

Healthy Food – Using the Food Pyramid

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: Health Skills

Lesson Duration: Two or three class

Student Objectives

- Develop a healthful school lunch menu for a week.
- Learn about the importance of a healthy diet and assess their eating habits.

Materials

- Discovery School video on *unitedstreaming: Managing Your Health: Weight Control*
Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- Diets
- Fast Food

- Computer with Internet access
- Note and chart paper
- Pens, markers

Procedures

1. Divide the class into two groups and explain that each group will research what constitutes a good diet. Students will create a week's worth of healthful lunches for the school cafeteria. Tell students they will find information about such diets on the Internet. If the class has access to only one computer, one group can brainstorm lunch menus based on past lunches and favorite meals at home while the other group is online.
2. Tell students they will be using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Guide Pyramid as a guide to their meal planning. Ask if they've seen the pyramid on the boxes of such foods as cereal and crackers, and whether they're familiar with the concept.
3. Direct them to the following Web sites:
 - <http://www.nal.usda.gov:8001/py/pmap.htm>

Here they can research the Food Guide Pyramid, a general guide to a healthful diet. Suggest that students take notes as they explore the site with its Dietary Guidelines links to AIM for

Fitness, BUILD a Healthy Base, and CHOOSE Sensibly. Have students take a few minutes to look over the Food Guide Pyramid and the recommended daily servings for each food group. Tell students that these servings apply to all people.

- http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html

This site features a colorful image of the Food Guide Pyramid and a look at the different food groups, as well as a glossary of medical terms and a link to articles on Being Good to My Body, Fabulous Food, and Keeping Fit and Having Fun.

4. After the two groups have finished their online research, have them create their week's worth of menus on chart paper. Tell them they may use markers to draw some of the foods or decorate their menus as they wish, perhaps even attaching Food Guide Pyramids from product boxes.
5. Have each group share its menus with the class. If a school nutritionist or dietician is available, arrange for that person to attend these presentations, comment on the menus, and talk to the students about the importance of eating right to stay fit.
6. Lead a class discussion on what the students learned about diet from the Web sites, why some foods are "good" and some are "bad," and how the students would assess their own diets.
7. Review important vocabulary words.
8. To help students understand what a serving is, share with them the following equivalencies:

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

- 1 serving = 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1 serving = 1 1/2 oz. of natural cheese, or 2 oz. of processed cheese

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts

- 1 serving = 2-3 oz. of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 serving = 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans
- 1 serving = 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter and 1/2 cup of peanuts is equivalent to 1 oz. of meat. Because nuts are high in fat, they must be eaten sparingly. (2 tablespoons of peanut butter is about half a serving, as is 1/2 cup of peanuts. Rather than eat a complete serving of these foods, it may be wise to supplement these portions with other foods from that food group.)

Vegetables

- 1 serving = 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1 serving = 1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or raw
- 1 serving = 3/4 cups of vegetable juice

Fruits

- 1 serving = 1 medium apple, banana, or orange
- 1 serving = 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit

- 1 serving = 3/4 cup of fruit juice

Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta

- 1 serving = 1 slice of bread
 - 1 serving = 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal
 - 1 serving = 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
9. Challenge students to create menus for breakfast and dinner for one week based on the Food Guide Pyramid and basic serving information.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students demonstrated a clear understanding of how to use the Internet as a research tool; worked cooperatively in their groups to create and present school lunch menus for a week; and actively participated in the class discussion on the importance of a healthful diet.
- **2 points:** Students demonstrated an on-grade understanding of how to use the Internet as a research tool; worked somewhat cooperatively in their groups to create and present school lunch menus; and took some part in the class discussion on the importance of a healthful diet.
- **1 point:** Students demonstrated a weak understanding of how to use the Internet as a research tool; had trouble working cooperatively in their groups to create and present school lunch menus; and participated little or not at all in the class discussion on the importance of a healthful diet.

Vocabulary

calorie

Definition: With a lowercase "c," the term refers to the amount of energy needed to raise the temperature of one gram of water one degree Celsius.

Context: When it comes to staying healthy, counting calories is just one aspect.

Calorie

Definition: With an uppercase "C," the term refers to the amount of energy required to raise one kilogram of water (about 2.2 pounds) one degree Celsius; one Calorie, or kcal, is equal to 1,000 calories.

Context: Nutrition is measured in Calories.