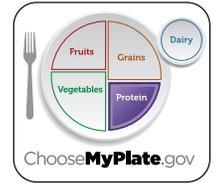


PROTEIN LESSON



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 Protein foods 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.

The Protein foods group includes foods derived from animals such as eggs, poultry, meat, and fish, and plant-based foods that are higher in protein content such as beans, peas, tofu, nuts, and seeds. USDA's MyPlate encourages people to consider the types of protein they choose. Recommendations include choosing leaner, animal-based protein sources such as boneless skinless chicken breasts and lean ground turkey and/or beef. In addition, choosing a wider variety of other protein sources such as beans, peas, nuts and seeds, and fish, is important. Beans, peas, nuts, and seeds provide dietary fiber and are low in saturated fat. Fatty-fish such as salmon, sardines, and trout contain heart-healthy fats in addition to protein and other important nutrients.

Not sure where to begin with adding more variety of protein into your meals? Try involving the family in planning a new meal and setting aside a night (or morning) for family meal time. You could try a new soup with beans or peas, which are inexpensive and healthful protein sources, or try a stir-fry with tofu or edamame. You can give your child a choice of protein options to add to the meal.

Eating meals as a family has benefits for children, which continue into adolescence; therefore, starting this routine early will set them up for success. **Some of the benefits of family mealtime shown in research include the following:**

- Children who frequently eat meals with their families are more likely to eat more servings of fruits and vegetables and to have healthier overall eating patterns than those who eat with their families less often.
- Children and adolescents who frequently eat meals with their families are more likely to have better mental and emotional health. Specifically, girls are less likely to think poorly about their bodies and engage in harmful weight control behaviors, and both girls and boys are less likely to show signs of depression.

Sincerely,

The Food \$ense Team

REFERENCES

Caldwell, A.R., Terhorst, L., Skidmore, E.R., & Bendixon, R.M. (2018). Is frequency of family meals associated with fruit and vegetable intake among preschoolers? A logistic regression analysis. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jhn.12531>

Dallacker, M., Hertwig, R., & Mata, J. (2018). The frequency of family meals and nutritional health in children: A meta-analysis. *Obesity Reviews*, doi: 10.1111/obr.12659.

Harrison, M.E., Norris, M.L., Obeid, N., Fu, M., Weinstangel, H., & Sampson, M. (2015). Systematic review of the effects of family meal frequency on psychosocial outcomes in youth. *Canadian Family Physician*, 61, 696-6106.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). (2017, November 3). All about the protein foods group. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods>