

Protein Group

Kindergarten-1st Grade



GOAL

Recognize foods in the Protein group as part of a healthy diet.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will state that foods in the Protein group help the body grow and heal.
2. Students will name one meat (animal) and one non-meat (plant) food in the Protein group.

NC EDUCATION AND HEALTHY LIVING STANDARDS

Kindergarten

Healthful Living Essential Standard K.NPA.1: Understand MyPlate as a tool for selecting nutritious foods.

English Language Arts Essential Standard RF.K.4 c.: Read common high-frequency words by sight.

1st Grade

Healthful Living Essential Standard 1.NPA.1: Understand MyPlate as a tool for selecting nutritious foods.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Protein PowerPoint presentation
- ☐ Student handout: Protein worksheet
- ☐ Parent handouts: Today in Nutrition class...Protein (English & Spanish), Recipe (if applicable)
- ☐ Educational Incentive
- ☐ Taste Test food & supplies
- ☐ Optional: "Can You Help Dean Protein Grow" PowerPoint presentation

INTRODUCTION/REVIEW

Who remembers what we talked about last time I was here? [Optional: Quick Quiz questions from previous lesson]

I gave you a challenge last time I was here. Does anyone remember what it was? Does anyone want to share how they did with the challenge?

MIND GRABBER

Lego House

This is a house made out of Legos. If I wanted to build this house, what would I need? Yes, I would need individual Lego blocks. The Legos are the building blocks of the house. We can look around this room and see the different kinds of building blocks used to make it (cinder blocks, glass, ceiling tiles, etc.).

Just as this house is made of blocks of Legos, our bodies are also made from small building blocks. These blocks are called proteins.

Everything in our bodies is made of at least some protein. Our muscles, skin, hair, eyes, and body organs, such as the heart, are all made from protein. If we are made up of so much protein, it must be pretty important!

DISCUSSION

FOODS IN THE PROTEIN GROUP

Today we are going to talk about the purple area on MyPlate. It is called the Protein group because all the foods in this group have a lot of protein for our bodies.



Public Health

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The foods in this group help us grow and heal.

To help us remember the foods in the Protein group, we have our food group friend, Dean Protein. Let's take a closer look at Dean Protein.

Option 1: [Look at Dean Protein together and have students identify the foods he is made of.]

OR

Option 2: [English/Spanish Reading Practice]

-As we look at Dean Protein we are going to practice reading. Let's do the first one together. "I see chicken." "Yo veo pollo." Where is the chicken on Dean Protein?

- "I see beans." "Yo veo frijoles." [read together as a class, or if the children are more advanced, have them read it to you]. Can anyone find the beans on Dean Protein?

- "I see ham." "Yo veo jamon." [read together as a class, or if the children are more advanced, have them read it to you]. Can anyone find the ham on Dean Protein?

- "I see eggs." "Yo veo huevos." [read together as a class, or if the children are more advanced, have them read it to you]. Can anyone find the egg on Dean Protein?

- "I see nuts." "Yo veo nueces." [read together as a class, or if the children are more advanced, have them read it to you]. Can anyone find the peanuts on Dean Protein?

-Great job! Dean Protein helps us remember some of the foods in the Protein Group. Let's look at some more foods that are in this group.

Some of the foods in this group we get from animals, and some of the foods we get from plants. Plant proteins are things like beans, nuts and seeds. Animal proteins are foods from animals, like cows, chickens, and pigs. Often protein foods we get from animals is called meat. [Optional: Would anyone like to share with me their favorite protein food?]

CHOOSING FOODS FROM THE PROTEIN GROUP

It is important to eat foods from the Protein group several times each day. It is a good idea to choose a VARIETY of foods from this group. What does the word "variety" mean?

Choosing many different foods from this group rather than eating the same foods every day.

For example, instead of eating hamburgers every day, you might choose different animal protein foods like chicken, shrimp or eggs sometimes, and other times you might choose plant protein foods such as almonds, peanut butter, or beans.

Since Protein group foods are from both plants and animals, let's look at some protein foods and see if you can figure out if it is from a plant or from an animal. [Optional game: Have students pretend to be a plant or an animal as you go through the different foods in the protein group. See if students can name which animal for the animal protein foods.]

WHY THE PROTEIN GROUP IS IMPORTANT

Remember, Dean Protein helps remind us of the foods in the protein group. Let's learn why these foods are so good for our bodies.

Repeat after me: When I eat foods from the Protein group, I give my body PROTEIN to grow and heal.

Protein helps us to GROW. Eating foods from the Protein group gives you the protein you need to get taller. It also helps your hair grow, and your muscles, skin, fingernails, and all parts of your body grow.

Protein helps us HEAL. If we get cut, we need protein to heal the cut. Remember the Lego house we talked about earlier? If there was a hole in the house, we would use a Lego block to fix it. Our bodies do the same thing-if we have a cut, our body helps it heal by adding protein blocks to the cut.



Optional: Game: "Can You Help Dean Protein Grow?" [see additional activities]

WRAP-UP & REVIEW

Let's Review!

- Protein foods come from both plants and animals.
- Protein foods help our bodies GROW and HEAL.
- Eat a VARIETY of protein foods to stay healthy.

Quick Quiz! [optional]

1. True or False? Chicken is in the protein group? True. Chicken is a protein food.
2. True or False? Protein foods only come from animals? False. Protein foods come from plants and animals.

CHALLENGE

Eat a protein food that comes from a PLANT today! Maybe some peanuts or peanut butter, almonds or beans.

TASTE TEST IDEAS

1. Hummus or bean dip with whole grain pita and raw veggies
2. Black bean mango salsa with whole grain tortilla chips
3. Sunflower or pumpkin seeds
4. Edamame
5. Protein Tasting Circle [see additional activities]

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

1. **"Can You Help Dean Protein Grow?" game:** Students select the protein foods to help Dean Protein grow taller. See additional PowerPoint presentation.
2. **Emergent Reader Books:** English & Spanish Emergent Reader books that focus on kindergarten-level sight words that help students build literacy skills while learning about the food groups.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-emergent-reader-mini-books>
3. **Which Animal Game:** Put plant and animal posters where all the students can see them. Have each child come to the front of the class and give them a food picture. Have the student tell the class what the food is and then place it with the plant or the animal poster. Or you can use animal posters (cow, pig, chicken, etc.) and have each child place the food picture on the animal it comes from.
4. **Protein Group Identification Game:** A student volunteer stands facing the rest of the group with his/her back to the teacher. Teacher holds up a big picture of a food from the protein group with its name written on it. The volunteer must not be told what the picture is. The object of the game is for the volunteer to figure out what the food is based on clues given by classmates. The volunteer calls on students in the group who give clues until the volunteer guesses the food. Clues may include the following:
 - Whether the food is from an animal or a plant
 - If meat, what animal it comes from
 - Color, taste (sweet, sour, etc)
 - At what meal it is usually eaten
 - Whether it is usually eaten hot or cold
 - Association with the holidays, etc.



Variation: Ask any student who brings their lunch to play "Stump the Class" by having classmates guess the protein foods in their lunch box. Use clues above. Bring food safety into the discussion by emphasizing that many protein foods need to be refrigerated or stored with an ice pack.

5. **Protein at Lunch:** Provide a school menu for this week and ask students to identify the protein foods.
6. **Protein Tasting Circle:** Since the foods in the protein group come from both plants and animals and are sometimes a bit harder for us to remember, today we are going to have a TASTING CIRCLE where we are going to taste several foods from the protein group.
 - Before we start tasting, let's talk a little about mindful eating. Who can tell me what it means to be mindful? That's right, being aware, or being present. When we are mindful, we notice our thoughts, feelings, and what our bodies are telling us. Being mindful is not about what we eat. It's about how we eat.
 - When we are tasting these foods from the protein group, I want you to be mindful of each food...how it tastes, how it feels, its shape, color, size, smell...notice everything about the foods. Let's practice with the first food together and then you can do the other ones on your own.
 - Let's start with the sunflower seed. First, take a look at it, noticing its texture and its color. Now close your eyes and feel the seed. What does it feel like, rough or smooth? Hard or soft? Wet, dry, or sticky? Now, smell the seed. Does it smell? What do you notice about the smell? Now put the seed in your mouth. Take the time to notice what it feels like in your mouth before you start chewing it. Begin chewing it very slowly and just focus on the flavor of the food and the feel of the food in your mouth. Notice how it feels to chew the food and swallow being aware of how the seed feels as it goes down your throat into your stomach.
 - Now we are going to taste several other foods from the Protein group. As you are going through them, use your mindful eating skills to really taste the foods.
 - Suggested foods to taste: Sunflower seeds, black beans, chickpeas, tofu, eggs, chicken, sunbutter

