


A Balanced Diet

Goals

- To identify food groups and foods that belong to each
- To plan a balanced meal that includes foods from most or all of the food groups
- To select breakfast, lunch and dinner menus that together include appropriate portions of all the food groups



Student Menu Planner:

A healthy menu for (what meal?):

Grains:

Fruits:

Vegetables:

Protein:

Milk:

.....

.....

Overview: Each child designs a balanced breakfast, lunch or dinner menu. Menus are organized by meal and combined to create a menu guide. Students use the guide to choose favorite menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner to create a daily diet that includes appropriate servings of all the food groups.

Materials

- One or more standard or ethnic/cultural food pyramids including information on recommended servings (available at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.html>)
- Copy of “Balanced Diet Pages” for each student
- Copy of “Balanced Diet Cover”

Directions

1. Review the food pyramid with students and ask them to name some foods in each group. Remind students that they should have foods in each group every day. For older students, list recommended servings for each food group.
2. Give students copies of the “Balanced Diet Pages”. Let children choose a meal they’d like to plan, or assign them a meal. Have children complete the menu template being sure to include a food in all or most of the categories.
3. Organize students’ menus by meal and combine into a book. Use the “Balanced Diet Cover” for the front and bind. Ask children to review the book and choose menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner that will provide appropriate portions of all food groups by the end of the day.

Extensions

- Print the “Recipe Cards” template in “More Activities” 2-per-page, preferably on heavy stock paper, then cut to form individual cards. Tell students to ask a relative or friend for a favorite healthy recipe and give each student a recipe card on which to write the recipe. Make the recipes available in a file box or bind as a cookbook and/or makes copies for students to take home.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups. Ask them to imagine they own a restaurant. Tell them to devise a menu that is both healthy and appealing. Then let them choose and print a suitable border or shape and write out their menus. If you want, ask students to bring in an item from their menu and host a food tasting festival.