

3 TEACHING TIPS AND TRICKS

Keep a Positive Approach to Teaching Nutrition

Too often students think good nutrition means eating foods they do not like and avoiding foods they do like. Let them know they have both the right and responsibility to choose most of the foods they eat. Encourage students to make food choices using these ideas:

- **Eating is one of life's great pleasures.** Emphasize the enjoyment of eating good-tasting foods in a pleasant environment. Encourage students to learn to enjoy many kinds of foods.
- **All foods can fit into a healthy pattern of eating.** Avoid giving food "good" or "bad" descriptions such as "junk foods" or even "healthy foods." Instead, encourage students to consider how much and what foods they eat on a routine basis.
- **Balancing food choices over time contributes to a healthy pattern of eating.** What you do over several days, not just in one day, is what counts. Talk about finding a long-term pattern of food choices that contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Avoid using the term "diet," which people associate with deprivation.
- **Changing food and health behaviors is a life-long process.** Show respect for personal choices; promote making "small steps" as a positive value for self-care.
- **Promote having fun moving.** Encourage students to do physical activities they enjoy. Emphasize enjoyment and the benefits of moving, not the work.
- **Be a great role model by taking care of yourself.** Pursue other ways to make your own health a priority.

Inexpensive Visual Aids for Estimating Amounts of Food

You can use the inexpensive items below as "estimating" visual aids that are lightweight and unbreakable. To determine if your students are wide awake, or just for a bit of classroom fun, distribute these items by tossing them at the students. Paper plates make silly classroom variations of Frisbees™.

Baseballs – Wiffle™ balls, or inexpensive plastic baseballs, are often available from toy stores and discount stores, especially in the spring and summer.

Deck of Cards – To make a fake deck of cards, trim kitchen sponges, wrap them in foil, and tape a card to the top and bottom. (Or copy the image provided on the reproducible handout *Putting It All Together*.)

9-Volt Batteries – "Fake" batteries can be made by photocopying two 9-volt batteries, twice. Wrap the photocopy images around a piece of kitchen sponge. (Or use the image provided on the reproducible handout *Putting It All Together*.)

8-Ounce Milk Cartons – School cafeteria staff can provide empty 8-ounce low-fat milk cartons.

4-Ounce Juice Boxes – Use the smaller juice boxes, not the standard 5½-ounce size.

4-Ounce, 6-Ounce, and 8-Ounce Yogurt Cartons – Visually show differences in amounts by using examples of food packages of various sizes.

CDs – Used CDs are often readily available. They are useful to approximate the outer edges of a slice of bread, or waffle. A slice of bread is usually about ½ inch thick.

Plates of “Estimating Objects” – Create three-dimensional plates by placing the items described above on paper plates. Or, glue copies of the 2-dimensional images from the handout *Get What YOU Need* on paper plates. You can also use commercially produced food models (shown in common measures) as examples of foods that meet the recommended amounts of foods from the food groups.

Nutrition Facts Card “Carriers” – Use rubber bands to attach several Nutrition Facts cards to empty low-fat milk cartons, aluminum cans, or plastic bottles of calorie-free or very low-calorie beverages (such as water, calorie-free versions of lemonade, iced tea, soda, etc.). Toss empty beverage containers used as “label carriers” to catch students’ attention.

Use the Reproducible Materials

- Distribute the Vocabulary and Definitions to use as a way to determine your students’ existing knowledge level of nutrition facts.
- Adapt the Homework and Test Questions to meet your students’ needs. As presented, they are enrichment options which may require more discussion and use of the reproducible materials to successfully complete.
- Use the Homework and Tests as a way for students to practice what they are learning. Ask them to talk with their parents about what they are learning in class.
- Encourage discussion along with an “open-book test” as part of the learning process; the true measure of success is improved health. Scoring the work or tests is optional.
- Distribute the *Sources for Nutrition Information*. (Duplicate from Reproducible master.) Ask students to locate resources on topics of their own personal interest.
- Provide the Parent Fact Sheets and Sources for Nutrition Information to both parents and school staff through your parent-teacher organizations, school nurse, principal and administrators, and the staff of the school lunch program.

Other Suggestions:

- Keep it simple. Stay focused on each lesson’s content. Avoid introducing other content until the *Nutrition Essentials* key concepts are covered.
- Visuals and plain language reinforce communication. The posters and *Get What YOU Need* handout summarize the most basic concepts in *Nutrition Essentials*. The text for the entire publication is written at about the 7th grade reading level to minimize translating the content into simpler terms. However, students do need to become familiar with the vocabulary.
- Make your own posters and slide shows. Step-by-step instructions are provided in this section.
- Engage your students with hands-on props and activities to support learning through personal involvement and body movement (kinesthetic learning). Make your students wiggle their hands to “feel” the numbers 5 and 20 for the % DV Guide, catch Frisbee™ paper plates, handle the 3-dimensional estimating objects, move arms to be a mime, dance, or lift weights, etc.
- Laminate the posters or use clear adhesive plastic to cover, so you can tape paper to cover or replace the foods, numbers, or other items on the posters.

Use Team Nutrition graphics to make slides or small posters.

Use the *Nutrition Essentials* poster images, provided in pdf format, by cutting and pasting them into other documents.

Use the Snapshot Tool on Adobe Reader. Click to select all or part of the image.

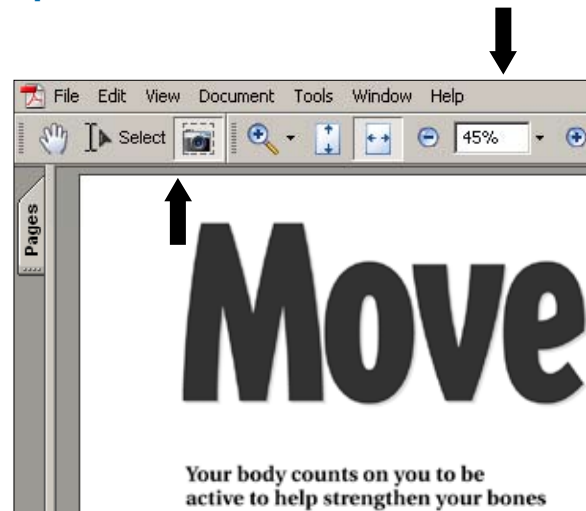


It looks like a camera surrounded by a dotted line.

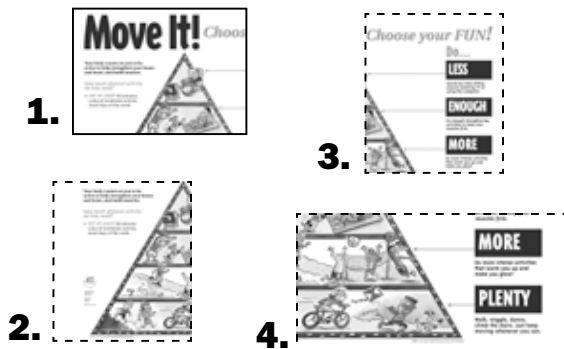
- Drag the + (dotted line) across the image from top left to bottom right corner.
- Click OK to save to the clipboard
- Go to your new document (PowerPoint slide or click a page in Word) and then hit Ctrl V to paste visual.
- Right Click image. Left Click Show Picture Toolbar drag Click on Text Wrap (In Word = dog-in-a-box) Click on any option to be able to change location and size by clicking and dragging the corners of the image.

To Make a Poster

- Use the same approach as above. Enlarge image to 250% or more.
- Copy several sections of the image.
- Paste each section on a separate page.
- Adjust each section by dragging corners to match the size of the other sections.
- Print, trim, and tape pages together.
- The more sections and pages created, the bigger the poster will be. If the interior edges overlap other sections, less trimming is needed to make the poster.



Click and drag



MyPyramid Amounts of Foods Charts for Children and Adults

These charts are based on Table 3 (page 12) and Appendix A-2 (page 53) in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The charts for teens represent an estimated amount of foods needed from the MyPyramid food groups, based on different ages, gender, and physical activity levels. Calorie levels are intentionally not included on the teen versions.

The charts for adults are provided as the last two pages of the CD contents. They are provided for comparison to *MyPyramid Amounts of Foods—FOR YOU* for teens. Expanded content related to MyPyramid is available at: MyPyramid.gov.