

# LESSON 1:

## ALL ABOUT MYPLATE

### ABOUT THE LESSON

This lesson focuses on MyPlate. There are three Add variations in the lesson:

- ***A Closer Look at MyPlate*** presents a general overview of the MyPlate tool and what information it contains
- ***How Much Do You Need on Your Plate?*** discusses how middle school youth can use MyPlate to determine how much from each food group they need
- ***MyPlate – the Breakfast Edition*** addresses how this important meal can be an opportunity to get nutritious foods from all the MyPlate food groups

There are also three Apply variations you can mix-and-match with any of the Add variations to create a customized lesson of your choosing.

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### TEACHING MESSAGES

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|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat breakfast                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Drink water instead of sugary drinks               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat different kinds of fruits     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat foods from most MyPlate food groups |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat healthy snacks                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do things to be physically active       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat different kinds of vegetables |   |
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### LESSON MATERIALS

#### ***All Variations***

- Access to equipment to show videos (computer, projector, etc.)
- Anchor Quiz Questions
- MyPlate pocket chart (hangable MyPlate chart with slats for food models/cards)
  - *Can be ordered from Walmart, Learning Resources, or Staples*

#### ***Apply, Variation A***

- MyPlate Food Groups Food Gallery reference guide

- Food models from the National Dairy Council:
  - Fat free milk (glass), 8 oz.
  - Low fat plain yogurt, 8 oz.
  - Chocolate pudding, ½ cup
  - String cheese, 2 oz.
  - Banana, 1 medium
  - Fruit cocktail, ½ cup
  - Grapes, ½ cup
  - Raisins, ¼ cup
  - Biscuits, ½ cup
  - Grits, ½ cup
  - Oatmeal, ½ cup
  - Popcorn, 1 cup
  - Hard-cooked egg, 1 egg
  - Peanuts, 1/3 cup
  - Roasted chicken, 3 oz.
  - Tofu, ½ cup
  - Baked potato, 1 large
  - Broccoli, ½ cup
  - Corn, ½ cup
  - French fries, 10 strips
  - Cheese pizza, ¼ of 12" pizza
  - Cream of tomato soup, 1 cup
  - Macaroni & cheese, 1 cup
  - Navy beans, ½ cup
- Cut-up vegetables for sampling (celery, broccoli, edamame, cucumbers, carrots)
- Ingredients for Greek yogurt Ranch dip: 1 Tablespoon ranch seasoning mix, 8 ounces plain Greek yogurt
- Large paper plates (one for each type of vegetable)
- Spoon
- Small paper plates

**Apply, Variation B**

- MyPlate Meal Placemats, printed in color on white card stock (one per page) and laminated
- Dry erase markers (5)
- Food models from the National Dairy Council:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dairy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fat free milk</li> <li>- 1% low fat chocolate milk</li> <li>- String cheese</li> <li>- Low fat plain yogurt</li> <li>- Low fat strawberry yogurt</li> <li>- Cheddar cheese</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Fruits               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Banana</li> <li>- Strawberries</li> <li>- Grapes</li> <li>- Pear</li> <li>- Canned peaches</li> <li>- Pineapple</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proteins               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black beans</li> <li>- Roasted chicken</li> <li>- Turkey</li> <li>- Ham</li> <li>- Hummus</li> <li>- Roast beef</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Vegetables               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broccoli</li> <li>- Baby carrots</li> <li>- Green pepper</li> <li>- Tossed salad</li> <li>- Sweet potato</li> <li>- Cauliflower</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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- Grains
  - Oatmeal
  - Bran flakes
  - Whole wheat bread
  - Brown rice
  - Pita bread
  - Muffin
- Combination Foods
  - Cheese omelet
  - Spaghetti with meat balls
  - Taco
  - Cheese pizza
  - Turkey sandwich
  - Chow mein
- Unsweetened applesauce (48 oz. jar)
- Small sampling cups (2-3 oz. size)
- Long-handled spoon
- Disposable gloves

### ***Apply, Variation C***

- Cranberry Chicken Salad recipe cards
- Ingredients and equipment for Cranberry Chicken Salad recipe:
  - Canned chicken breast (16 oz.)
  - Celery bunch
  - Green onions (2)
  - Dried cranberries (6 oz. bag)
  - Light mayonnaise (1/4 cup)
  - Plain Greek yogurt (1/4 cup)
  - Yellow (or Dijon) mustard (1 t.)
  - Salt & pepper
  - Whole wheat crackers
  - Large mixing bowl
  - Large spoon
  - Can opener
  - Small mixing bowl
  - Paper plates (large and small)
  - Disposable gloves
  - Sanitizing wipes

## **LESSON PREPARATION**

### ***Apply, Variation A***

- Prior to the lesson:
  - Locate the specific National Dairy Council food models needed for the Apply activity and set them aside.
  - Prepare vegetables for the sampling portion of the Apply. Wash all produce and cut into sample-size pieces. Store in zip-top plastic bags in the refrigerator.
  - Make the Greek yogurt Ranch dip. Store in the refrigerator.
- Day of the lesson:
  - Hang the MyPlate pocket chart in the front of the room.
  - Set out the vegetables, dip, and plates for sampling.

### ***Apply, Variation B***

- Prior to the lesson:
  - Locate the specific National Dairy Council food models needed for the Apply activity and set them aside.

- Day of the lesson:
  - Set up a table with the printed MyPlate Meal Placemats, food models, and applesauce for sampling.

### **Apply, Variation C**

- Prior to the lesson:
    - Wash all vegetables. Dice 1 stalk of celery and both green onions. Cut the remaining celery stalks into sticks for sampling. Store in a zip-top plastic bags in the refrigerator.
  - Day of the lesson:
    - Set up the table for the Cranberry Chicken Salad recipe demonstration. Wipe down all surfaces with sanitizing wipes. Set out disposable gloves, equipment, and ingredients.
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## **TRANSITION**

Last time we met, we talked about .... Who would like to share about...?

Today, we'll be talking about MyPlate. Even though MyPlate has been around awhile, some people may not be familiar with it. But we can learn a lot about healthy eating – and getting regular exercise – if we use this handy tool. MyPlate is the latest in a long history of food guides. Do you know when the first food guide was released? *[Allow for a few responses.]* The first food guides published by the USDA came out all the way back in 1916! Over the years, the nutritional advice in these guides has changed in response to research and new discoveries about nutrition. Whether the food guides were wheels or pyramids, they all strived to do the same thing: encourage people to eat balanced diets that included foods from different food groups.

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## **ANCHOR**

You may be familiar with MyPlate, or this may be the first time you've heard of it. MyPlate is a tool that helps you know how to balance the food choices you make across the five main food groups, as well as the relative proportions of each group to eat. Before we jump into today's lesson, let's start with a quiz to see how much you already know. *[Divide the participants into two groups. Toss a coin to determine which group goes first.]*

*[Refer to the MyPlate Quiz Questions set. Give the first question to the first group, and then go back-and-forth between the two groups. If a group misses a question, explain the answer to the entire audience. Each group should get a total of five questions, one from each MyPlate food group.]*

After doing this activity, how many of you learned something new about MyPlate? *[Ask for a show of hands.]* How might teens like you use MyPlate to help you make decisions about what you eat? *[Allow for a few responses.]*

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## **ADD**

### **Variation A – A Closer Look at MyPlate**

MyPlate is a visual tool created by the USDA to help Americans make healthy choices when it comes to food and drink. MyPlate was launched in 2011 and features the five major food groups in a user-friendly, plate-and-cup arrangement that you can look at and easily see the relative amounts of each food group to include in each meal.

*[Refer to the MyPlate pocket chart.]* If you look at this image of MyPlate, what are some of the things you notice? *[Allow for several responses. Probe for: colors of the different food groups, number of food groups, relative size of each food group to each other and to the overall plate.]* What are some things you can't necessarily tell by looking at MyPlate? *[Allow for several responses. Probe for: nutrients found in each food group, which foods in each food group are better choices, how many calories you should get in a meal or in a day.]*

Within each of the food groups, there are many different options – and not all choices are created equal. It's up to us to choose healthier options to get the most benefit. Whenever possible, choose foods that are lower in fat, sodium, and added sugars. Look for foods that have more fiber (whole fruit instead of fruit juice, whole wheat bread instead of white bread). Where do you think you could find information about a food's fiber, sugar, fat, or sodium content? *[Allow for a few responses; answer should be Nutrition Facts label and/or ingredients list.]*

In addition to telling us about how our plates should look at mealtimes, the MyPlate website ([choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)) also gives recommendations about how much daily physical activity teens need for optimal health. Who knows how much physical activity you need each day? *[Allow for a few responses.]* Current guidelines state that youth age 6-17 years old need 60 minutes of daily physical activity. If you get more than that, your energy needs go up, and you can use MyPlate to help you determine how much you need to eat.



*[If time permits, show the following video clip to the participants. Ask them if they relate to the sentiments expressed in the video.]*

MyPlate, My Health: The Newest Dietary Guidelines (1 minute): <https://youtu.be/u7PJU8ssNeE>

### **Variation B – How Much Do You Need on Your Plate?**

MyPlate is a simple, visual tool to help you understand what a healthy eating pattern looks like by showing you the different food groups and the relative amounts of each one. *[Refer to the MyPlate pocket chart.]* But if you look at MyPlate, do you know **specifically** how much fruit, or grains, or protein to eat? *[Allow for a few responses.]* The truth is, a quick glance at MyPlate won't tell you how many servings of each food group you need. Why do you think this is so? *[Allow for participants to respond and reflect on this question.]*

Everybody is different, and therefore everybody's nutrient needs are also different. For instance, factors such as gender, age, and activity level all play a part in how much you need to eat. MyPlate is not a "one size fits all" tool, which means you can customize it to fit your unique make-up. According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a moderately-active middle school girl needs between 1,800-2,200 calories per day, while a moderately-active middle school boy needs between 2,000-2,400 calories. How does this break down by food groups? Let's look at this chart. *[Pass out a MyPlate Servings Chart to each participant.]*

Starting with the Dairy group, most everyone needs 3 cups of foods from this group. *[Invite a participant to read the examples of what 1 serving from the Dairy group is.]* For the Fruit group, the range is between 1 ½ to 2 cups per day. *[Invite a participant to read the examples of what 1 serving from the Fruit group is.]* Teens like you need between 6 to 8 ounces of Grains, which is equal to 1 slice of bread, a half of a bun or bagel, ½ cup of cooked pasta or rice, or 1 ounce of cereal. How many of you think you only eat ½ cup of cooked pasta when you have a plate of spaghetti? *[Ask for a show of hands.]* In fact, a typical plate of spaghetti has about 2 cups of pasta, which is actually 4 servings from the Grains group. For the Proteins group, you need between 5 and 6 ½ ounces of proteins. That might sound like a lot, but a typical hamburger patty is 4 ounces. And 1 Tablespoon of nut butter counts as 1 ounce from the Proteins group, but many of us use at least twice that amount on our PB&J. For the Vegetables group, you need between 2 ½ and 3 cups of vegetables. *[Invite a participant to read the examples of what 1 serving from the Vegetables group is.]* Why do you think it's different for leafy green vegetables? *[Allow for a few responses.]* At the bottom of the chart, you see the amounts of sodium, saturated fat, and added sugar you should limit yourself to. Reading food labels can help you determine if you are within the goals for these "nutrients to limit."



*[If time permits, show the following video clip to the participants. Ask them if they relate to the sentiments expressed in the video.]*

*How to Follow the USDA MyPlate Dietary Guidelines (2 ½ minutes):*

<https://youtu.be/87xBZisdodY>

### **Variation C – MyPlate – The Breakfast Edition**

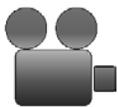
Whether or not you eat breakfast, you're probably familiar with the phrase, "breakfast is the most important meal of the day." There's plenty of research to support this claim:

- A 2008 study found that teens who eat breakfast weigh less than those who skip it. This is a bit ironic, because some teens skip breakfast in order to control their weight.
- Numerous studies have found that eating breakfast equals better school performance because you can concentrate better and have more energy. Want to ace that test? Eat a healthy breakfast to fuel your body *and* mind.
- Does your school offer breakfast? Students who participate in school breakfast show improved attendance, behavior, and academic performance as well as decreased tardiness. Students who eat breakfast the morning of a standardized test have significantly higher scores in spelling, reading, and math, compared to those who do not eat breakfast. Now that's something to chew on.
- Including protein at breakfast – from foods like eggs, Greek yogurt, milk, nuts and nut butters, or lean meat – can help stabilize your appetite the rest of the day. What kinds of protein-containing foods do you think would be good for breakfast? *[Allow for a few responses.]*

Besides all of these benefits, breakfast is an excellent opportunity to get much-needed nutrients from all the MyPlate food groups – not just grains, like the majority of us eat. Grains are certainly good for you, but many of us opt for less-healthy refined grains, which lack fiber and often contain a lot of added sugar. *[Refer to the MyPlate pocket chart.]* What are some other food groups you usually eat at breakfast? *[Allow for a few responses.]*

Think of breakfast as a chance to eat other food groups. You might be thinking, “Fruits and vegetables for breakfast?” In fact, there are many different ways you can include produce in your morning meal. Eat like Elvis: spread nut butter onto a piece of toast and add banana slices. Fast, nutritious, and portable – so you can take it on the go. If you have more time – five minutes, to be exact – you can make a simple breakfast burrito. Spray a large mug with non-stick cooking spray, crack two eggs, and add a handful of frozen mixed vegetables and a splash of milk. Microwave on high for 30 seconds, stir, and microwave an additional 70-80 seconds. Top with some shredded cheese and transfer to a whole wheat tortilla. You're out the door in no time, and you have a healthy breakfast to start your day.

What are some other ideas you have for breakfast that include at least three food groups? *[Allow several participants to share their ideas and engage in a dialogue.]*



*[If time permits, show one of the following video clips to the participants. Ask them if they relate to the sentiments expressed in the video.]*

What Does the World Eat for Breakfast? (1 ½ minutes): <https://youtu.be/ry1E1uzPSU0>

MyPlate, My Wins: MyPlate at Breakfast (1 minute): <https://youtu.be/cKeuCuBQjcU>

## APPLY

### Variation A – So You Think You Know Your Food Groups?

When it comes to classifying foods into the five MyPlate food groups, some foods are easy to figure out, but others can be tricky. Some foods may biologically be a fruit – like a tomato – but belong in the Vegetables group. Others, like black beans, belong to *both* Vegetables *and* Proteins. I'm going to hold up several food models. Tell me which food group you think they belong in. We'll see how we did as a group at the end.

*[Hold up each food model, one at a time, and ask the participants which food group the food belongs in. After the participants provide a group consensus, invite someone to place it into the slats in the corresponding food group. At the end of the exercise, compare each grouping with the USDA MyPlate Food Gallery lists.]*

*[When the activity is complete, engage the participants in a discussion about the exercise. Ask the following questions and allow for several responses/a dialogue.]* Which foods were you surprised about? How does this influence how you think about the different food groups? What are some things you notice about the variety of types of foods within each food group?

#### **Answer Key for Food Groups Apply Activity**

Fat free milk (Dairy)	Eggs (Proteins)
Pudding (Dairy)	Peanuts (Proteins)
String cheese (Dairy)	Roasted chicken (Proteins)
Yogurt (Dairy)	Tofu (Proteins)
Banana (Fruit)	Baked potato (Vegetables)
Fruit cocktail (Fruit)	Broccoli (Vegetables)
Grapes (Fruit)	Corn (Vegetables)
Raisins (Fruit)	French fries (Vegetables)
Biscuit (Grains)	Macaroni & cheese (Dairy AND Grains)
Grits (Grains)	Cream of tomato soup (Dairy AND Vegetables)
Oatmeal (Grains)	Navy beans (Proteins AND Vegetables)
Popcorn (Grains)	Cheese pizza (Dairy, Grains, AND Vegetables)

**\*Note:** the food models from the National Dairy Council do not categorize popcorn as a grain, but according to the USDA MyPlate Food Gallery, popcorn is classified in the Grains group (and is actually a whole grain).

Today we're going to sample some fresh veggies with a homemade Ranch dip. This dip is made with plain Greek yogurt, which tastes a lot like sour cream. But, unlike sour cream, Greek yogurt has a lot more protein and calcium, and a lot less fat. It's super-easy to make: just add a tablespoon of ranch dressing mix to a cup of Greek yogurt and mix well. You can choose

whichever vegetables you like. *[Invite participants to sample the fresh vegetables and dip.]* How many food groups are represented in this snack? *[Allow for a few responses.]*

### **Variation B – Create a Health(ier) Plate**

We've learned about how the MyPlate tool can help guide our food choices. We've seen that there are five food groups, with a large variety of foods falling within each one. Of course, some foods are better options than others.

I'm going to divide you into small groups. *[Have participants count off to form groups of 4-5 people, for a total of five groups.]* Each group will get a placemat that has different kinds of foods representing a meal. In your groups, discuss whether or not you feel this meal is healthy as it appears, or how you could make it even better. Up at the front of the room, I have placed some paper food models on a table. If you want to swap out one of the foods on the placemat your group has, use the dry-erase marker to cross it off the plate, and then replace it with one of the food models. *[As participants come up to select food models, be prepared to assist with selections so that each group gets a good choice of models to use.]*

When you are finished, you should have a meal that contains foods from each of the five food groups. What are your questions before we begin? *[Allow 5-10 minutes for participants to complete the activity.]*

Starting with Group 1, share what changes you decided to make to your meal. *[Repeat this for all of the participant groups.]*

What did you learn from doing this activity? *[Allow for a few responses.]* How does this make you think about your own food choices? *[Allow a few participants to respond.]*

Opting for unsweetened applesauce instead of regular applesauce is one example of a way you can make a healthier choice within the Fruit group. I have some samples of unsweetened applesauce up here. If you want, you can add a sprinkle of cinnamon to it to give it more flavor without adding calories. *[Invite participants to sample the applesauce.]* Is this something you would eat at home? Why or why not?

### **Variation C – Cooking Up MyPlate**

Now it's your turn! Today we're going to make a dish that contains all five food groups. Does that sound exciting or intimidating? *[Allow for a few responses.]* Teens benefit from having experience in the kitchen because they learn important cooking skills and can control how much salt, fat, and sugar is in a recipe. Today's recipe is a deli-style cranberry chicken salad served with whole wheat crackers. The entire recipe takes 15 minutes to make at home. It contains all five food groups, so it's a great for a balanced snack, lunch, or dinner. We're using canned chicken, but you can also use cooked chicken if you have some at home. I'll need a few volunteers to help make the chicken salad. If you decide to volunteer, you'll need to put on hand sanitizer and disposable gloves.

First, we'll start with the chicken. *[Recruit a volunteer to help.]* Open the cans with a can opener and drain the water into an empty cup or dish. Then, use a spoon to scrape the chicken into a bowl. Separate the chicken with the spoon. *[Ask the volunteer to return to his/her seat.]*

Next, I need two volunteers to add the celery and onions. *[Recruit two volunteers, one for the celery and one for the onions.]* When making a chicken salad, it's ideal to cut the veggies into very small pieces, like I did here.

Next, I need two volunteers to measure out the sauces and the cranberries. *[Recruit two volunteers, one for the mayonnaise, mustard, and yogurt, and one for the cranberries. Ask the vegetable slicers to return to their seats when done.]*

Finally, I need someone to mix it all together. *[Recruit someone who has not yet assisted.]* If we were making this at home, we would put this in the refrigerator to let the flavors blend. But it's perfectly fine to eat it right now. *[Place a tablespoon of the chicken salad with two wheat crackers on each small plate. Ask for two volunteers to serve the samples to the rest of the participants.]*

What do you think of this recipe? Is this something you would make at home? Why or why not? How might you make it different? *[Allow for a discussion about the recipe and suggestions for modifications.]*

This recipe is a healthier version of standard deli-style chicken salad because we used light mayonnaise and Greek yogurt, which gives this recipe some extra protein and calcium while cutting back on fat. This is just one way that cooking at home can help you eat better.

*[Pass out a copy of the Cranberry Chicken Salad recipe to each participant.]* This is the recipe we made today. I invite you to make it at home for your family.

*[Allow participants with food allergies to have extra celery or dried cranberries as an alternative tasting opportunity.]*

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## **AWAY**

*[Pass out a copy of the MyPlate, My Wins: MyPlate mini poster to each student.]*

This fact sheet shows a picture of the MyPlate tool, with key suggestions and example amounts for each food group. Next to each food group, write in a couple of your favorite foods that belong in that group. Then, write in one food from each food group that you haven't tried yet but might be willing to give a try.

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## NOTES

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## RESOURCES

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