



Getting the Most Nutrition From Your Food

Lesson Highlights

Objective

Students will:

- Review the content of *MyPyramid for Kids*, identifying food groups and important nutrition messages relating to each food group.
- Chart the foods they eat during 1 day and place each food into the appropriate food group.
- Explore the concept of choosing the healthier foods from each group and discuss examples from all the food groups.

Curriculum Connections:

Math, Science, Language arts

Student Skills Developed:

- Analysis and recordkeeping
- Understanding and interpreting visual data
- Understanding scientific inquiry

Materials:

- *MyPyramid for Kids* classroom poster
- *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout for each student
- *MyPyramid Worksheet* for each student
- Access to the *MyPyramid.gov* Web site during class, in the computer lab, or at home

Getting Started:

Hang the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster (full-text side) where everyone can see it.

Pass out the black-and-white *MyPyramid for Kids* handout to each student. Review the food groups and messages with your students. Have students follow along and write the name of the food groups on the handout.

Here are some points to discuss with your students:

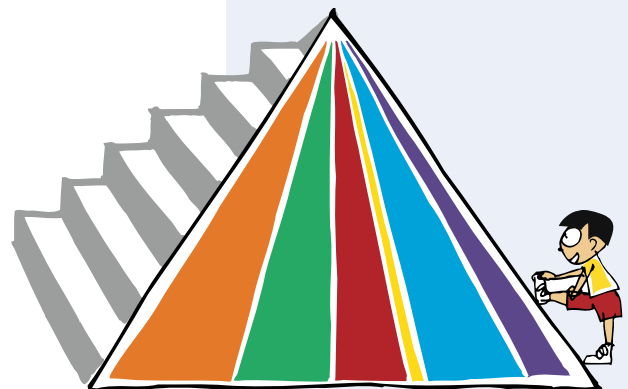
- **Make half your grains whole.** Whole grains are higher in fiber and some nutrients than other grains. Look for whole wheat or other whole grains on the ingredient label of bread bags and cereal boxes. It should be the first thing listed. Ask your students whether they can name other grains (*oats, rye, corn*). Most grains are ground into flour, then made into grain foods like cereals, bread, and tortillas. Popcorn is a whole grain too.
- **Vary your veggies.** Most people do not eat enough vegetables, especially dark green and orange vegetables. Ask students if they can name dark green and orange vegetables (*broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, romaine lettuce, spinach, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes*). Vegetables have vitamins and minerals that are important for a healthy body.
- **Focus on fruits.** Variety is important. Tell students they should try to eat different colors of fruit such as oranges, cantaloupes, strawberries, grapes, and blueberries. Juice drinks should be 100% juice.
- **Get your calcium-rich foods.** Milk and milk products are sources of calcium. Tell students that they are at an age when calcium is most important because their bones are growing quickly. Ask them to name other milk products (*cheese, yogurt, ice cream*). Check the labels for fat content. (*Students may be interested to learn that there is calcium in dark green leafy vegetables, but it takes a lot to equal the calcium in a glass of milk.*)
- **Go lean with protein.** Protein is needed for growth; however, many Americans eat too much protein. Extra calories of any kind get turned into fat. (*Students will learn more about protein in Lesson 2.*)
- **Physical activity.** *MyPyramid for Kids* focuses on physical activity. Ask students whether they get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day. Do they think most kids do? Why or why not?

- **Point out** that *MyPyramid for Kids* gives the amounts to eat in ounces and cups – ounces for the grain and meat and beans groups and vegetables, fruit, and milk are given in cups.

Note: ounce equivalents for grains can also be measured in cups, e.g., 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal or ½ cup cooked cereal, and ounce equivalents for meats and beans can also be measured in tablespoons, e.g., peanut butter.

Getting the most nutrition from your food:

- Ask your students if they know why the food group stripes are wider at the bottom of *MyPyramid for Kids*. Explain that every food group has foods that you should eat more often than others; these are at the bottom of *MyPyramid for Kids*. The wider stripes at the bottom remind you to eat more of these healthier foods.
- Explain that the foods at the bottom of *MyPyramid for Kids* provide vitamins and minerals without a lot of solid fat or added sugar. Examples include: a slice of whole-wheat bread, a piece of fruit, steamed vegetables, fat-free milk, or a baked chicken breast. Tell your students that they should choose these foods most often because it is important to get the nutrients the body needs without eating too much solid fat or added sugar.
- Foods with higher amounts of solid fat and added sugar are in the narrower top area of *MyPyramid for Kids*. Tell students that occasionally everyone can enjoy these foods (for example, cake, candy, sweetened drinks, chips, and fried foods). But, eating too many of the foods from the top of *MyPyramid for Kids* could lead to weight gain.



- Every food group has foods that fall into the bottom and the top of *MyPyramid for Kids*. Here are some examples. Recreate the main text of the chart below on the board and discuss why the foods have been placed in each category. (The explanations in italics are points you might make.)

MyPyramid for Kids Food Group Stripes

Food Groups	Wider Area	Narrower Area
Grains	Whole-wheat bread	Doughnut
Explanation: <i>Whole-wheat bread is a whole grain food with little fat. But doughnuts are fried and have lots of fat and added sugar.</i>		
Vegetables	Baked sweet potato	French fries
Explanation: <i>Baked sweet potato is an orange vegetable full of vitamins and minerals and it doesn't need butter or sugar to taste good! The French fries are also potatoes, but they are fried and have a lot of fat.</i>		
Fruits	Peach	Peach pie
Explanation: <i>Fresh peaches are in their most natural form and have a lot of vitamins and minerals. A slice of peach pie has less than one peach and has a lot of added sugar and fat.</i>		
Milk	Lowfat frozen yogurt	Ice cream
Explanation: <i>Both lowfat frozen yogurt and ice cream are desserts made from milk. The lowfat frozen yogurt is usually made from fat-free milk, while the ice cream is often made with cream, which is higher in fat.</i>		
Meat and Beans	Baked fish	Fried fish
Explanation: <i>Fish has lots of protein. The amount of fat depends on the way it has been cooked. Fried fish is much higher in fat than baked fish.</i>		

- Ask your students if they can think of other foods in each food group that belong on the top and bottom of *MyPyramid for Kids*. Have them write in their ideas on the *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout.



Activity: *MyPyramid Worksheet*

Pass out the *MyPyramid for Kids Worksheet* to students. Ask students to fill out the worksheet by listing all the foods (and the amounts) they ate yesterday for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. After students have completed this task, have students categorize the foods they ate yesterday into food groups. (You may need to help students with combination foods. For example, a slice of pizza would fit into several food groups such as grains, vegetables, milk, and meat and beans.) Next, have them list their physical activity and time spent on each activity. Then have the students rate how they did yesterday and set goals for tomorrow.

Group Activity: Play the *MyPyramid Blast-Off Game*

As a follow-up to the lesson, have students play the *MyPyramid Blast-Off Game* on the enclosed CD ROM or at teamnnutrition.usda.gov or MyPyramid.gov educators' page. In this game, students see if they can make the *MyPyramid* rocket fly. To do this they need to fill the rocket with the right "fuel"— a day's worth of smart food choices and physical activity. They will use the knowledge learned from this lesson to help them make the best choices. After students have played the game, ask what they have learned.



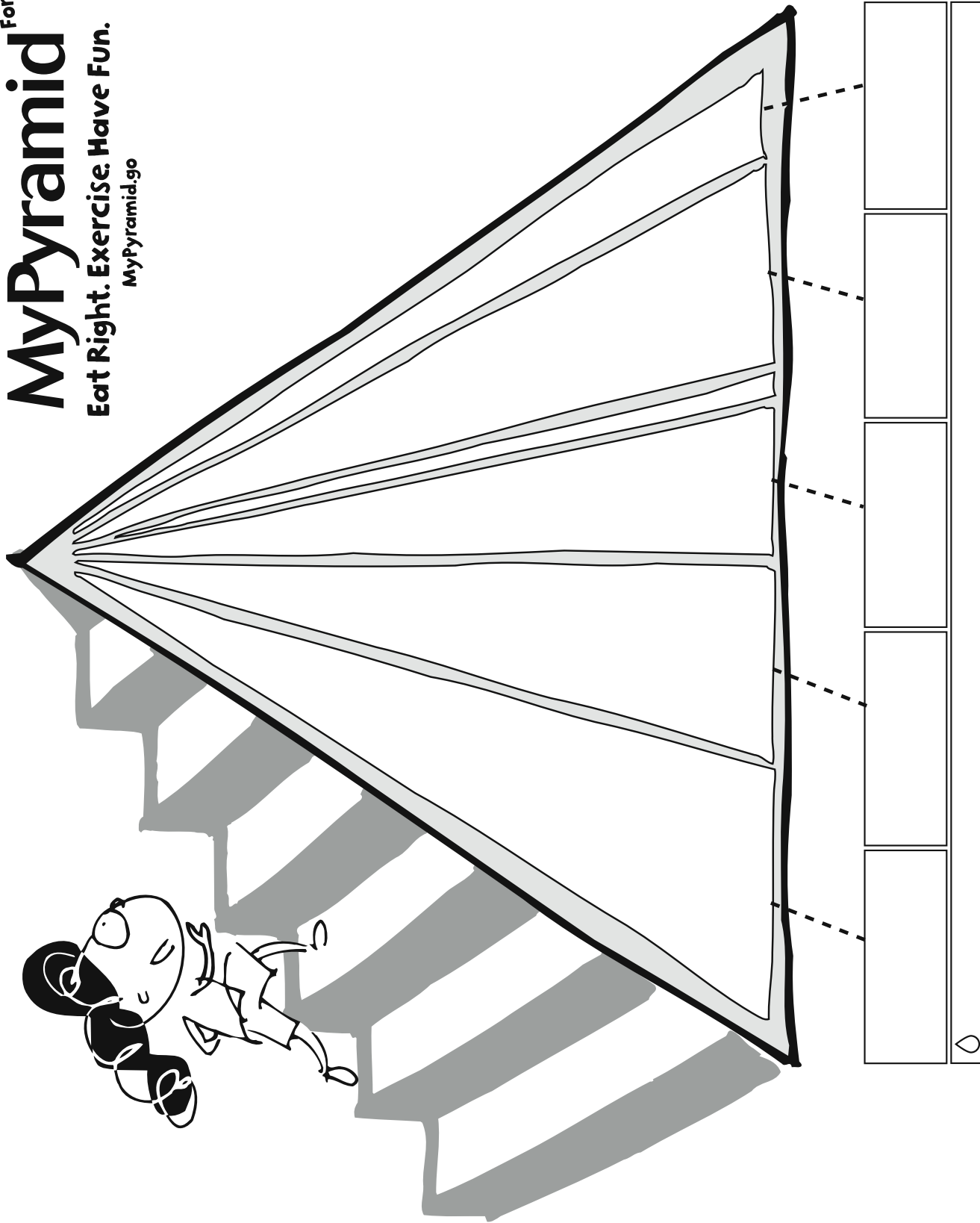
Lunchroom Link:

Have students analyze 1 week of lunchroom menus, identifying which foods come from each of the food groups and if the foods fit on the top or bottom of *MyPyramid for Kids*.

MyPyramid For Kids

Eat Right. Exercise. Have Fun.

MyPyramid.go



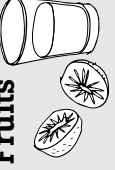





MyPyramid Worksheet

Name: _____

MyPyramid FOR KIDS

Check how you did yesterday and set a goal to aim for tomorrow

Write In Your Choices From Yesterday	Food and Activity	Tip	Goal (Based On a 1800 Calorie Pattern)	List Each Food Choice In Its Food Group*	Estimate Your Total
Breakfast:	Grains 	Make at least half your grains whole grains.	6 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent is about 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, or 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal)		_____ ounce equivalents
Lunch:	Vegetables 	Color your plate with all kinds of great tasting veggies.	2 1/2 cups (Choose from dark green, orange, starchy, dry beans and peas, or other veggies).		_____ cups
Snack:	Fruits 	Make most choices fruit, not juice.	1 1/2 cups		_____ cups
Dinner:	Milk 	Choose fat-free or lowfat most often.	3 cups (1 cup yogurt or 1 1/2 ounces cheese = 1 cup milk)		_____ cups
	Meat and Beans 	Choose lean meat and chicken or turkey. Vary your choices—more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.	5 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent is 1 ounce meat, chicken or turkey, or fish, 1 egg, 1 T. peanut butter, 1/2 ounce nuts, or 1/4 cup dry beans)		_____ ounce equivalents
Physical activity:	Physical Activity 	Build more physical activity into your daily routine at home and school.	At least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a day or most days.		_____ minutes

Use teacher-created *MyPyramid Menu Worksheets* available under "Teacher Resources" on the electronic blueprint in place of this worksheet.

* Some foods don't fit into any group. These "extras" may be mainly fat or sugar—limit your intake of these.

How did you do yesterday? Great So-So Not So Great

My food goal for tomorrow is: _____

My activity goal for tomorrow is: _____

