



# Creating A Better Plate

Grades 3-5

## Maine Learning Results Alignment:

Health and Physical Education

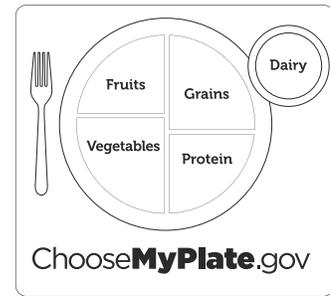
### F. Decision Making and Goal Setting

#### 1. Decision making

- c. Choose a healthy option when making a decision.

#### 2. Goal Setting

- a. Set a short-term personal health goal.
- b. Track progress toward achieving the goal



USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

## Lesson Summary:

Students evaluate foods according to their nutritional value and determine how much and how often they should eat certain foods by labeling them as Anytime (GO), Sometimes (SLOW) or Seldom (WHOA). An outdoor game reinforces learning.

## Objectives:

Students will

- identify foods that can be consumed anytime,
- identify foods that can be consumed sometimes,
- identify foods that can be consumed seldom,
- choose healthy foods for a snack,
- set a goal to eat healthy foods, and
- include physical activity in their daily routine.

## Procedure:

Inside:

- 1 Introduce the USDA's Choose My Plate. Refer to the new food graphic, Choose My Plate and point out differences among foods contained within each group.

Grain group examples:

- refined white bread vs. whole grain bread
- saltines vs. whole wheat crackers
- white rice vs. brown rice
- refined sweetened cereals vs. whole grain cereal

Dairy group examples:

- skim vs. whole milk
- fat-free or reduced fat cheeses or yogurt vs. full fat cheeses and yogurt

Protein group examples:

- lean hamburger vs. regular hamburger
- chicken with skin removed vs. chicken with skin on

Use the following question to prompt class discussion:

**Question:** Should you eat the same amount of a super sweet cereal as you would of a less sweet cereal or oatmeal? Why or why not?

**Answer:** No! To maximize the best outdoor (and indoor) energy, fitness, and brainpower, emphasize foods such as whole grain cereals and breads, beans, vegetables, and fruits.



## Creating A Better Plate (continued)

Grades 3-5

Encourage low-fat animal products, such as skim or low-fat milk, yogurt, fish, and skinless chicken or turkey, and fewer servings of higher fat choices. “Empty calorie” foods (those with few, if any, nutrients and added sugar, for example) should be minimized.

One way to classify food is according to how often you should eat it, or **how much** of a particular food is recommended. Think of the options as “anytime or GO” foods, “sometimes or SLOW” foods, and “occasional or WHOA” foods.

ANYTIME foods are generally LOW in fat, saturated fat, sugar, and do not have a large number of preservatives or additives listed under ‘ingredients’. We call these GO foods.

SOMETIMES foods should be eaten in small portions or just a couple of times per day/week. They are MODERATE in fat or saturated fat, may be high in sodium, cholesterol, or added sugars, or are made from white flour. We call these SLOW foods.

OCCASIONAL or SELDOM foods should be limited to a few times a week/month; use smaller portions of these. They are foods HIGH in fat, saturated or trans fat, or added sweeteners. They may contain many additives or preservatives and are generally more processed. We call these WHOA foods.

- 2 Brainstorm which foods would fit in these different categories. To assist with this exercise, see [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov), Center for Science in the Public Interest [www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org) or invite a dietitian/nutritionist to speak with the class.
- 3 Create large paper food model cards by cutting out photographs of a variety of foods. Make up a range of cards—from those considered nutritious to those considered nutrient-poor. Make sure you have several from each category of Choose My Plate and enough for each student to have at least one card. (Simpler version would be to use cards with names of foods on them.) A good place to get food pictures is from grocery store flyers. You may also use some of the food group handouts created in the Healthy Foods, Healthy Bodies activity. For example, if you cut out pizza, you can ask students how it should be classified (this is a SLOW food). For younger students, you may want to use individual foods.
- 4 Place one third of the total number of food cards in each of three containers.

### Outside:

- 1 Place one container in each of three corners of a large field or play space.
- 2 Have students form a circle in the remaining corner of the field—large enough to place/mark three boxes inside their circle, one marked “GO”, one marked “SLOW”, and one marked “WHOA”.
- 3 One box represents foods that you could eat anytime (GO), the second symbolizes foods that you could eat sometimes (SLOW), and the third stands for foods that you could eat occasionally (WHOA). Label them accordingly; if you’re using string, chalk or food coloring, make “anytime” outline green, “sometimes” outline yellow, and the “seldom/occasional” outline red.
- 4 Each student starts from the circle and jogs, skis, or snowshoes to one of the three containers, retrieves one of the cards, and brings it back to the boxes. Place each card in the appropriate box and tell what food group to which it belongs... e.g.



## Creating A Better Plate (continued)

Grades 3-5

donuts would go on the “occasional or WHOA” box and is in the grain group; a lean hamburger would belong on the “sometimes or SLOW” box in the protein group; plain non-fat yogurt would go on the “anytime GO” box in the dairy group etc.

- 5 Once all cards are placed in a box, students should move in place. Discuss as a group. Would you make any changes? Why or why not? Gather all materials and return indoors.

### Inside:

Students fill out the Choose MyPlate Worksheet. Have each student select a GO food for a snack and explain why it is a healthy choice. Create and enjoy a classroom snack using some of the foods from the “anytime or GO” pyramid.

### Special Needs Students:

Students with physical disabilities should be assigned jobs that fit their abilities. For example, students might be the timekeeper or judge whether or not a card is in the correct container. Allow students with dietary concerns to place foods in their own personal “never” category, and have a discussion about foods that are healthy for some, but not for all.

### Materials:

- Cut-out photographs of a variety of foods; best to laminate if using outdoors OR use cards with names of foods on them OR laminated paper food models with nutrition information, which are available for purchase through the Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council 1-888-496-6255 (optional) These same cards can be used for the previous lesson, Outdoor Food Plate.
- String or yarn, chalk, food coloring (if doing in snow) or boxes
- 3 containers large enough to hold “paper food models”