



Guide to Hands-on Learning



second harvest
HEARTLAND
Food changes everything.™

Section 7: Nutrition for a Healthy Body

Lesson Description

Students will understand healthy food choices.

Materials Needed

Computer and Internet access.

Preflection

- What do you know about nutrition?
- What does your body need to operate at its best?
- How do your nutritional needs change as you age?
- How can you improve your health by what you eat?
- What are the food groups?



Facts

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, a healthy diet includes a variety of foods from the major food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods.

Fruits and vegetables are loaded with antioxidants, essential minerals, health-enhancing fiber and flavonoids that all bodies need. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. It may also protect against certain types of cancers. Eating fruits and vegetables rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss. The goal is to eat 5-9 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Grains are any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or other cereal grain. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products. Grains are important sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).

Proteins are part of every cell, tissue, and organ in our bodies. These body proteins are constantly being broken down and replaced. The protein in the foods we eat is digested into amino acids that are later used to replace these proteins in our bodies.



Protein is found in the following foods:

- Meats, poultry, and fish
- Legumes (dry beans and peas)
- Tofu
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds
- Milk and milk products



Dairy All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Most Dairy Group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group. Calcium is used for building bones and teeth and in maintaining bone mass. Dairy products are the primary source of calcium in American diets. Diets that provide 3 cups or the equivalent of dairy products per day can improve bone mass.



Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not.

From myplate.gov

Activity 1

Research and report on why a healthy body needs each food group.

Activity 2

Create a kid-friendly brochure that encourages young people to eat a healthy diet. Include tips to include more fruits and vegetables. This could also be a video or PSA and be shown over the school TV channel.

Activity 3

Complete a food journal that documents all food and liquids consumed in 24 or 48 hours. Students can use a computer or electronic apps to keep track.

- Did you see any patterns in your food intake? For example, did you eat the required/suggested amounts of fruits and vegetables? Protein? Healthy fats? Grains?
- How much liquid did you drink?
- Often, the most brightly colored foods contain the most nutrients. What colors did you eat today?
- Are there any food patterns that you would like to change?
- Did anything surprise you about this exercise?

If you're interested in learning more about healthy foods to eat, visit "[Choose My Plate](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx)" at [choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx). Use the website's tool to enter your age, sex, weight, height and physical activity level to get a personalized, healthy meal plan just for you.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

- Did any of the nutritional information about food surprise you?
- What healthy habits do you have that you will continue?
- Based on what you know now, what foods would you give to a food collection?

Extension to Learning

Make a list of foods locally grown. Visit a local farmers market and see if you can find these foods. Are there foods you didn't expect to see? Talk to the farmers about how they grow their food.

Look at the resource list at the end of this guide. Follow the links to learn more about our Harvest to Home program, which allows us to collect agricultural surplus and fresh, local food from the Minneapolis Farmers Market.

