



EatHealthy

I eat (and drink) the best foods for my body every day.

Healthy Steps for Healthy Decisions

GRADE LEVEL:
Intermediate

TIME:
30 minutes

GROUPING STRUCTURE:
Whole and small group

SUBJECTS:
**Health
Science**

**English Language Arts –
listening and speaking
Math
Physical Education**

Objective
Students will identify foods to limit and suggest healthy choices.

Materials/Preparation

- ➔ **Classroom Materials**
 - Construction paper (five pieces)
 - Crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers
- ➔ **Provided in the Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives Kit**
 - MyPlate poster
- ➔ **Before the Activity**
 - Make on construction paper and post five Healthy Decision Food Signs



Opening the Activity

1. **Divide students into five small groups and direct each group to stand in front of one of the five signs that you have posted in the classroom.**
2. **Tell students that there are five foods posted on the sign and their team has three minutes to decide which foods on the list are foods that should be limited or only chosen sometimes.** They should circle the foods that should be limited.

Sign 1
Glazed Donuts
Fried Chicken
Vanilla Ice Cream
Orange Soda
Salted Peanuts

Sign 2
Chocolate Cake
French Fries
Strawberry Milkshake
Sweetened Iced Tea
Plain Potato Chips

Sign 3
Vanilla Cupcake
Fried Mozzarella Sticks
Chocolate Ice Cream
Fruit Drink
Cheese Flavored Crackers

Sign 4
Apple Pie
Hot Dog
Ice Cream Sandwich
Lemonade
BBQ Potato Chips

Sign 5
Chocolate Chip Cookie
Pizza
Root Beer Float
Grape Soda
Cheese Flavored Tortilla Chips

3. **At the end of three minutes, have students return to their seats.** Discuss how students felt about this experience. Was it easy or hard and why?
 - We know that we should eat healthier foods more often and less healthy foods occasionally.
 - It can be challenging to decide which foods are not the healthiest choices because many factors go into deciding.

- Explain to students that determining the healthiest foods to eat can be challenging, even for adults. There are choices within the five food groups that are healthier than others.

4. Tell students that today's activity will be about choosing the healthiest foods in a food group.

Leading the Activity

5. Call attention to the MyPlate poster.

Are there any messages on the poster that might help us understand how to pick the healthiest foods and drinks in a food group?

- Ideal responses: There is a message about the grains group that helps us know that whole grains are best; There is a message about making sure we choose fruits and vegetables; There is a message reminding us to choose low-fat dairy foods; There is a message reminding us to choose water over sugary drinks.
- The reminders on the MyPlate poster can help us to know how to create the healthiest plates from the five food groups and which foods we should limit.
- There are three main guidelines for foods to limit. We should limit foods with added sugar, solid fats, and salt.
- The poster also reminds us that the nutrition facts label and ingredient list can help us make healthy decisions.



6. Explain what makes certain foods in a food group healthier to eat (or drink) using the Choosing the Healthiest Foods in a Food Group Discussion Points.

Closing the Activity

7. Have students return to their original Healthy Decision Food Signs and conduct a small group discussion.

Does the group want to make any changes to the foods they have circled?

8. Reveal and discuss the correct answer.

Answer: All of the foods on the list should be limited and should be circled.

9. Have students identify a healthier choice for each food on the list (i.e., something that would be an everyday/every meal choice instead of a choice that should be limited).

A word about added sugars:

A product's Nutrition Facts label provides a total amount of sugar per serving and does not make a distinction regarding the amount of added sugars in a product. You can find added sugars by looking at the ingredient list.

Other words that mean added sugar:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| • anhydrous dextrose | • crystal dextrose | • glucose | • malt syrup | • raw sugar |
| • brown sugar | • dextrose | • high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) | • maltose | • sucrose |
| • cane juice | • evaporated corn sweetener | • honey | • maple syrup | • sugar |
| • confectioner's powdered sugar | • fructose | • invert sugar | • molasses | • sugar cane juice |
| • corn syrup | • fruit juice concentrate | • lactose | • nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar) | • white granulated sugar |
| • corn syrup solids | • fruit nectar | • liquid fructose | • pancake syrup | |

Choosing the Healthiest Foods in a Food Group

Discussion Points

CUT BACK ON FOODS HIGH IN ADDED SUGAR, SALT, AND SOLID FATS

Currently, many of the foods and beverages we eat and drink contain empty calories – calories from solid fats and/or added sugars. Solid fats and added sugars add calories to the food but few or no nutrients. For this reason, the calories from solid fats and added sugars in a food are often called empty calories. Learning more about solid fats and added sugars can help you make better food and drink choices.

- Solid fats are fats (oils) that are solid at room temperature (e.g., butter). Some solid fats are found naturally in foods. They can also be added when foods are cooked.
- Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added when foods or beverages are made or prepared.
- The foods and beverages that provide the most empty calories are:
 - » Cakes, cookies, pastries, and donuts (contain both solid fat and added sugars)
 - » Sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks (contain added sugars)
 - » Cheese (contains solid fat)
 - » Pizza (contains solid fat)
 - » Ice cream (contains both solid fat and added sugars)
 - » Sausages, hot dogs, bacon, and ribs (contain solid fat)

Choose foods in forms with no added sugars.

Example: When choosing between two forms of a food in a food group such as sweetened and unsweetened apple sauce in the Fruit Group, choose the unsweetened version because it has no added sugar. This doesn't mean that the unsweetened apple sauce has no sugar in it at all; it means that the only sugar in the unsweetened apple sauce comes from the sugar that is naturally found in the apples used to make it.

Choose milk or other foods from the Dairy Group that are non- or low-fat; you will get the same amount of nutrients but less empty calories.

Example: Choose skim milk instead of whole milk (because skim milk contains no empty calories at all whereas whole milk contains solid fats).

Go lean with protein; choose meats with less fat and prepare Protein Foods in a way that does not add more solid fat to the dish (e.g., broil, grill, roast, or poach meat instead of frying).

Example: Choose baked chicken breast without the skin instead of fried chicken (because fried chicken contains solid fats from frying and skin).

Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you eat – it all adds up. Everyone, including kids, should limit their total salt [sodium] intake to less than 1 teaspoon per day. One teaspoon of salt is 2,300 milligrams of sodium. Read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients list to find packaged and canned foods lower in salt (e.g., “low sodium”, “reduced sodium”, or “no salt added”).

Example: Choose unsalted nuts as a Protein Food; you will get the same amount of nutrients but without the extra salt.

CHOOSE WHOLE GRAIN FOODS FROM THE GRAINS GROUP

The grains group is made up of two kinds of grains: Whole Grains and Refined Grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel – the bran, germ, and endosperm. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. When this is done the process removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins from the grain. Sometimes refined grains are enriched which means that some of the nutrients that were taken out are added back in. Even if a grain is enriched, the fiber cannot be added back. Try to make sure that at least half of your daily grains come from whole grain sources.

Example: Choose macaroni and cheese made with whole-wheat macaroni noodles.

Tip: Just because a food (e.g. bread) is brown or the package says it is made of “wheat”, does not mean it is a whole grain. The easiest way to tell if a food is a whole grain is to read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole grain ingredient first on the list (e.g., “whole wheat”, “brown rice”, or “oatmeal”).



EatHealthy
I eat (and drink) the best foods for my body every day.

Healthy Steps for Healthy Decisions

continued

5
ACTIVITY

Discussion Points: Explaining Calories

- The foods we eat have calories.
- Calorie – a measurement used to tell us how much energy our bodies will get from eating a certain food.
- Our bodies use energy all day long, this is called burning calories. Even sitting here, your body is using calories.
- One reason for an unhealthy weight is eating more calories than our bodies use. Your body stores unused calories as fat.
- Making sure we get enough calories from healthy foods is also a part of being a healthy weight. It is important to eat the right amount of calories for you.
- We need to balance our daily calorie intake with the amount of energy we use.
- ChooseMyPlate.gov because the advice for how much a person should eat of each food group is based on how active a person is during the day.
- The more physically active a person is, the more calories they need. The less physically active a person is, the fewer calories they need.

- Ideal responses: Replace fried chicken with skinless grilled chicken breast; Replace strawberry milk shake with real fruit smoothie.

10. Share a few of the replacement foods with the whole group and discuss.

- Within a food group, foods with the least amount of empty calories and added salt are the healthiest choices.
- It is important to limit foods with too many empty calories (added sugars and solid fats) and too much salt in our day-to-day lives.
- These foods can be enjoyed on special occasions rather than as a part of our regular meals and snacks.

Healthy Steps for Healthy Snacks Acrostic Poem example

Cheese and whole grain crackers
Hummus dip and carrot sticks
Apple slices with peanut butter
Raisins
Low-fat yogurt
Ice pops made from 100% no sugar added fruit juice
English muffin toasted and topped with tomato sauce and cheese



EatHealthy

I eat (and drink) the best foods for my body every day.

5 ACTIVITY

Healthy Steps for Healthy Decisions

continued



Modifications/Extensions

- Extend the activity by having students practice reading nutrition facts labels and ingredient lists. Divide students into teams and give each team a nutrition facts label and ingredient list and have them locate key information (e.g., serving size, calories, where to look for added sugars, where to look for solid fats, where to look for nutrients to increase, percent daily values, and where to look for whole grains).
- Integrate math by asking students to name the math skills needed to read ingredient lists and nutrition facts labels and have students create math problems based on making healthy food choices.
- Extend the activity by having students complete an “Energy In/Energy Out” research project to determine how many calories are in common foods they eat and how many calories are used through common activities they do every day.
- Have each student write a Healthy Steps for Healthy Snacks Acrostic Poem by listing a healthy snack for each letter in their name.



EatHealthy
I eat (and drink) the best
foods for my body every day.

5
ACTIVITY

Healthy Steps for Healthy Decisions

continued

Reading a Nutrition Facts Label and Ingredient List

Fat-Free Strawberry Yogurt

Saturated Fat and Trans Fat are solid fats

Look for foods with:
- 0g of Trans Fat
- %DV of less than
5% of Saturated Fat

Sodium is salt.

20% DV or
more per serving
is high.

Sugar

Note: this is the total
amount of sugar and
does not specify the
amount that is naturally
occurring versus “added
sugar.”

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 5g	2%
Sodium 118 mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 1g	0%
Sugars 16g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 55%	Iron 0%
Vitamin D 15%	Potassium 0%

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	30g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Ingredients: Cultured grade A nonfat milk, strawberries, sugar, pectin, modified corn starch, natural flavor, kosher gelatin, purple carrot juice concentrate, carmine and turmeric (for color), malic acid, calcium phosphate. Contains active yogurt cultures including *L. acidophilus*.

Serving Size

Tells us how much makes up one serving and how many servings are in the package. Information on the label is based on ONE serving.

Amount of Calories

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of this food.

General Guide to Calories

- 40 Calories is low
- 100 Calories is moderate
- 400 Calories or more is high

*Note: The General Guide to Calories provides a general reference for calories when you look at a Nutrition Facts label. This guide is based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Percent Daily Values

- 5% or less is LOW
- 20% or more is HIGH

Limit these nutrients

Get enough of these nutrients

Foot Note

This provides general recommended intake levels for nutrients in terms of Percent Daily Values. This information is not about a specific food and it is the same on every label because it shows recommended dietary advice for all Americans.

Ingredient List

The ingredient list tells you what a food is made of and the ingredients are listed in order from greatest to least. Look here for added sugars and whole grains.

- To limit foods with added sugar, make sure that added sugars are not listed as one of the first few ingredients.
- To increase foods with whole grain, choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the label's ingredient list: brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, oatmeal, quinoa, rolled oats, whole-grain barley, whole-grain corn, whole-grain sorghum, whole-grain triticale, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, wild rice.