



What is the Food Pyramid?

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INTRODUCTION

This lesson will inform students about the food pyramid and how to use it to ensure healthy eating habits. It will explore the food served to students and educate them on how to choose the healthier options. Students will learn about the portions of food groups they should be eating on a daily basis as well.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Grade Level & Subject: Grades K-2; Health and Science.

Differentiation:

- ✓ Ideal for children with special needs due to the learning domains addressed in this lesson. These activities are geared toward visual, kinesthetic, and tactile learners.
- ✓ Ideal for English Language Learners - see extended activities section for ELL enrichment.

Length: One 60-minute class period.

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the Food Pyramid and daily nutrition needed.
- Understand the benefits of healthy eating and better choices.

National Standards Addressed:

This lesson addresses the following National Education Standards¹

- Content Standard: [NPH-H.5-8.3 REDUCING HEALTH RISKS](#)
As a result of activities in grades K-8, all students should
 - Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.
 - Analyze a personal health assessment to determine health strengths and risks.
 - Distinguish between safe and risky or harmful behaviors in relationships.
 - Demonstrate strategies to improve or maintain personal and family health.
 - Develop injury prevention and management strategies for personal and family health.
 - Demonstrate ways to avoid and reduce threatening situations.
 - Demonstrate strategies to manage stress.

¹ <http://www.education-world.com/standards/>

- Content Standard: [NPH-H.5-8.6 SETTING GOALS FOR GOOD HEALTH](#)
As a result of activities in grades K-8, all students should
 - Demonstrate the ability to apply a decision- making process to health issues and problems individually and collaboratively.
 - Analyze how health-related decisions are influenced by individuals, family, and community values.
 - Predict how decisions regarding health behaviors have consequences for self and others.
 - Apply strategies and skills needed to attain personal health goals.
 - Describe how personal health goals are influenced by changing information, abilities, priorities, and responsibilities.
 - Develop a plan that addresses personal strengths, needs, and health risks.
- Content Standard: [NS.5-8.6 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES](#)
As a result of activities in grades K-8, all students should develop understanding
 - Personal health
 - Populations, resources, and environments
 - Natural hazards
 - Risks and benefits
 - Science and technology in society

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper.
- Markers.
- Tape.
- Crayons.
- Reproducible #1 – Blank Food Pyramid.
- Reproducible #2 – Food picture cards; you may want to find additional pictures in magazines.
- Optional: measuring cups or actual representations of serving sizes (ex. slice of bread to represent grains, etc.)

For extension activity:

- Reproducible #3 – Daily Food Log

Assessment: Students will be assessed through the following activities:

- Ongoing comprehension monitoring throughout the activity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Relevant Vocabulary:

- **Food Pyramid:** (noun) a diagram that represents a healthy diet by placing food groups in a pyramid according to the number of servings from each group to be eaten every day.
- **Serving Size:** (noun) a standardized amount used in comparing similar foods, loosely based on

the amount of a product normally eaten in one sitting.

Information:

Children's lunches have never been the epitome of health. Due to the combination of lack of funds, lack of fresh food availability and children's limited tastes, what used to be a healthy and fulfilling lunch has become a lunch of preservatives, saturated fats, carbohydrates and unhealthy calories. Only 58% of schools serve fresh fruits and vegetables every day. Due to these factors, children in the United States have numerous health issues that were formerly only found in adults such as obesity, high blood pressure, and Type Two Diabetes. Oftentimes, public school lunches do not offer the quality of food that children need, and consequently do not teach children what a proper balanced meal looks like. Students begin to confuse fried potatoes as their healthy vegetable, ice cream as their dairy, and apple pie as their fruit. It is important to explain to students that, although these foods do have some nutritional value, they should not comprise the entire serving of each food group.

We all know children cannot be forced to eat their vegetables at school, especially when there are much tastier-looking options. One of the ways to help children eat healthier meals is to teach them what a properly balanced meal looks like using the food pyramid. Understanding how the food pyramid works is an invaluable skill, which will not only help kids choose what to eat at school, but also help them lead a longer healthier life. Students will start to recognize how eating better makes them feel better and will continue to look for the healthier options available in the cafeteria.

Resources:

<http://www.usda.gov>

<http://mypyramid.gov>

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

Preparation: Create food picture cards; you may copy and cut cards from Reproducible #2 and/or find additional pictures in magazines (especially representing snacks, desserts, and unhealthy food).

LESSON STEPS

Warm-up: *What Are Healthy Foods?*

1. Ask students what types of food are healthy and visually represent their answers using a [graphic organizer](#) such as a web.
 - a. Are apples healthy? Why or why not?
 - b. Are French fries healthy? Why or why not?
 - c. Are potatoes healthy? Why or why not?
2. On a separate piece of chart paper, ask students what they had to eat yesterday.
 - a. Is this food healthy or unhealthy? Why or why not?

Activity One: *What is a food pyramid?*

1. Put Reproducible #1 – USDA Food Pyramid on the overhead projector and/or pass out a black-and-white copy to each student or table.

2. Explain to your students that the government was having a tough time deciding how they could distinguish healthy food from non-healthy food too, so they made a food pyramid. The food pyramid is a diagram that represents a healthy diet by placing food groups in a pyramid according to the number of servings from each group to be eaten every day.
3. Each section is color coded for the food group it represents: orange for grains, green for vegetables, red for fruits, yellow for fats and oils, blue for dairy, and purple for proteins like meat and beans. Refer to the projected color version of Reproducible #1 – USDA Food Pyramid or color in your own black-and-white transparency. Ask students to follow along by coloring their own copies.
4. Show that certain sections are bigger than others, and explain that it is because one needs more of certain groups per day than others. Show how green (vegetables) is larger than the purple (meat and beans) section and explain that it means you need more servings of vegetables than meat per day.
5. Explain that the amount of food you should eat per day per category is called a serving size. To better illustrate to your students what a proper serving is explain that 1 slice of bread is an ounce, which is the measurement by which grains are counted. It may be useful to show measures or actual examples of serving sizes to better illustrate these.

Activity Two: *Where does it belong?*

1. Using a piece of chart paper, recreate the food pyramid on a larger scale.
2. Pass out a picture card depicting a type of food to each student. Ask each student to identify his or her food item and determine if the item if it is a grain, vegetable, fruit, dairy, or protein.
3. After the student names and classifies his or her food item, ask them to come up the board and place the item on the food pyramid.

Wrap Up: *Healthier Living*

1. Have the students brainstorm ways to eat healthier (i.e. bringing lunch from home, choosing the healthier cafeteria options, trying to eat more fruit/vegetables) and explain why that's a better choice.
Ex: Eating more fruits and vegetables is healthier because they are rich in nutrients that help you grow and stay healthy. They are also a good option to eat when you want a snack, instead of eating an unhealthy snack like chips or candy.
2. Ask the students what they should do if they didn't get their full serving of fruit at school? Suggest that they tell their parents to have at home more of the food that they typically don't get a much of at school so they can get their daily requirements.
3. Ask the students if they think the food that's served in the cafeteria is healthy. How could it be healthier? Steer them towards having fresher foods and not so much of the processed food choices such as pizza or hot dogs.

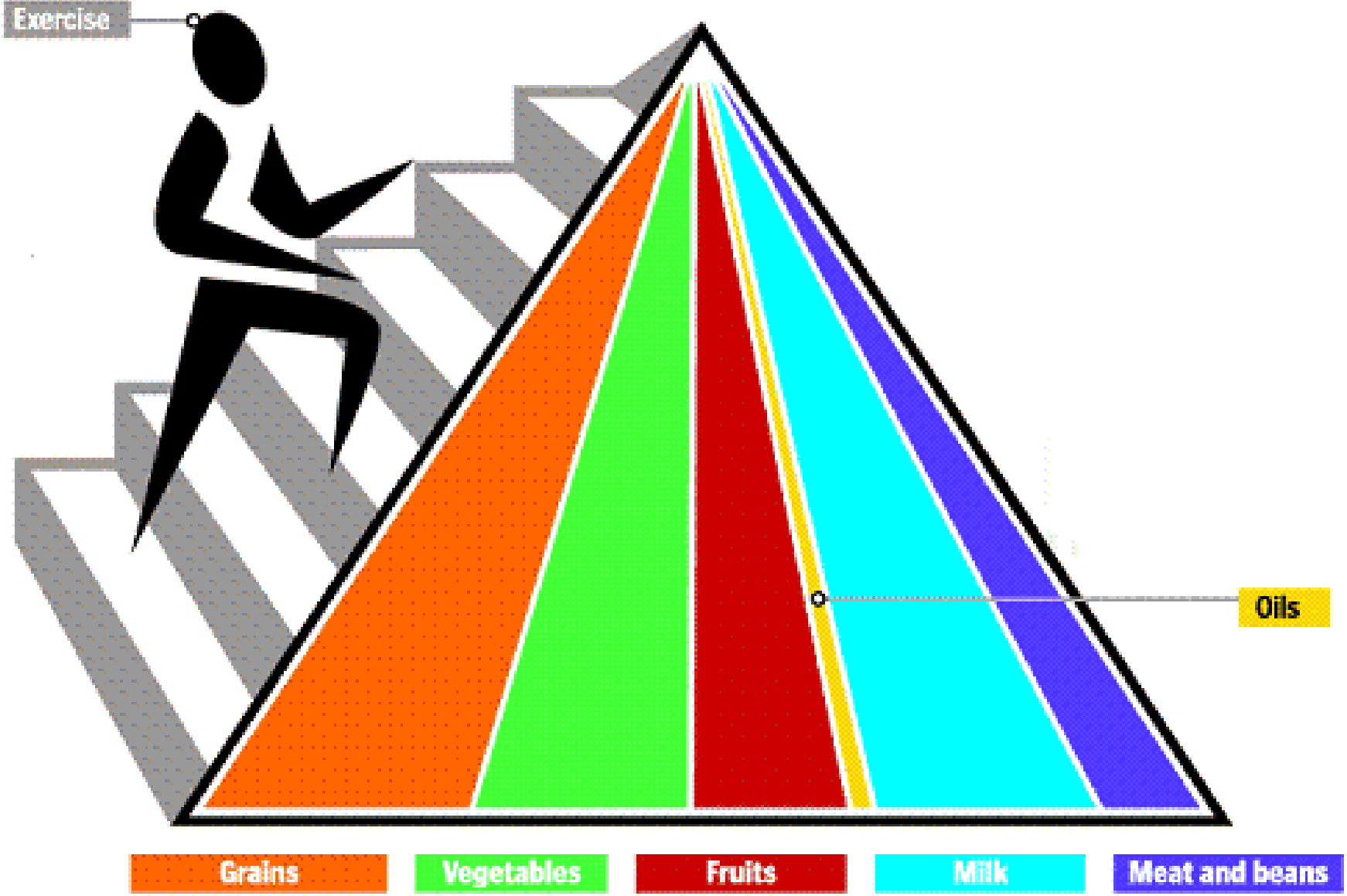
Extension Activity

1. Ask students to monitor their own food consumption over a period of time. Give students copies of Reproducible #3 – Daily Food Log and an additional Reproducible #1 – Blank Food Pyramid. Students should record what they ate over the assigned period of time on the log page as well as classify their foods on the food pyramid by writing, drawing, or pasting pictures of them in the correct category.

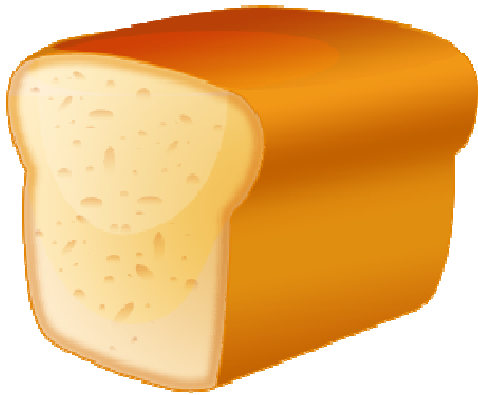
2. Have the class come up with a list of healthier items they would like to see in their school lunchroom. Consider more fruits and vegetables, less processed food, fresh food from local farms, “Meat-Free Mondays,” healthier options like pizza with whole wheat crusts, or grilled chicken instead of chicken fingers. Submit this list to the principal, cafeteria staff and/or other administrators for consideration.
3. For ELL students, use picture cards depicting food items, to introduce and review vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

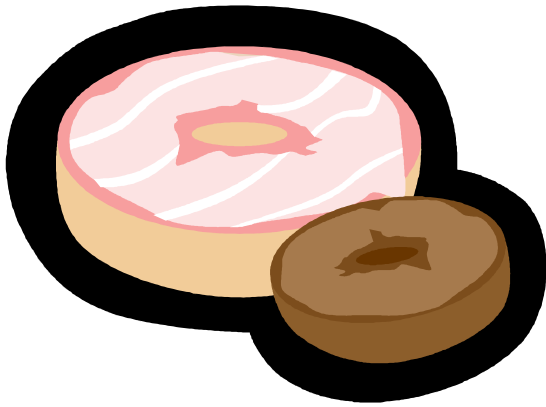
In this lesson, students learned what the food pyramid is and how it works. Students applied this knowledge to deciding their everyday lunchtime meals and making healthier choices. The lesson is intended to encourage students to take responsibility for what they eat, and explain the benefits of making good choices. Through these activities, students have learned the importance of eating right, and how to do so on a daily basis



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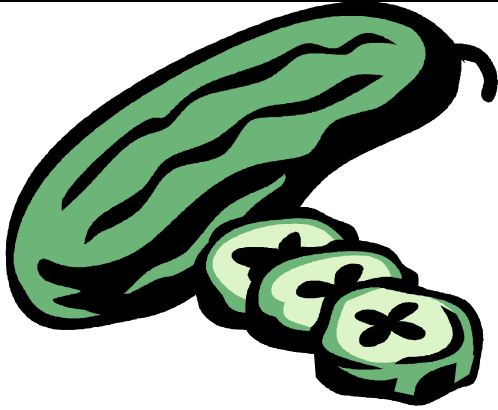
BREAD



BAGEL



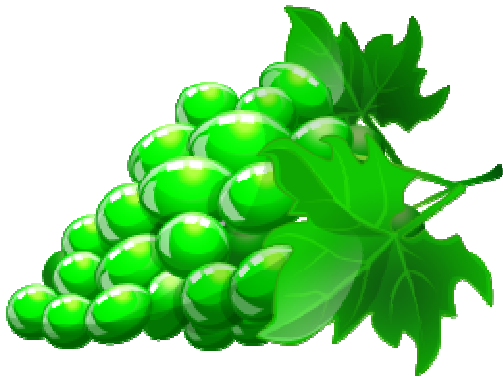
CARROT



CUCUMBER



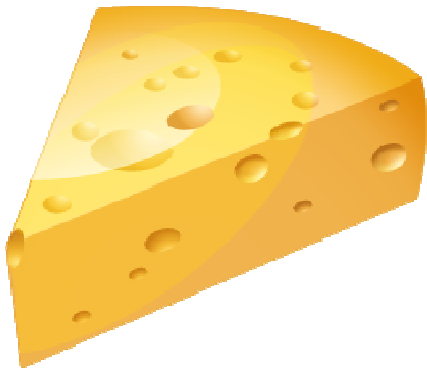
APPLE



GRAPES



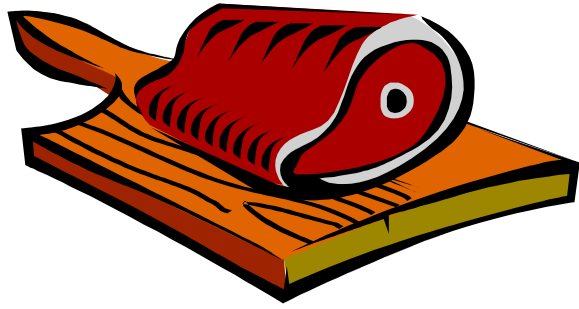
MILK



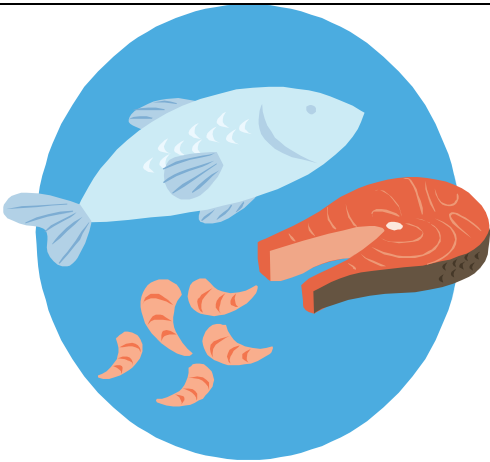
CHEESE



TURKEY



ROAST BEEF



FISH

My Daily Food Log

Name: _____

Day # _____

For breakfast I had...	
For lunch I had...	
For dinner I had...	
For snacks I had...	