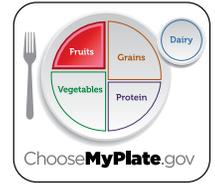


FRUITS LESSON



Dear Parent,

Your child attended a Food, Fun, & Reading lesson today. Food, Fun, & Reading gets children excited about trying nutritious foods through reading and fun activities. Each lesson focuses on a different USDA MyPlate food group. Today, your child learned about the Fruit group. Please see the attached handouts for more information including MyPlate tips for parents, a kid's activity sheet, and kid-friendly recipes to try at home.

USDA's MyPlate recommends that children ages 3-7 eat 1 – 1 ½ cups of fruit per day depending on their age and calorie needs. Visit www.choosemyplate.gov for specific recommendations. MyPlate is a visual tool that you can use to plan your child's meals. Imagine drawing a line down the center of your child's plate; MyPlate recommends that one-half of the plate be fruits and vegetables. As your child learned today, fruits contain many important nutrients. Research consistently shows that eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables has long-term health benefits such as reduced risks of developing chronic diseases; therefore, it is important to help children establish healthy habits early on in life.

Fruits come in many forms. They may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. 100% fruit juice also counts as a fruit. Here are some tips to help your child eat more fruits.

- Top whole grain cereal or pancakes with fruit instead of syrup. Or, add bananas or blueberries to pancake mix.
- Make a smoothie by blending yogurt, berries and/or bananas, and ice in a blender.
- Dip fruit skewers into yogurt dip (mix low-fat yogurt with a small amount of honey and cinnamon).
- Sliced, fresh fruit or canned fruit makes a great grab-and-go snack. If choosing canned fruit, look for fruit that is canned in 100% juice.
- Make fruit fun! Try fruit creations such as fruit kabobs or palm trees with a banana as the base and kiwi slices as the leaves.

What if my child prefers fruit juice over fruit? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents set the following limits for fruit juice consumption (100% fruit juice):

- Children ages 1-3 years should drink no more than ½ cup (4 fl. oz.) of fruit juice per day; and
- Children ages 4-6 years should drink no more ½-¾ cup (4-6 fl. oz.) of fruit juice per day.

There are several reasons to choose whole fruits over 100% fruit juice most of the time. Whole fruits contain fiber, but most of the fiber is removed when juice is made. Fiber is important to prevent constipation in children. In addition, juice is not as filling as whole fruit so children may consume more energy than their bodies' need if they drink juice throughout day.

Sincerely,

The Food \$ense Team

REFERENCES

Heyman, M.B., & Abrahms, S.A. (2017). AAP Section on gastroenterology, hepatology, and nutrition, AAP committee on nutrition. Fruit Juice in Infants, Children, and Adolescents: Current Recommendations. *Pediatrics*; 139(6).

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). (2017, July 25). All about the fruit group. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruit>