



# Build a Healthy Plate



## **Session Overview**

In this session, participants will learn about food assistance programs that can help families obtain additional food. An educator will provide information on MyPlate, the food groups and recommended amounts. Participants will be engaged in a discussion about foods to increase, foods to reduce, balancing calories and physical activity. Participants will practice “building a healthy plate” using MyPlate and meal cards and discuss ways to include more fruits and vegetables.

**Target Audience:** English and Spanish speaking adults

**Group Size:** 5-30 participants

**Time Needed:** 60 minutes

## **Behavioral Objectives:**

After the session participants will be able to:

1. Name at least two food assistance programs that can help families obtain additional food.
2. Describe MyPlate and the five food groups.
3. Modify a meal to reflect the MyPlate guidelines.
4. State two ways to include physical activity in their daily routine.

## **Key Message:**

Using food assistance programs and MyPlate can help individuals make healthier food choices.

## **Materials Needed for Session:**

- Primary handouts: OC-CNAP *How to Get Food Help in OC*; USDA *What’s on Your Plate?*; USDA *Let’s eat for the health of it*; USDA tip sheet *Be Active Adults*; *NEOP Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbook
- “Portion Plate” model, food models, sample meal cards (USDA, *NEOP* and WIC sources), 8-ounce measuring cup
- Whole milk and 1% milk cartons
- Optional: *NEOP Sugar Synonyms* poster, CA WIC *What is a Whole Grain?* poster, HCA WIC *Mealtimes* 2-sided handout (*Who decides what?* and USDA *Nibbles Enjoying the Family Meal*), HCA WIC *Family Meals* poster

## **Outline of 60-minute session:**

- Welcome & introduction (1 min)
- Activity 1: The Cost of Food & How to Get Help (5 min)
- Activity 2: Food is Your Friend! MyPlate & the Food Groups (10 min)
- Activity 3: Using MyPlate to Create Better Meals (22 min)
- Activity 4: You Can Do It! (10 min)
- Activity 5: Family Meals (9 min) – Optional
- Activity 6: Food Demonstration or Taste Test– Optional, must have ServSafe certification
- Conclusion and Evaluation (3 min)

## **Welcome to “Build a Healthy Plate”** (1 min)

1. Introduce the class topic and distribute the handout packet.
2. Review the class objectives and the key message.

## **Activity 1: The Cost of Food & How to Get Help** (5 min)

1. You know how much money you need to pay the rent, electricity bill and car insurance – but how much does it cost to feed your family healthy meals and snacks?
2. The average cost to feed a family of four on a budget for one week is \$150.20<sup>1</sup>. This includes healthy foods but does not include cleaning supplies or eating out. That’s about \$21.00 a day for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Lunch at a fast food restaurant can often cost about \$20.00.
3. How much do you spend? Collect receipts for all of your food and beverage purchases for one week and add them up to see how much you spend on food.

### **Food Assistance Programs**

Many families need additional resources to ensure they have enough food and healthy meals. Look at the ***How to Get Food Help in Orange County*** handout.

1. CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps) – helps people of all ages get extra food.  
There are 3 ways to apply:
  - i) Call the office nearest your home (*Refer to 6 phone numbers listed*)
  - ii) Go online – [www.mybenefitsCalWIN.org](http://www.mybenefitsCalWIN.org) (*English and Spanish forms available*)
  - iii) Call a non-government community partner to help you apply (*Refer to 4 phone numbers listed*)
2. WIC – helps provide food to women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby and children up to 5 years of age. You can call one of the four agencies providing services in Orange County to learn more. (*Refer to 5 phone numbers listed.*)
3. Several other food assistance programs – School Lunch, Summer Meals, EFAP, Brown Bag, Kids Café, and more. Call the phone numbers listed on the handout or 2-1-1.

## **Activity 2: Food is Your Friend! MyPlate and the Food Groups** (10 min)

Food gives you nourishment and enjoyment. It gives you the fuel and nutrients needed to:

- Move – Move your muscles, including your heart and lungs
- Think – Feed your brain
- Grow – Replace the cells that make up your entire body; a red blood cell lives about 120 days and then it is replaced.

### **What does food provide?**

1. Energy in the form of calories: Carbohydrate, protein, fat and alcohol
2. Essential nutrients such as vitamins A & C, minerals including iron, calcium, sodium & more
3. Other items: Cholesterol, gluten, fiber, water, phytochemicals and more (*color, odor, flavor*)
4. Foods have different combinations of these nutrients.
  - a. Foods with similar combinations are grouped together – making our 5 food groups.
  - b. The food groups and MyPlate make it easier for you to get the nutrients your body needs.

### **How can MyPlate help?**

The ***What’s on Your Plate?*** handout shows the MyPlate symbol on the front and more food group information is on the back. The MyPlate symbol helps you think about what and how much food goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl.

There are 5 food groups; (Refer to the MyPlate symbol)

1. Fruit group is in red
2. Vegetable group is in green
3. Grains group is in orange
4. Protein group is in purple
5. Dairy group is in blue

### **What do you need every day?**

Let's look at the back of the handout to learn more about the food groups and the recommended amounts. The amount you need is based on your age, gender and how much physical activity you get. The recommended daily amounts shown on the handout are for an average adult. We'll be using food models to help you visualize how much you need. *(Start with the column on the left and provide a quick overview of the food groups.)*

1. Vegetables (green section):
  - a. Eat 2 ½ cups every day
  - b. Eat a variety of colorful vegetables every day; especially dark green and dark orange.
  - c. Good source of: Vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, phytochemicals, minerals
  - d. All forms count – fresh, frozen, canned; include 2 or more vegetables at your main meal
2. Fruits (red section):
  - a. Eat 2 cups every day
  - b. Include one citrus fruit every day – orange, grapefruit, tangerine
  - c. Good source of: Vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, phytochemicals, minerals
  - d. All forms count – fresh, frozen, canned, dried, 100% juice (limit juice to 4 oz – 6 oz a day for children per USDA guidelines; choose whole fruit more often than juice)
3. Grains (orange section):
  - a. Eat 6 ounces every day
  - b. Bread, rice, cereal, pasta, tortillas, crackers
  - c. Good source of: B vitamins, fiber, energy and more
4. Dairy (blue section):
  - a. Get 3 cups every day
  - b. Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, calcium-fortified soy beverage
  - c. Good source of: Calcium, vitamin D and more
5. Protein (purple section):
  - a. Eat 5 ½ ounces every day
  - b. Animal: Chicken, turkey, fish, beef, eggs; Plant: Beans, nuts, peanut butter, tofu – eat a variety
  - c. Good source of: Protein, iron, zinc, vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and more

**Activity:** I will name a food group and you tell me your favorite food from that group.

### **Activity 3: Using MyPlate to Create Better Meals** (22 min)

We have another handout to help you and it is called *Let's eat for the health of it*. This handout will help us talk about four topics: *(Refer to the bottom of the handout)*

1. Build a healthy plate
2. Cut back on foods high in fats, sugars and salt
3. Eat the right amount of calories for you
4. Be physically active

## **Build a healthy plate** (*Refer to the top of page 2 on the handout*)

### 1. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. Filling half your plate with these foods will help you get important nutrients without getting extra fat and calories.

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you what fruits and vegetables you ate at dinner last night. Be honest - It's OK if you did not fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables because that's the reason for this class.

### 2. Switch to fat free or low-fat (1%) milk

- a. You usually see four different kinds of milk: whole milk, 2% fat, 1% fat and fat free. (*Refer to containers and/or food models*)
- b. Lower fat milks, such as 1% and fat free, have the same amount of calcium and other nutrients, such as vitamin D, but fewer calories and less fat
- c. Children under two years of age should drink whole milk
- d. People over two years of age may want to get less fat and fewer calories by drinking lower fat milks. If you switch from whole milk to 1% milk, you will get about 45 calories less per cup, but it can add up. Drinking 1% milk may save ~650 calories/week which can add up to over 9 pounds in a year.

*Background info from USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference – Release 27:*

- Whole Milk (#01077): 149 calories x 2 cups/day x 7 days = 2,086 calories per week
- 1% Milk (#01082): 102 calories x 2 cups/day x 7 days = 1,428 calories per week
- 1% milk is 658 fewer calories/week, over year the equivalent of 9.78 pounds

- e. Try calcium-fortified soy products as an alternate to dairy foods

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you what type of milk you usually drink.

### 3. Make at least half your grains whole grains

You need 6 ounces from the grain group every day so you should try to make at least 3 of these whole grain foods.

- a. What is a whole grain? It has three parts: (*Refer to WIC Whole Grain poster*)

- Bran – high in fiber, B vitamins
- Germ – B vitamins, protein, minerals, healthy oils
- Endosperm – mostly starch

Processed or refined grains usually contain only the endosperm.

- b. How can you eat more whole grains?

- Choose whole grain products – whole wheat bread, corn tortillas, whole grain pasta; brown rice; whole grain cereal, oatmeal
  - Foods that are not whole grains include white rice, white bread, regular pasta
- Try something new:
  - Eat 100% whole grain cereals
  - Add brown rice, bulgur or other whole grains to soups and casseroles
  - Use half whole wheat flour / white flour in baking recipes

**Activity:** How many of you ate a whole grain food yesterday? Tell the person next to you a whole grain food you may want to try.

### 4. Vary your protein food choices

- a. Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean. A portion size for cooked meat is 3 ounces but many people eat more than they need. (*Refer to the food model*)
- b. Try to eat fish about twice a week. Canned fish, such as salmon and tuna, counts. Eat beans, which are high in protein and fiber and less expensive.

We know what we should eat more often so now let's discuss what you should eat less often.

**Cut back on fats, sugars and salt** (Refer to the bottom of page 2 on the handout)

1. Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugar

Sugar is found naturally in some foods such as fruit, milk and grains and is added to others.

a. Major sources of added sugar<sup>2</sup>

- Soda, energy drinks and sports drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, grain-based desserts (*cookies, cakes*), dairy-based desserts (*ice cream, pudding*) and candy

b. Ways to reduce added sugar (Refer to the Sugar Synonyms poster)

Read the food label to check for these other names for sugar. We will have an entire class on label reading. Until then

<u>Ends in “-ose”</u>	<u>Any “syrup”</u>	High fructose corn syrup
Dextrose	Malt syrup	Corn sweetener
Maltose	Cane juice/syrup	Brown sugar
Glucose, Fructose		Honey

c. Drink water instead of sweetened beverages – Rethink Your Drink!

We will have an entire class on beverage choices. Until then:

- Read beverage labels
- Consume smaller portions
- Choose healthy options more often

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you a sugary food you may want to eat less often.

2. Look out for salt and sodium

Sodium is found naturally in some foods and is added to others.

a. Major sources of added sodium<sup>3</sup>

- Breads and snack foods (*sodium used as a preservative*), processed foods (*canned and frozen foods, mixed dishes, pizza, soup*) and cured foods and condiments (*cold cuts, sausage, bacon, soy, BBQ sauce, pickles*)

b. Ways to reduce added salt

- Eat more home-prepared foods
- Read the food label to check for sodium content and look at the ingredients
- Use less table salt. Add spices or herbs to season foods instead of salt

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you a salty food you may want to eat less often.

3. Eat fewer foods that are high in solid fats

Some fats are solid at room temperature, such as butter, and some are not, such as oils.

a. Try to eat fewer solid and saturated fats – major sources (Refer to handout)

- Cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, hot dogs

b. Ways to reduce fats:

- Select leaner meats and lower fat milk and dairy products
- Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing foods

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you which of the fats and oils listed in the handout you use most often.

**Eat the right amount of calories for you** (Refer to the top of page 3 on the handout)

Enjoy your food but eat less

1. Think about why you are eating: Are you hungry, bored, stressed, in a hurry, eating in front of the TV? Get back in touch with your hunger cues – eat until you are satisfied and not “stuffed”. It takes time for your brain to get the message you have had enough to eat. Take time to enjoy your food – enjoy the flavors and the company of others
2. Avoid oversized portions
  - a. Portion size has increased over the past 20 – 30 years. Here are some food models to show you various portions.
    - Pizza, muffin, cookie, rice or French fries food models show large vs. normal portion sizes
    - Vegetable and milk food models show what ½ cup (4 oz) and 1 cup (8 oz) portions look like.
  - b. How to control portion size:

The bigger the portion, the more people tend to eat:

    - Use a smaller plate, bowl and cup
    - Don't eat from the food package
    - Measure out snacks
    - Eat at home more often
    - Share restaurant meals

**Activity:** Tell the person next to you which food model was most surprising to you.

### **Be physically active your way**

How many people think they sit too much? Physical activity is something we can do for ourselves and for our health. It may be hard to start but you will benefit later. Just like we have made brushing our teeth a daily habit, we can make physical activity a habit. (Refer to the ***Be Active Adults*** handout.)

#### Benefits of physical activity:

1. Reduces the risk for chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes
2. Promotes a healthy weight
3. Reduces stress

#### How much activity do you need?

1. Adults should get at least 2 ½ hours of moderate physical activity each week (about 30 minutes 5 days a week). You can break it into 10 minutes at a time. (*Tip #2*)
2. Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Let them play!

#### Pick activities that you like:

1. Have fun! You don't have to go the gym to be active. Examples: walking, biking, dancing, playing with your kids, going to the park or community center, playing ball. (*Tips #10, #5*)
2. What you eat and drink and your level of physical activity are important for your own health and the health of your family – be a healthy role model.

**Activity:** Refer to the ***Be Active Adults*** handout. Ask 3 volunteers to read a tip they would like to try to be more physically active.

### **Food labels**

On the back of the ***Let's Eat for the Health of It*** handout is some information about using food labels to help you make better choices. We will have a whole class on reading labels but when you have some time, take a minute to look at this information.

**Activity 4: You Can Do It!** (10 min – or longer if the optional topics are not presented)

Look at these sample meal cards and work with a partner to modify the meals to reflect the MyPlate guidelines discussed. Does the plate have all the food groups? Is half the plate filled with fruits and vegetables? What do you need to add or take away? How can the recipes in the *NEOP* cookbook be used to create better meals? Option: ask volunteers to share what they had for dinner and discuss how to modify the meals to reflect the MyPlate guidelines as a group.

**Activity 5: Optional – Family Meals** (9 min)

We just discussed MyPlate and some guidelines for making healthy food choices. However, family meals go beyond the food served. Here are some tips for happy family meals.

First, let's discuss a short scenario – have you ever had a meal like this?

Read scenario:

A tired mother comes home with her two children and asks them to start their homework while she makes dinner. The older child is hungry and starts eating some chips. The younger child complains when he hears they are having hamburger casserole for dinner. The mother decides she will make both the casserole and quesadillas. Everyone sits down to dinner in front of the TV. The children start to fight, the mother gets angry and tells them to stop arguing and not say another word. The family continues to eat in silence. (*Note: May add a “father” or other family member to the scenario if appropriate for site.*)

Discussion

- Have you ever had a meal like this?
- What were some good things about this example? (*Eating as a family*)
- What could be improved? (*Turn TV off, provide positive environment, no chips for snack*)

1. Family meals help everyone – Kids who have meals with their families:<sup>4</sup>

- a. Eat more fruits and vegetables
- b. Eat healthier overall
- c. Do better in school
- d. Communicate better
- e. Are more social
- f. Show a decrease in risk-taking behaviors (*smoke, drink, take drugs*)

2. Parents and children have different roles at mealtime (*Refer to the front of the WIC Mealtime handout or poster*)

- a. Parent decides:
  - When to offer food – Regular meals and snacks
  - What foods to serve – Healthy choices
  - Where to serve foods – Preferably at a table; not in front of TV or in bedroom
- b. Child decides
  - Whether or not to eat – Children will eat when hungry
  - Which foods to eat – Choice of healthy foods - apple vs. orange not apple vs. chips
  - How much to eat – Young children are usually still in touch with hunger cues and know when they are full

**Activity:** I'll give you two examples and you decide if the parent and child are following their roles.

- Child decides to eat potato chips in front of the TV at 5:30 (just before dinner)
  1. Who is deciding when, what and where to eat? (*child*)
  2. Who is deciding whether to eat and how much? (*child*)

**Potential problems?**– *Child is eating a less healthy snack and may not be hungry at dinner when healthier food is served*

**Possible solutions?**– *Parent could offer a healthy, less filling snack before dinner or have the child assist with meal preparation so dinner can be served earlier*

- Mother decides a child will finish all the food on his plate
  1. Who is deciding when, what and where to eat? (*parent*)
  2. Who is deciding whether to eat and how much? (*parent*)

**Potential problems?**– *Child may resist being told what to do and refuse to eat*

**Possible solutions?**– *Let children eat the amount they want to eat but do not allow snacking or additional food until the next regular meal or snack time.*

3. Enjoying the Family Meal (*Refer to the Nibbles info on back of the WIC Mealtimes handout*)
  - a. Set regular mealtimes and be a role model for healthy eating.
  - b. Show that family meals are important. Turn off the TV.
  - c. Eat around a table.
  - d. Enjoy meal talk. Plan topics to talk about to help include all family members.

**Activity 6: Optional – Food Demonstration or Taste Test** (*must be ServSafe certified*)

1. Prepare one recipe from the *NEOP Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbook; options include Corn and Green Chili Salad, Vegetable Quesadillas and Breakfast Fruit Cup
2. Conduct a taste test with vegetables; options include use of vegetables in season, compare fresh, canned and frozen vegetables, compare raw and cooked vegetables

**Conclusion and Evaluation:** (3 min)

You don't have to be perfect. Each day brings a chance to eat healthy foods.

**Home activities:**

1. Prepare one recipe from the *Everyday Healthy Meals* cookbook.
2. Go to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) and find two items that are interesting to you or your family members.
3. Save all of your receipts for food and beverage purchases for one week. This includes receipts from the grocery store, eating out, the convenience store, gas station, coffee shop, etc. Add up all of the receipts to see how much you spent on food for the week. We will talk more about planning meals and shopping on a budget during our next class.

**Evaluation:**

- Do you have any questions?
- Let's review. (*Distribute evaluation forms or conduct verbally.*)

## Build a Healthy Plate

**After attending this class I feel confident that I can:**

	Agree Very Much	Agree	I Am Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree Very Much
1) Name at least two food assistance programs that can help families obtain additional food.					
2) Describe MyPlate and the five food groups.					
3) Modify a meal to reflect the MyPlate guidelines.					
4) State two ways to include physical activity in your daily routine.					

**Closing:**

Thanks for attending the class and I hope you are now able to build a healthy plate.

*If part of a series of classes:*

At our next class, we will talk about planning and shopping on a budget. Please bring your food receipts and a grocery store circular ad to our next meeting.

**References:**

- <sup>1</sup> Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Four Levels, U.S. Average, May 2014, Family of 4 Couple
- <sup>2</sup> Sources of Added Sugars in the Diets of the US Population, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, Chapter 3, Figure 3-6, pg. 29; [www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/Chapter3.pdf](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/Chapter3.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> Sources of Sodium in the Diets of the US Population, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, Chapter 3, Figure 3-2, pg. 22; [www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/Chapter3.pdf](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/Chapter3.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Family Meals Spell Success, Purdue University, [www.cfs.purdue.edu/cff/documents/promoting\\_meals/spellsuccessfactsheet.pdf](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/cff/documents/promoting_meals/spellsuccessfactsheet.pdf)

For CalFresh information, call 877-847-3663. Funded by the USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit [www.CaChampionsForChange.net](http://www.CaChampionsForChange.net) for healthy tips.