or chair). The muscles used are made of protein. You can also put your hand on your chest and feel your heart muscle beating.*

6. *Water: Sweating after an activity is the body's way of cooling down. You can also breathe into the palm of your hand and feel the moisture.*

Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)

1. *What are the 5 basic food groups?* (Answers: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk (dairy) and protein)
2. *At meal time, how much of our plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables?* (Answer: half)
3. *What can you do when eating fruits and vegetables to be sure you are getting all the vitamins and minerals we need?* (Answer: eat a variety of colors)
4. *What are 3 out of the 6 categories of nutrients?* (Answers: carbohydrates, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, water)
5. *Why is it important to eat a variety of foods from all of the food groups?* (Answer: to ensure that we get all of the nutrients our bodies need to grow and stay healthy)
6. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
7. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
8. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Fall lessons: Lesson 2 (Exploring Plant Parts), Lesson 4 (Traveling Seeds), Lesson 6 (Winterizing the Garden) and Lesson 10 (Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking).

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