

LESSON 1: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students learn about the essential nutrients for sustaining health and energy. Students identify key macronutrients and micronutrients the body needs and, using the [National Dairy Council Food Models](#), students identify the best choices to reach nutrient goals.

TIME

One to two 45-minute classes

OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will:

- Identify key nutrients;
- Describe ways in which key nutrients help the body;
- Identify sources of key nutrients; and
- compare the nutritive value of different foods.

STANDARDS

NGSS

MS-LS1-5. Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms.

MS-LS1-3. Use argument supported by evidence for how the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells.

CDC NHES

1.8.1 Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

1.8.3 Analyze how the environment affects personal health.

MATERIALS

In addition to common classroom materials and an Internet connection, students will need:

- [National Dairy Council Food Models](#) (see “Preparation” for instructions)
- **Nutrient Challenge Activity Sheet** (six copies)
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks

PREPARATION

1. Using the [National Dairy Council Food Models](#), select six cards from **each of the five food groups**, six from **Combination**, and six from **Others**, for a total of 42 cards.
2. Print and prepare the cards, affixing the nutritional information to the back of each food using one of the following options:
 - Prepare the cards yourself in advance of the class.
 - Have your students prepare the cards (cut them out, affix the information on the back) using scissors and glue sticks.
 - If you do not have access to a printer, you or your students can make flash cards, using the online food models as a guide.
3. Arrange students into groups of six.
4. Randomly divide the 42 cards into six piles, ensuring that each group has seven cards, one from each category.
5. Make six copies of the **Nutrient Challenge Activity Sheet**.
6. Ensure access to a projector to share the **Nutrient Tables**.

LESSON 1 : MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



INTRODUCTION

Ask the students about their familiarity with MyPlate and food groups. Accept all answers. Explain that you will be focusing on key nutrients and determining the best sources for those nutrients.

LESSON PROCEDURE

Step 1

Ask students to identify each of the food groups (dairy, protein, vegetable, fruit, grain, and others). Create a column for each group on a board or online whiteboard.

Step 2

Ask students to brainstorm their favorite foods. As they offer suggestions, have them add the food to the appropriate food group column. For each response, ask the remaining students to confirm the placement with a “thumbs-up.” If there are only a few confirmations, ask the student if they would like to change their choice or if they would like to ask another student where they would place it. Continue until each student has had at least one turn.

Step 3

Ask the students what the foods in each food group have in common. For example, grains all come from plants, dairy products contain animal milk, fruits grow on trees or bushes, etc. If no student suggests it, explain that foods in the same food group contain many of the same key nutrients. If you would like to give them a clue, you can ask them “What do all of the foods in the protein group have in common?”

Step 4

Explain to students that there are many different nutrients found in foods. Some are called **macronutrients** and others are called **micronutrients**. *Explain:*

- **Macronutrients** include protein, carbohydrates, and fats. Along with macronutrients, it's important to make sure you have enough fiber in what you eat.

- **Micronutrients** include vitamins and minerals.

Show students the macronutrient table which explains what each macronutrient does in the body and which foods they're commonly found in. Explain that macronutrients are very important to the body, and that everybody's body needs them. However, it's also important to remember to get the right amount of each macronutrient because having too much isn't the best for your body.

Then, show students the micronutrient table which explains what each vitamin and mineral does in the body and which foods they're commonly found in. Explain that micronutrients are also very important to the body, and that everybody's body needs them. However, it's also important to remember to get the right amount of each micronutrient because having too much isn't the best for your body.

Step 5

Explain to students that they will be participating in a challenge. Distribute six cards to each group, food side up. Give each group a copy of the **Nutrient Challenge Activity Sheet**.

Step 6

Explain that they will work in rounds to quickly order their food cards from “Most” to “Least” for each nutrient. Explain that they should not look at the nutritional information on the back of each food. Instead, they are encouraged to discuss which foods are most likely to contain more of the nutrient than the others. As they work, they should list the foods in order on their student activity sheet. In order to encourage groups to focus on only one nutrient at a time, lead each “round” by

LESSON 1: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



naming the nutrient of the round. Remind students that the cards show one serving of that food.

Begin with macronutrients: **Protein, Carbohydrate, Fat, and Fiber.**

Then, move on to the micronutrients found on nutrition labels: **Vitamin D, Iron, Calcium, and Potassium.**

Finally, if your students are up for the challenge and time allows, ask them to order the foods by nutrients not found on nutrition labels: Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, B Vitamins, and Magnesium.

To keep students fully engaged, have students swap cards with another group at any point in the challenge.

Step 7

After students have completed all of the rounds, have students explore the [Interactive Nutrition Facts Label](#). The objective is for them to have a general understanding of how to find specific macronutrient or micronutrient information. If students do not have access to the Internet, share this image with them.

New Label

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

The serving size now appears in larger, bold font and some serving sizes have been updated.

Calories are now displayed in larger, bolder fonts.

Daily Values have been updated.

Added sugars, vitamin D, and potassium are now listed. Manufacturers must declare the amount in addition to percent Daily Value for vitamins and minerals.

Step 8

Then, have each student review the nutrition facts on the back of each Food Model card and compare the facts to their own rankings for each nutrient from Most to Least.

If you had students order the nutrients **not** found on labels, have each student select one food from their group's assigned food. Explain that they will use [FoodData Central](#) to create a nutrition label for their selected food. Tell them to find all of the missing micronutrient values for Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, B Vitamins, and Magnesium. Remind them to be aware of the portion size.

Then, collectively order each food card from **Most** to **Least** for each nutrient, and have each group compare the full list to their own list to determine if they ordered them correctly.

Step 9

Discuss with the whole class:

- Are any foods very high in more than one nutrient?
- Why is it important to eat a variety of foods?
- Are any nutrients more challenging to get enough of than others?
- How do macronutrients and micronutrients affect human growth?
- Think of the body as many different interacting systems. How might a nutritional deficiency that affects one system also affect other systems?

LESSON 1 : MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



REFLECTION

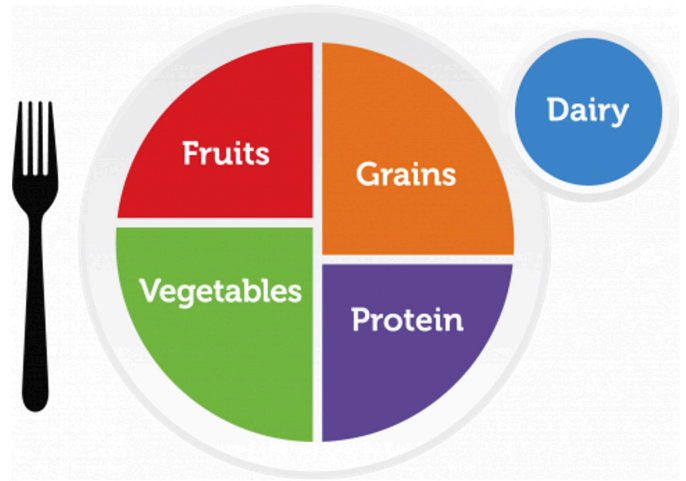
Show students the MyPlate graphic. Ask them to design a meal that has a good balance of nutrients, particularly macronutrients.

ASSESSMENT

Review their MyPlate meal designs to assess understanding of nutrients found in foods.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

If you have students who are speakers of other languages, USDA produces the MyPlate graphics in 18 different languages.



LESSON 1 : MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



NUTRIENT TABLES

MACRONUTRIENT TABLE	HOW IT HELPS YOUR BODY	FOODS
Protein	Helps build maintain healthy muscles and gives your body energy	milk, yogurt, chicken, beef, nuts, egg, peanut butter, fish, cheese
Carbohydrate	Gives your body energy	pasta, cereal, bread, beans, popcorn, rice
Fats	Gives your body energy and helps your body absorb nutrients	whole milk, oil, avocado, full-fat cheese, salmon, beef, butter
Fiber**	Helps support digestion	apples, corn, whole grains, berries, avocado

**Although Fiber is technically not considered a macronutrient, it's important to make sure that it's included in what you eat. *These nutrients are not found on nutrition labels.

MICRONUTRIENT TABLE	HOW IT HELPS YOUR BODY	FOODS
Vitamin A*	Helps keep eyes and skin healthy	eggs, milk, carrots, spinach, peppers, cereal, black-eyed peas
Vitamin C*	Helps heal cuts and bruises	oranges, bell peppers, tomatoes, kale, snow peas, kiwi
Vitamin D	Helps build strong bones and teeth	milk, salmon, cremini mushrooms, cereal, eggs
Vitamin E*	Helps protect cells	almonds, avocados, spinach, broccoli, shrimp, olive oil
B vitamins*	Helps cells function properly	tuna, milk, yogurt, cheese, beef, crab, cereal, beans, eggs
Iron	Helps keep your blood healthy	beef, shellfish, spinach, beans, quinoa, cereal, dried fruit
Calcium	Helps build strong bones and teeth	milk, yogurt, cheese, trout, squash, spinach, clams
Potassium	Helps nerves and muscles to function	salmon, beans, avocado, bananas, milk, mushrooms, tomato
Magnesium*	Helps the heart stay healthy	spinach, almonds, lima beans, tuna, brown rice

LESSON 1 : MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEAL



NUTRIENT CHALLENGE ACTIVITY SHEET

ORDER THE FOODS...	ROUND 1 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 2 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 3 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 4 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 5 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 6 NUTRIENT:
<p style="text-align: center;">MOST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEAST</p>						

ROUND 7 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 8 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 9 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 10 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 11 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 12 NUTRIENT:	ROUND 13 NUTRIENT: