

Choose Your Food

Grades 3-4 Activity

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the types of nutrients in the foods that we eat.
- Recognize the amount of food our bodies need.
- Explain why it is important to eat from a “healthy plate.”

Ideas for Classroom Discussion:

- Talk with the class about the kinds of nutrients our bodies need to keep moving, thinking, and growing. Starches give us energy. Proteins help us build strong muscles. Vegetables and fruits give us vitamins and minerals. Ask them about their favorite foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Talk about the portions of food on a healthy plate: 1/4 of the plate should be filled with starches; 1/4 should be filled with protein; and 1/2 should be filled with vegetables and fruit. Have the class think about the amount of food and kinds of food they eat at mealtimes. Do they eat enough “good for you” foods? Do they always include vegetables and fruits with their meals? Which ones? Which are their favorites? Explain why our bodies need nutrients and why we should not eat too much of any food, even if it’s good for you. Because our bodies need a variety of nutrients and we need to eat a variety of foods in order to get all of these nutrients. A fun way to think of it is to eat a variety of colors from the vegetable and fruit groups every day.
- Talk about eating from a range of colors at every meal. What foods are not on their healthy plates? Should they NEVER eat these foods? Emphasize that there are some foods that are better for your body than others, but that doesn’t mean that we can’t eat them sometimes. For example, fruit and brownies are both sweet and make a good dessert. However, one is healthier than the other. Why should we eat more fruit than brownies?
- Ask the class about their favorite snack foods. Talk about healthy snacks from the food groups. What is a healthy snack? Ideally, a snack includes foods from two food groups, such as fruit and yogurt, cheese and crackers, peanut butter and crackers, a sandwich, apples and peanut butter, or carrots and string cheese.

Take It Further:

- Have students categorize the food on their healthy plate using the food groups. Ask students to identify the food groups (starch, fruits and vegetables, protein) that the foods on their plate belong to. Also ask the students to evaluate the foods in the food pyramid and determine which food groups contain starches, protein, and vegetables and fruit.
- Have the class create a healthy breakfast, lunch, snack, or dinner menu. Have the students draw or cut out magazine pictures from each of the food groups. In the classroom, review the food groups. Give each student a white paper plate. Have students pick foods and paste them on their plates using the “healthy plate” portions above. Post their healthy plates on a bulletin board or in the hallway. During the week, ask the students if they ate any of these foods for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Or, ask them to make it a goal to eat some of these foods during the week.

Additional Resources:

Visit the American Diabetes Association Web site at diabetes.org/schoolwalk additional materials and resources for your classroom:

- Full-color flier of the food pyramid
- More School Walk for Diabetes educational activities
- Activity pyramid reference tool
- Shaping America’s Health

You may also want to visit MyPyramid.gov to download the USDA food pyramid mini poster or other materials to review with your class.

This lesson aligns with National Standards!

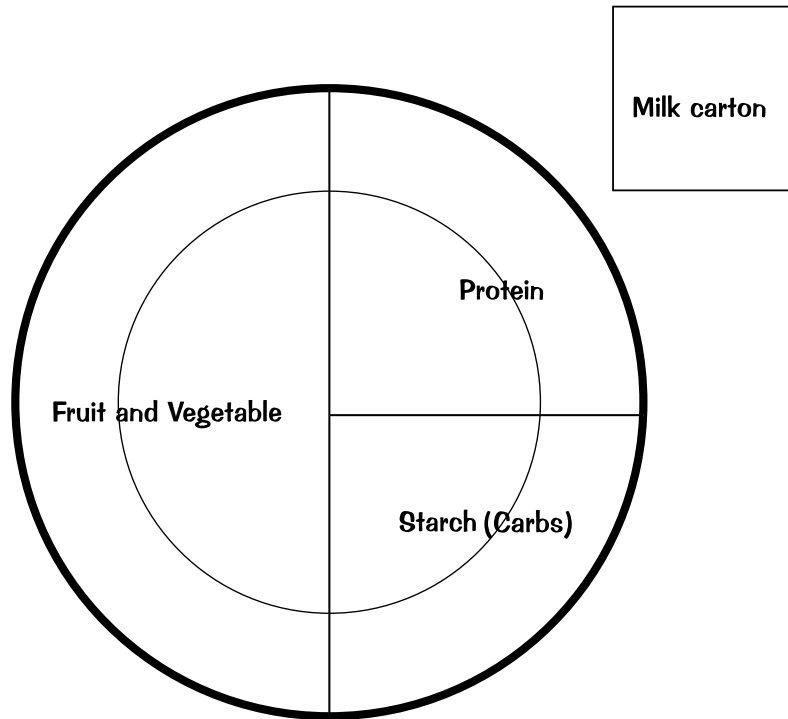
National Health Education Standards

Standard 3: Accessing Information – Students will be able to identify nutrients in foods and healthy proportions of foods.

Standard 5: Decision Making – Students will be able to identify a variety of foods, choose healthy snacks and create healthy menus.

Read more about the National Health Education Standards and National Standards for Physical Education in the Classroom Lessons tab of the School Walk for Diabetes Kit.

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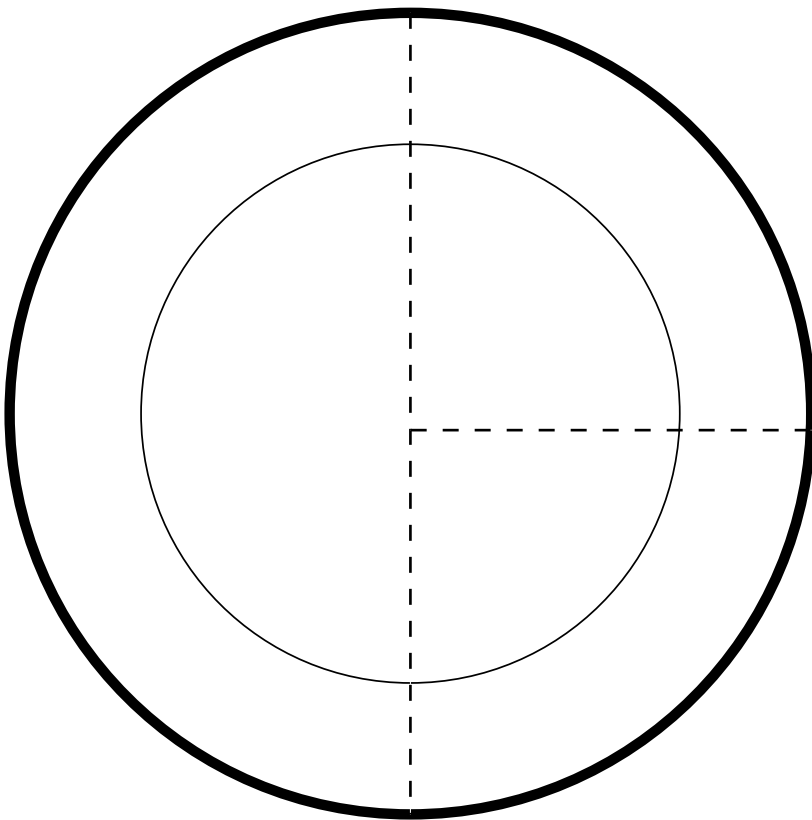
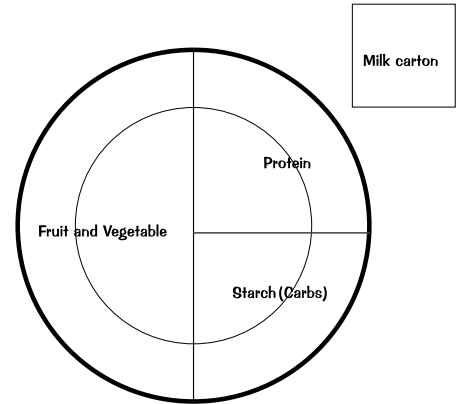
Circle the food that is missing from each plate.

Plate 1: Protein (top-right), Fruit and Vegetable (left).
Items: Chicken drumstick, slice of bread, banana.

Plate 2: Protein (top-right), Starch (Carbs) (bottom-right).
Items: Fish, broccoli, taco.

Plate 3: Fruit and Vegetable (left), Starch (Carbs) (bottom-right).
Items: Fried egg, bowl of rice with chopsticks, corn on the cob.

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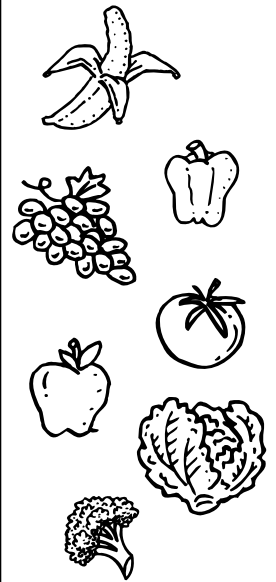
Protein



Starch/Carbs



Fruit and Vegetables



Trace the imaginary lines of the plate. Draw a food from each category onto the plate.