



Introducing MyPyramid

Grades 6 to 8

Note to nutrition educators:

Change can be exciting and confusing. Many of your students have spent several years learning about the Food Guide Pyramid and how it helps us eat healthy foods. Now they will be learning about MyPyramid, which is part of the updated food guidance system introduced by USDA in April 2005. They may have questions like:

- What's wrong with the "old" pyramid?
- Why do we need to change?

This lesson will help you answer questions and introduce MyPyramid to students in grades six through eight.

To learn more about MyPyramid and try some of its interactive features, visit MyPyramid.gov.

Knowledge objectives

Students will know:

- MyPyramid replaces the old Food Guide Pyramid and gives us the latest information from nutrition experts about eating healthy food and being active.
- The recommended food pattern from MyPyramid for their age range.

Behavioral objectives

Students will:

- Compare what they typically eat to the recommended food pattern for their age range and set a goal for improving.
- Set a goal for increasing their physical activity level.

Supplies needed

- Old Food Guide Pyramid poster (MP681)
- MyPyramid poster (N943)

Student handout

- MyPyramid for youths (N942)

Teacher references

- MyPyramid.gov
- MyPyramid 101 packet (N940)

Core activity

- What's Inside MyPyramid?

Doing the Lesson

Introduce yourself and tell students: I will be visiting your classroom to talk about how we can look our best and stay healthy. Here's a clue: It's about eating healthy foods and moving our bodies every day.

Ask the students if they can tell you about an important scientific discovery or invention they have learned about. Accept all answers. It's not important if they know the name of the scientist. Some ideas are: electricity, airplanes, telephones, and computers.

The main concept to convey is that when scientists make a new discovery, it can change our lives for the better. Sometimes we even change the way we live. For example, instead of using candles to light our home, we now have electric lights. Ask them if they can think of any other examples.

Show the poster of the old Food Guide Pyramid and tell students: Until April 2005, this was the best information we had about healthy eating.

Remove poster of the old Food Guide Pyramid and display the MyPyramid poster. Tell students: In April 2005, nutrition experts introduced an updated version called MyPyramid.

MyPyramid contains the latest scientific discoveries about eating healthy food and getting plenty of physical activity.

Ask the students: What do you think might happen when we have new scientific discoveries about eating healthy food? (*We might make some changes in what we eat.*)

What do you think might happen if we have new scientific evidence that getting plenty of physical activity each day keeps our bodies healthy? (*We might decide to be more active.*)

Give each student a copy of the MyPyramid for youths handout. Ask them to look at the back of it. Each food group has an important message for us along with some tips. As you talk about each group, ask the class what tips they would like to add:

- Grains – Choose whole grains
- Vegetables – Go for the colors
- Fruits – Fresh, frozen, canned and dried will do
- Milk – Feed your bones with high calcium foods
- Meat and Beans – Go lean

Ask the students: Did I forget any color? (Yellow)

Tell students: Yellow represents Oils. Oils are not a food group. The yellow band is narrow to remind us that we need a small amount of oil each day to stay healthy. We can get plenty of oil from eating foods like nuts, fish, cooking oil and salad dressing.

Ask students: Do you notice anything else on MyPyramid? (*Person climbing the steps on the side of MyPyramid.*)

What do you think this person is trying to tell us? (This reminds us how important it is to be active every day.)

Tell students: A reminder to be physically active every day is something new about MyPyramid. Being physically active can help us look our best and keep our bodies healthy.

Children and teens should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, or most days. Your physical activity doesn't have to occur at one time. For example, at different times of the day, you could ride your bike for 15 minutes, walk the dog for 15 minutes and play basketball with your friends for 30 minutes. It all adds up!

Ask the students: What kinds of physical activities do you enjoy?

Do What's Inside MyPyramid? activity

Lesson summary:

Have students count off into these groups: orange, green, red, blue, purple and physical activity.

Give group members five minutes to write a newspaper headline about their group for kids their age. The headline should be something important they learned from MyPyramid. Remind them that to catch people's attention, the headline should be exciting.

Here are some examples:

· **Meat and Beans:** MyPyramid Says Skip the Skin — Cut Calories By Taking Skin Off Chicken

· **Physical Activity:** Take a Hike — Move Your Body For 60 Minutes Every Day

Have each group share its newspaper headline.

Core activity: What's Inside MyPyramid?

Purpose

Helps students compare what they typically eat to the recommended food pattern for their age range.

Supplies needed

- MyPyramid for youths (N942)
- chalkboard or flip chart and markers
- measuring cups in 1 cup, ½ cup and ¼ cup measures
- tablespoon measure
- food models or real foods to illustrate recommended amounts from food groups

Student handout

- MyPyramid work sheet*

Teacher reference

- Recommended Food Pattern*
- MyPyramid 101 packet (N940)

Advance preparation

- Make a copy of the worksheet for each student.
- Make a transparency of the Recommended Food Pattern sheet if desired.

*Furnished with lesson

How to do this Activity

Let's look inside MyPyramid and see what foods we should eat each day. *(As you talk, write each food group and recommended amounts on the chalkboard or flip chart from the Recommended Food Pattern, or show the transparency.)*

Tell students: We are going to do a worksheet activity to see how your eating pattern compares to the recommended food pattern for your age. But first, let's talk about how to estimate amounts of food from each group. (Use measuring cups, food models or real foods to illustrate recommended amounts.)

- Count as one ounce from Grains: 1 slice of bread, ½ English muffin, 3 cups popcorn, 1 cup of dry cereal, ½ cup of rice or pasta, ½ cup oatmeal, or 1 small tortilla.
- Vegetables, Fruits and Milk are counted in cups. (Show the one cup and one-half cup measures.)
- Count as one ounce from the Meat and Beans

Group: 1 ounce of lean meat, fish or poultry, ¼ cup cooked beans or peas, 1 egg, or 1 tablespoon of peanut butter (show ¼ cup and 1 tablespoon measures.)

We should limit the amount of foods high in sugar or fat, like soda, candy, butter and stick margarine

Give students a copy of the worksheet and ask them to think about the food they ate and the physical activities they did yesterday and write their choices in the left column. They should try to estimate amounts, like 1 slice bread or ½ cup broccoli. (If students have questions about amounts of food, use the MyPyramid 101 packet.)

Then, have them compare their choices with the recommended food pattern—just an estimate. Check one of the boxes at the bottom (either “I did great” or “I can do better.”)

Write a food goal for tomorrow. Write an activity goal for tomorrow. Ask some of the students to share their results

Tell them you will check with them the next time you visit to see if they met their goals.

Recommended Food Pattern

Food groups	Ages 9-13 years (1,600 to 1,800 calories)	Ages 14- 18 years (1,800 to 2,200 calories)
Grains	5 to 6 ounce equivalents	6 to 7 ounce equivalents
Vegetables	2 to 2½ cups	2½ to 3 cups
Fruits	2 to 2½ cups	2½ to 3 cups
Milk	3 cups	3 cups
Meat & Beans	5 ounces	5 to 6 ounces

These are the amounts of food to aim for each day. The larger amounts are recommended for males. If you are active, you can eat a little more. Children and teens should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, or most days.

MyPyramid work sheet

Record your food choices for yesterday	Category	Tips
	Grains	Choose whole grains
	Vegetables	Go for the colors
	Fruits	Fresh, frozen, canned and dried will do
	Milk	Feed your bones with high calcium foods
	Meat & Beans	Go lean
	Physical activity	Get 60 minutes of physical activity every day, or most days
	Extras	Limit soda, candy, butter and stick margarine.

Check one:

- I did great
- I can do better

My food goal for tomorrow is:

My activity goal for tomorrow is: