



EatHealthy

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

19

 ACTIVITY

Healthy Food Counts!

GRADE LEVEL:
Primary

TIME:
60 minutes

GROUPING STRUCTURE:
**Whole group/
independent**

SUBJECTS:
**Health
Science
English Language Arts –
listening, speaking, and
writing
Math**

Objective
Students will predict and identify the recommended daily amount for each food group.

Materials/Preparation

Classroom Materials

- Crayons
- Suggested items for “What Counts as a Portion” (see page 23) demonstration
- Blank paper (one sheet/student)
- Sticky notes (five)



Downloadable Materials

www.nestleusa.com/healthysteps

- Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives MyPlate poster or handout
- Food Cards



Before the Activity

- Post poster and cover the areas showing each recommended daily intake amount with a sticky note.
- Prepare items for “What Counts as a Portion” demonstration

Grains	Fruits	Vegetables	Dairy	Protein

Opening the Activity

1. Introduce the Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives MyPlate poster.

- The poster is a tool to help us learn how to think, eat, and move healthy.
- There are pictures, symbols, and messages that tell us about nutrition (which means eating healthy) and physical activity (which means moving healthy).
- One very important symbol on the poster is the MyPlate icon.

2. Discuss the MyPlate icon on the poster.

MyPlate illustrates the five food groups using something we see at mealtimes, a place setting. MyPlate uses different colors to show portions of each food group on the plate and in the cup. Why are some portions on MyPlate larger than others?

- Ideal responses: We need to eat different amounts of food from each food group every day; A healthy meal starts with more vegetables and fruits and smaller portions of protein and grains; To show us that we should make half our plate fruits and vegetables.

- Tell students that they're going to do an activity that will help them understand how much of each food group they should eat every day.



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Leading the Activity

- Point to each food group and have students name the group out loud.
- Have students draw a recording chart with five columns on a blank piece of paper and label the columns with the names of the five food groups.
- Ask students why it is important to know how much of each food group to eat every day.
 - Ideal responses: So we don't eat too much food in one day; So we get the right balance of foods from each food group; So we know when we have what we need to be healthy.
- Explain how we know the right amount to eat of each food group every day.
 - There are recommendations for a healthy amount to eat from each food group every day on the MyPlate poster. These amounts are covered right now because in a moment, you are going to guess the recommended amounts.
 - Most of the time, we do not eat the total amount of food recommended for a food group in one meal. Most people eat a portion of the recommended amount in each meal.

Suggested items for "What Counts as a Portion" demonstration

- Grains** – a bowl of cereal and a measuring cup (to show 1 cup of dry cereal fills a regular size bowl)
- Vegetables** – 6 baby carrots and 1/2 cup measuring cup (to show that 6 baby carrots makes about 1/2 cup)
- Fruits** – 1 small apple
- Dairy** – 1 regular container yogurt
- Protein** – 1 small chicken breast half (or deck of cards to show the approximate size of 3 ounces of meat)

Note: based on a 1,800-calorie food pattern.

If demonstration materials are unavailable, then simply show examples of "what counts as a portion" using the Food Cards and Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives MyPlate poster.



Understanding recommended average daily intake amounts

- Amounts vary depending on characteristics such as age and how physically active a person is. For personalized amounts, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov.
- The recommendations in this activity are appropriate for a 5- to 9-year-old child.
- ChooseMyPlate.gov provides recommended average daily intake amounts in terms of total volume or weight for the day (e.g., instead of five servings of vegetables per day, the recommendation is 2 1/2 cups).
- If children are familiar with the amount that counts as a portion for each food group and the number of portions they should eat to make up the total recommended volume or weight, then they can estimate when they have eaten the right amount from each group every day.

8. **Ask students if they can name some foods in the Grains Group.** Show students the Grains Group Food Cards.
9. **Explain why it is important to eat foods from the Grains Group.**
10. **Explain/demonstrate what counts as one portion of the recommended amount of grains.**
11. **Ask students to predict the number of times they should eat a portion of grains in one day.** If one ounce, one piece of bread, or a bowl of cereal counts as one portion, then how many portions do you think you need of grains every day?
12. **Have students hold up their hands, using fingers to represent the number of portions they predict for the Grains Group.**



Food Group Talking Points (for activity steps 8 – 14/repeat for each group)					
	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Dairy	Protein
What are they?	Foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, or barley	Vegetables or 100% vegetable juice	Fruits or 100% fruit juice	Foods made from milk that retain their calcium	Foods made from meat, poultry, fish, beans, peas, eggs, or nuts
What are some foods in the group?	Bread Pasta Breakfast cereals Oatmeal Tortillas	Corn Carrots Green beans Red peppers Broccoli	Apples Oranges Strawberries Bananas Grapes	Milk Cheese Yogurt Cottage cheese	Lean meat Chicken Turkey Fish Eggs Peanut butter Nuts
Why is it important to eat foods from this group?	We get fiber from foods in the Grains Group, which helps our heart stay healthy.	We get vitamins from vegetables. Carrots are high in Vitamin A, which helps keep our eyes and skin healthy.	We get vitamins from fruits. Strawberries are high in Vitamin C, which helps heal cuts and wounds.	We get calcium from foods in the Dairy Group, which helps give us strong bones and teeth.	We get protein from foods in the Protein Foods Group, which helps to build muscle.
What is the daily recommended amount?	6 portions (6 oz.) 1 portion size = approximately 1 oz. <i>Tip:</i> choose whole over refined grains.	5 portions (2½ cups) 1 portion size = approximately ½ cup <i>Tip:</i> choose dark-green, red, and orange vegetables and make half your plate vegetables and fruits.	3 portions (1½ cups) 1 portion size = approximately ½ cup <i>Tip:</i> choose whole or cut-up fruits more often than fruit juice and make half your plate vegetables and fruits.	2½ portions (1 cup) 1 portion size = approximately 1 cup <i>Tip:</i> choose skim or 1% milk.	2 portions (estimated) (5 oz.) 1 portion size = approximately 2 - 3 oz. <i>Tip:</i> choose lean meats and seafood two times a week.





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continued

Food Group Talking Points (for activity steps 8 – 14/repeat for each group) *continued*

	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Dairy	Protein
What counts as one portion?	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • ½ cup cooked pasta • 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal • ½ cup of cooked oatmeal • 1 small tortilla 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup of green beans • 6 baby carrots • 1 cup of lettuce • ½ small potato • ½ corn on the cob 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup of applesauce • 1 small apple • 1 small banana • 16 grapes 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup of milk • 1 regular container yogurt • 2 ounces processed American cheese (1 slice of processed cheese is equivalent to 1/3 cup milk) 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small half chicken breast = 3 oz. • 1 small lean hamburger = 2-3 oz. • 2 tbsp. peanut butter = 2 oz. • 1 cup of split pea, lentil, or bean soup = 2 oz. • 2 eggs = 2 oz.
Frequently Asked Questions	<p>What is the difference between whole and refined grains?</p> <p>Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel (bran, germ, and endosperm). Refined grains have been through a process that removes the bran and germ. To tell if a food is considered whole grain, read the nutrition label and look for one of the following ingredients first on the label's ingredient list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brown rice • bulgur • graham flour • oatmeal • whole-grain corn • whole oats • whole rye • whole wheat • wild rice 	<p>Do beans and peas count?</p> <p>Peas and beans are excellent sources of fiber, protein, and iron. They can be counted in either the Vegetables or Protein Foods Group.</p>	<p>Do canned and frozen fruits count?</p> <p>Yes, canned and frozen fruits count. Choose fruits canned in their own juices and not in heavy syrup which adds extra calories. (And, canned and frozen vegetables count for the Vegetable Group too.)</p>	<p>Do butter, cream and cream cheese count?</p> <p>Foods made from milk that have little or no calcium (e.g., cream, butter, cream cheese) are not considered a part of this group.</p>	<p>Does lunch meat count?</p> <p>Processed meats such as ham, sausage, hot dogs, and lunch or deli meats count, but have added sodium. When choosing between foods with added sodium (salt), we should choose foods with lower numbers.</p>

Note: based on a 1,800-calorie pattern.



13. Provide the correct answer. Remove the sticky note on the poster covering the recommended amount for the Grains Group.

- The recommended amount is 6 ounces. A portion for grains is 1 ounce and we need 6 ounces of grains every day, so if you are holding up six fingers – you are correct.
- Look and discuss: Did anyone predict correctly? Who had the closest prediction? How many predicted too low? How many predicted too high?



14. Have students draw, color, and write the name of a food and the recommended daily amount for the Grains Group on their recording chart.

- Point out the key message for the Grains Group: Make at least half your grains whole.

15. Repeat steps 8 –14 for each of the remaining food groups (Vegetables, Fruits, Dairy, and Protein) using the Food Group Talking Points chart and the poster.

16. Remind students why there are no recommended amounts for oils. Oils are not a food group; We need some oil every day for good health.



Closing the Activity

17. Ask students to think about the foods and drinks they had from the Dairy Group yesterday.

18. Take a poll: How many students had enough milk and how many did not? What are some ways to make sure you are getting enough calcium-rich foods every day?



Modifications

Adjust the suggested time for this activity by providing students with a premade recording sheet. Use Student Activity Sheet 4 (provided at www.nestleusa.com/healthysteps and www.neahin.org/healthysteps). You can also adjust the suggested time by spreading this activity over a five day period. Take about 10 – 15 minutes per day and cover one food group at a time. If you have additional time, divide students into small teams. Assign each team a food group. Provide each team with demonstration materials and have them plan a skit to explain what counts as a portion of the recommended daily amount for their assigned food group. Have teams share their demonstrations with the rest of the class. Be mindful of school policies regarding allowing students to handle food in the classroom.





Healthy Food Counts!

1

Record the correct number of portions for each food group.

Grains

I need to eat portions every day.
Draw a picture of a food from the Grains Group.

1 portion of Grains = 1 oz.
Eat 6 oz. every day;
At least half should be whole.

Vegetables

I need to eat portions every day.
Draw a picture of a food from the Vegetable Group.

1 portion of Vegetables = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Eat 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups every day;
Vary your veggies.

Fruits

I need to eat portions every day. Draw a picture of a food from the Fruit Group.

1 portion of Fruits = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Eat 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups every day; Make sure juice is 100% fruit juice with no sugar added.

Dairy

I need to eat portions every day.
Draw a picture of a food from the Dairy Group.

1 portion of Dairy = 1 cup
Get 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups every day; Choose low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt.

Protein

I need to eat portions every day. Draw a picture of a food from the Protein Foods Group.

1 portion of Protein = approximately 2 – 3 oz.;
Eat 5 oz. every day; Choose lean meats and eat more fish.





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2 Circle...

the **Grains Group** foods with an **orange** crayon.
 ...the **Vegetable Group** foods with a **green** crayon.
 ...the **Fruit Group** foods with a **red** crayon.
 ...the **Dairy Group** foods with a **blue** crayon.
 ...and the **Protein Group** group foods with a **purple** crayon.



3

Count how many of each food group.

Record:

Grains _____ **Vegetables** _____ **Fruits** _____

Dairy _____ **Protein** _____

Note: based on a 1,800-calorie pattern.

