

MyPlate-Protein: Brain Food

Kindergarten - 2nd grade

MyPlate Connection

Teacher says, “Protein foods give your body the energy and strength it needs to stay active, focused, and strong. Imagine enjoying a delicious turkey-burger, a handful of crunchy nuts, or a bowl of warm lentil soup. These foods help build strong muscles, keep your body full for longer, and support your immune system so you can stay energized and ready for fun and learning!”

Nutrition Objective

Students will understand the important role lean protein plays in maintaining a balanced and active life.

Cross Curricular Connection

ELA, Science, SEL

Materials

Explore your lending library for books that support the lesson!

Ingredients-

- canned chicken (open outside of classroom)
- green apples
- canned pineapple
- 6-oz Greek yogurt
- whole-grain crackers

Essential Vocabulary

Energy- the strength and endurance required for sustained physical or mental activity. Example- Protein gives me the **energy** to learn and play!

Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (PA)

Strength:

Push-ups:

Note: if you do not have access to blank wall space, you can potentially try to use desks, tables, or even chairs.

On your feet or in your seat–

- Stand or sit in a chair about an arm’s length or less in front of a wall
- Place both hands on the wall, chest level and shoulder width apart
- Keep your body straight and slowly bend your elbows and lean your chest towards the wall
- Push back through your palms to straighten your arms and return to the starting position.
- Set a timer for 15-20 seconds and keep moving until the timer rings
- For an added challenge you can try to bend your elbows more slowly and pause before straightening them

(15-20 seconds)

Take 10 seconds to breathe

The Balancing Airplane or Crossing Toe Touches

On your feet –

- Stand on your right leg and bring your arms up and out to your sides for balance.
- Begin to lean forward over your right leg
- Let your left foot lift off the floor behind you

- Try to lean forward until your back is flat like a table
- Stand up and switch to stand on your left leg
- Repeat until the timer rings
- For a harder challenge, try to put your arms down at your sides

In your seat –

- Sit tall and hold your arms out to your sides
- Begin to lean forward and reach your right hand toward your left toes
- Sit back up to switch sides
- Lean forward and reach your left hand toward your right toes
- Sit back up and repeat until the timer rings

(15-20 seconds)

Take 10 seconds to breathe

Kneeling or Seated Back Extension or Seated Forward Flexion

On your feet (knees) –

- Kneeling on the floor sit tall on your knees without sitting on your heels
- Cross your arms to hug yourself, grabbing opposite shoulders
- When the timer starts, begin to lean back without sitting
- Come back up to sit straight and then repeat until the timer has stopped

(15-20 seconds)

Take 10 seconds to breathe

In your seat –

- Sit tall and cross your arms to hug yourself grabbing opposite shoulders
- When the timer starts, begin to lean forward without coming all the way onto your thighs
- Sit back up and then repeat until the timer has stopped while keeping your back as straight as possible

(15-20 seconds)

Think about how you feel – is your heart pumping faster? Are you thirsty? Do you feel energized?

Take a deep breath in and let it out.

Lesson Process

Key Points

Teacher-Begin Lesson with a fun, informative video on proteins!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEvM2Z6RS44>

Teacher says, "Your body is always talking to you, letting you know when it is time to eat, play, or rest. This happens through special signals and chemicals. And guess what? Protein helps your brain cells talk to each other!"

Teacher asks, "What are signals or cues your body tells you when you are full or no longer hungry?"

Speaking Stem: "A signal my body gives me when I am no longer hungry is..."

Fullness Cue	Description
Stomach feels comfortable	Your stomach feels cozy, not too empty or too full, just right like a balloon that isn't too stretched.
Slowing down your eating	You start eating slower because you're not as hungry and can feel satisfied without rushing.
No more hunger	The growling or empty feeling in your stomach goes away, meaning your body is ready to stop eating.
Feeling more focused	You can pay attention better in class or during play because you're not distracted by hunger.
Feeling comfortable to move	Your body feels light and ready to move without feeling heavy or uncomfortable.

Teacher says, "These are all ways proteins help cue you are full or ready to be done eating!"

Teacher summarizes: Protein is an important part of your MyPlate, and you can eat it in many ways. You might enjoy tofu stir-fry, sunflower seeds, edamame, beans, grilled fish, or even chickpea soup. These are all tasty choices from the protein group that help you stay strong and healthy.

To achieve wellness goals, it is important when able to, to eat foods that give you energy. If you are in a hurry and need a quick snack before a big test, try Greek yogurt, turkey jerky, or trail mix with pepitas (hull-less pumpkin seeds).

Teacher says, "Proteins can come from plants or animals. If you eat animal-based proteins, try to pick lean meats like pork loin or skinless chicken breast. Remember to try to eat a balanced diet with a robust combination of proteins and other fuel foods from your MyPlate."

Healthy Fuel Foods Chart

Proteins 🍗 🥚	Veggies 🥦 🥕	Whole Grains 🌾 🍞	Carbs 🍌 🍎	Healthy Fats 🥑 🌿
Chicken 🍗	Broccoli 🥦	Brown Rice 🍚	Sweet Potatoes 🍠	Avocado 🥑
Eggs 🥚	Carrots 🥕	Quinoa 🌾	Apples 🍏	Nuts 🥜
Fish 🐟	Spinach 🥬	Oats 🌾	Bananas 🍌	Olive Oil 🌿
Tofu 🍲	Peppers 🌶️	Whole Wheat Bread 🍞	Berries 🍓	Seeds 🌰
Beans 🍲	Tomatoes 🍅	Whole Wheat Pasta 🍝	Grapes 🍇	Cheese 🧀
Yogurt 🥛	Cucumbers 🥒	Popcorn 🍿	Potatoes 🍟	Dark Chocolate 🍫

As you keep practicing mindfulness, pay attention to how different proteins make you feel during the school day. Does scrambled tofu or eggs with feta keep you full? How do you feel after your cheese stick snack? Listening to your body can help you stay strong and ready to learn!

Teacher asks, "Can you name a protein you like to eat or would like to try?"

Speaking Stem: (Turn and talk) "A protein I already enjoy eating is..." or "A protein I would like to try is..." Support students by referring to key facts in the texts as needed.

Lesson Activity (Exit ticket)

This or That? Protein Power Food or Other Fuel Food

Objective: Students will identify protein foods and other fuel foods while engaging in simple, inclusive movements.

Instructions:

1. **Teacher says,** "Proteins give our bodies the energy to move in fun and unique ways! Let's learn about which foods provide this power while we move our bodies!"
2. Read each protein example for students and ask them to move their bodies in a way that may imitate that protein food.

Protein Power Moves (15 second each)

- 🥚 Eggs – Hug yourself like your muscles are growing!
- 🍗 Chicken – Flap your wings like a strong chicken.
- 🍲 Beans – Sway side to side like beans in the wind.
- 🐟 Fish – Make a slow swimming motion with your arms.
- 🧀 Cheese – Stretch your arms up like melty cheese.
- 🥜 Peanut Butter – Rub your hands together like spreading PB on bread.

Wrap-Up Discussion:

1. What protein foods help our muscles grow?
2. What other foods give us energy in different ways?
3. What was your favorite movement?

Teacher Tip: Adjust movements based on space and student abilities to keep the activity inclusive and fun!

Lesson Expansion Activity

Draw a picture of yourself achieving a goal along with a delicious protein that would help fuel your success!

Mindfulness Moment

Staying active is important for your body and your mind!

When you eat lean proteins, you give your muscles the fuel they need to stay strong. Lean proteins also help you focus and stay calm. By combining mindful activities, like deep breathing or stretching, with a diet rich in lean proteins, you can keep your body energized and your mind sharp!

Students Can

All students can participate in the food prep in some way. Students may open cans, wash produce, cut foods with appropriate knives, mix foods, and serve peers. Support students with hand over hand if needed.

Preparation and Recipe

Protein Packed Chicken Salad

- *canned chicken-protein!* (open outside of classroom)
- *green apples*
- *canned pineapple*
- *6-oz Greek yogurt-protein!*
- *whole-grain crackers*



Directions

- 1.) Teacher opens and drains chicken outside of class
- 2.) Students carefully cut green apples into bite size pieces.
- 3.) Students open and drain canned pineapple and add to the bowl with apples and chicken.
- 4.) Students open and mix Greek yogurt into the chicken salad mix.
- 5.) Students receive a small tasting of chicken salad and a few whole grain crackers.

Colorado Comprehensive Health Standard(s)

Kindergarten, Standard 2. Physical and Personal Wellness. 1. Apply knowledge and skills to engage in lifelong healthy eating. 3. Apply knowledge and skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and social well-being.

First Grade, Standard 2. Physical and Personal Wellness. 1. Apply knowledge and skills to engage in lifelong healthy eating. 3. Apply knowledge and skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance

Second Grade, Standard 2. Physical and Personal Wellness. 1. Apply knowledge and skills to engage in lifelong healthy eating. 3. Apply knowledge and skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance

For additional activities and information visit <https://colosph.cuanschutz.edu/school-wellness>



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SCHOOL & COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROGRAM

Protein and energy Family Letter

Getting enough protein increases your energy, helps muscle growth, and improves your bone health. Some ways to get the protein our bodies need:

- Eat eggs for breakfast or add eggs to salads and sandwiches.



- Make a snack mix with nuts such as peanuts, almonds, and walnuts.



- Keep canned fish or chicken in your pantry for quick meals.



- Add lentils to soups, salads, and pasta sauce.



Protein is an important part of your diet. Protein can be found in meat, poultry and seafood, and also in plant-based foods such as legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Grab and Go Brain Food!

Feed your brain and body with nutritious trail mix!



Ingredients

Dried Cranberries

Dried apples

Whole grain cereal

Shelled sunflower seeds (lean protein)



- 1.) Open and empty all materials into a common bowl.
- 2.) Mix and serve, ENJOY!

Boost your energy in just minutes!

Feeling tired or sluggish? Add MVPA to your day!

- Take a walk after meals.
- Take a break to do jumping jacks, high knees, or jump squats.
- Play tag with your kids before dinner.
- Sprint up a flight of stairs.



Resources



Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
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**HUNGER
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Rocky Mountain
Prevention Research Center
colorado school of public health



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PROGRAMA DE BIENESTAR ESCOLAR Y COMUNITARIO

Proteína y energía Carta para la familia

Consumir suficiente proteína aumenta la energía, ayuda al crecimiento muscular y mejora la salud de los huesos.

Algunas formas de obtener la proteína que nuestro cuerpo necesita:

- Coma huevos en el desayuno o agréguelos a las ensaladas y sándwiches.



- Prepare una merienda mezclando frutos secos como cacahuates, almendras y nueces.



- Tenga pescado o pollo enlatado en su despensa para comidas rápidas.



- Agregue lentejas a sopas, ensaladas y salsa para pastas.



Las proteínas son una parte importante de la dieta. Se encuentran en la carne, las aves y en los mariscos, y también en alimentos de origen vegetal como las legumbres, los frutos secos y las semillas.

¡Comida para el cerebro lista para llevar!

¡Alimente su cerebro y su cuerpo con una mezcla nutritiva de frutos secos!

Ingredientes

Arándanos rojos secos

Manzanas secas

Granos integrales

Semillas de girasol peladas (proteína magra)



1.) Ponga todos los ingredientes en un recipiente común.

2.) Mezcle y sívalo. ¡DISFRÚTELO!

¡Aumente su energía en tan solo unos minutos!

¿Se siente cansado o con pereza? ¡Agregue AFMV a su día!

- Salga a caminar después de las comidas.
- Tómese un descanso para hacer saltos de tijera, elevaciones de rodillas o sentadillas con salto.
- Juegue al escondite con sus hijos antes de la cena.
- Suba corriendo un tramo de escaleras.



Recursos

Rocky Mountain
Prevention Research Center
colorado school of public health



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