

How Much?

Food and Physical Activity

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy mothers learn ways to get enough of the right kinds of food, but not too much, and recognize that a healthy lifestyle means paying attention to what they eat and how physically active they are each day. Participants will discuss the kinds and amounts of foods that are needed by women and children. Participants will measure and visualize different size portions of foods. Finally, participants will commit to one action to be physically active during the coming week and at least one action to get the recommended amounts of foods from the *MyPyramid* food groups based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan. The participants will receive two take-home tools to help them achieve these actions by working with their children: *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More* and *MyPyramid for Kids Coloring Page*.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Mothers with children between the ages of 2 and 18

GROUP SIZE: 5 to 7 participants

NEEDED TIME: 45 minutes

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

After the session participants will be able to:

- Identify the amounts of food most women and children need from each food group.
- Identify and commit to at least one action to get the right amount of foods from *MyPyramid* food groups.
- Identify and commit to at least one action to get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Knowing the amount of food to eat from each food group can help you eat enough, but not too much.
- Measuring foods with measuring cups and spoons can help you see how much food you are eating from each food group.

- Kids need the right amount of food from all food groups to grow strong and healthy.
- Physical activity can help burn off some of the food you eat.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR SESSION

- Nametags/markers
- Food models (2- and 3-ounce portions of meats)
- Measuring cups and spoons (let participants take home if funds allow)
- Foods to measure: cooked brown rice*, pasta*, fat-free milk, low-fat yogurt, cheese slices, fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, hard-cooked eggs, etc.
- *MyPyramid* poster – Hang poster at eye level so everyone can see it.
- Handouts for mothers:
 - *The Healthy Family Guidebook*
 - *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More*
 - *MyPyramid for Kids Coloring Page*

*TIP:

If making rice and pasta ahead of time for class, add oil or use non-stick spray so it does not clump together.

Outline of 45-minute session:

- Welcome and introduction to *How Much? - Food and Physical Activity* (5 minutes)
- Discussion group activities (25 minutes)
- Group activity—measure and visualize various amounts of foods (10 minutes)
- Sum up and home activity (5 minutes)

Review the information on the handouts, *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More*, and *MyPyramid for Kids Coloring Page*. For additional background information, review “Inside the Pyramid,” “Tips to help you eat,” and “Tips for increasing physical activity” on the USDA website: www.mypyramid.gov. Also review the *Guidebook*, especially information on pages 6, 26 and 27.

WELCOME TO HOW MUCH?—FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Welcome participants and ask them to make their own nametag (first names only). Make sure each has a copy of the handouts; *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More*, *MyPyramid for Kids Coloring Page*, the *Guidebook*, and a highlighter or pencil. Mention other points of interest as needed, such as the location of restrooms and water fountains.

BEGIN:

What do you enjoy about feeding your family? Call out your answers. Write responses on flipchart.

DISCUSSION GROUP ACTIVITIES

CONTINUE:

Tell the mothers the group will be talking about:

- The right amounts and kinds of foods you and your family need each day to be healthy
- The connection between how much you eat and how physically active you are

POINT OUT:

Feeding your family can be enjoyable. It is a way of taking care of the people you love. Many women tell me that they know what foods are good for their families. But, they want to know how much of what kinds of foods they should eat. And what their children should eat. They may not know that each family member may need different amounts of food depending on their age, activity level, and gender.

ASK:

- How could knowing how much food to eat each day help you and your family?
- What do you think it means to balance what you eat with what you do physically?
- Think about riding bikes. What does your child need to learn to ride a bike without training wheels? (Balance, practice)

Allow mothers to share their responses for each question before moving to the next one, using the appropriate responses from mothers.

POINT OUT:

- Balancing what you eat with how physically active you are requires practice and a “can-do” attitude—just like a child learning to ride a bike.
- Kids need the right amount of food from all food groups to grow strong and healthy. If you don’t eat enough you may not get everything your body needs for energy and health.
- If you eat too much of certain foods you won’t have room for the other foods your body needs. You could also gain weight.
- We need to use up what we take in. This means burning off some of the calories we take in by being physically active.



CONTINUE:

It’s important to eat foods from all of the food groups every day. The amount of food you need to eat each day depends on whether you are male or female, your age, and how physically active you are.

Ask each mother to look at the *MyPyramid* poster (on the wall) and page 7 in the *Guidebook*. Read aloud the amount of food needed from each food group each day (based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan that is appropriate for many women and children):

- Grains - Eat 6 ounces every day
- Vegetables - Eat 2½ cups every day
- Fruits - Eat 2 cups every day
- Milk – Get 3 cups every day; for kids aged 2 to 8, it’s 2 cups
- Meat and Beans - Eat 5½ ounces every day

Also, read the amount of physical activity that women and children need each day.

POINT OUT:

Women and kids who are not very physically active will need less food. Younger kids (2-8 years) may also need a little less food, while teenage boys who are very physically active may need more food.

ASK:

How does this amount of food match up to what your family normally eats at home?

POINT OUT:

- *MyPyramid* shows you what types of food and how much to eat. The amounts of foods are listed in cups or ounces (show measuring cups/spoons and discuss their sizes). It's easy to estimate amounts of foods if you practice measuring food a few times using the measuring cups and spoons. After awhile you will recognize what 1 cup or 1/2 cup looks like on the plates and in the glasses that you use at home. Let participants measure different foods and encourage them to let their children measure food at home.
- It's important to be physically active. Children need 60 minutes of physical activity and adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity most days of the week.
- Keep the right kinds of foods on hand to make it easy to get the amounts and kinds of foods your family needs for good health. Look at the *MyPyramid* poster to find the right foods from each of the food groups. Also, note that healthy choices are those that are low in solid fats and added sugars.

SUM UP:

- Balancing food choices to get what you and your family need can be done by making small changes. Each day, eat the recommended amounts of foods from the various food groups.
- During this next week, what actions can you take to be more physically active and eat the recommended kinds and amounts of foods? Allow participants to share their ideas. Facilitator can write them on a flipchart.
- Ask participants to look at the handout, *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More*. Read the ideas and ask "which ones make sense to you?"
- Another idea is to eat fewer foods that are often high in added sugars, such as:
 - sodas
 - fruit drinks
 - candies and sweets
 - sports drinks

HOME ACTIVITY:

- Ask participants to commit to one action to be physically active and one action to get the recommended kinds and amounts of foods during the coming week by highlighting or circling the item on the handout *Ways to Eat Smart and Move More*. Tell participants they can add their own ideas.
- Encourage them to give their younger child the *MyPyramid for Kids Coloring Page* and share what they have learned.

