



Food Pyramid Relay Race

Written by GEF Staff

Grades: PreK-2

Subjects: Science, Health

Time: 45 minutes



***Standards:** Students will...

Health Standard 6: Understand the essential concepts about nutrition and diet.

Benchmark 1: Classify foods and food combinations according to food groups.

Objectives: Students will be able to...

- Understand the structure of the USDA Food Pyramid
- Understand reason for different size stripes on the USDA Food Pyramid
- Utilize the USDA Food Pyramid to identify food groups and recommended number of daily servings from each group

Materials:

- Access to chalk and chalkboard or poster board
- Three by five index cards, or cereal box cardboard cut into three by five rectangles, or large sticky note paper
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Permanent marker (optional)
- Magnets or masking tape
- Food Pyramid Cards
- Food Pyramid Basics worksheets
- Blank Food Pyramid worksheets

Overview: "Eat every color every day." The USDA recommends that foods from every food group be eaten each day to maintain a healthy diet. The USDA Food Pyramid is divided into six colored stripes each representing one of the food groups. The wider the stripes the greater amount of that food should be consumed daily. Here is a quick explanation of the stripes (moving from left to right) and the groups they represent. For more details see the Food Pyramid Basics PDF below or visit online the [USDA Food Pyramid](#).

- The Grain Group: Orange Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. Each day you should eat 6 servings or 6 ounces total from the Grain Group. In the grain group are any foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product.
- The Vegetable Group:Green Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. Each day you should eat 4 servings or 2 cups total from the Vegetable Group. In the vegetable group are any vegetables or 100% vegetable juice . Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.
- The Fruit Group: Red Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. Each day you should eat 3 servings or 1 ½ cups total from the Fruit Group. Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

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- The Oils Group: Yellow Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. A person's allowance for oils depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. The daily allowance for children ages four to eight years old is four teaspoons. Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the vegetable oils used in cooking. Some oils are used mainly as flavorings, such as walnut oil and sesame oil.
- The Milk Group: Blue Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. Each day you should eat 3 servings or 3 cups total from the Milk Group. All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Most milk group choices should be fat-free or low-fat.
- The Meats and Beans Group: Purple Section on the USDA Food Pyramid. Each day you should eat 2 servings or 4 ounces total from the Meats and Beans Group. All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of this group.

Kid's Speak: "Eat every color every day." The USDA recommends that foods from every food group be eaten each day to maintain a healthy diet. The USDA Food Pyramid is divided into six colored stripes each representing one of the food groups. The wider the stripes the greater amount of that food should be consumed daily. The six groups include: the Grain Group (orange stripe), the Vegetable Group (green stripe), the Fruit Group (red stripe), the Oils Group (yellow group), the Milk Group (blue stripe), and the Meats and Beans Group (purple stripe).

Eco-Fact: If you can cut some calories through your diet and burn some calories through physical activity, you'll have better results losing weight.

Procedures:

Preparation for Relay Race

1. Cut out individual food and beverage picture examples from each section of the Food Pyramid. Pictures can come from Food Pyramid Cards or magazine.
2. Paste each item onto a three by five index card, sticky note paper or cardboard.
3. If desired, label each item with a permanent marker to help young kids with word and image associations.

Learning About the Food Pyramid

1. Draw the Food Pyramid on the chalkboard or onto a piece of poster board in the front of the room.
2. Distribute Blank Food Pyramid worksheets to students. Teacher can model adding food group names to Blank Food Pyramid. Students can then draw several foods in each stripe as a reminder of what foods are members of each group.

Relay Race

1. Divide kids into two teams.
2. Provide each team with a handful of magnets or a roll of tape, and half of the food and drink examples previously glued to cardboard or index cards or large sticky note paper.
3. One member from each team will go to the board and stick one of their items correctly on the food pyramid as fast as they can.
4. Then they race back to their group and tag the next person to go. Continue with this procedure.
5. After the kids have placed all of their items on the Food Pyramid, discuss the correct and incorrect matches.



Wrap-up

After the completion of the activity, conduct a brief discussion.

Sample discussion questions:

- What is your favorite food in each food group?
- Did anyone discover a new food today during the activity?
- Are there any foods that you would like to try for the first time?
- Was it hard or easy to decide which group to place your card?
- Why do you think there were no cards with potato chips, candy bars or soft drinks included in this activity?

Adaptations:

Extensions:

Check out other nutrition lessons on this site.

[My Great Big Food Pyramid](#)

[You are What You Eat](#)

GEF Community: Join the GEF Community on-line. It only takes a minute. Share your ideas with other GEF Community students from around the country.

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The Food Pyramid Basics

Orange Section on the USDA Food Pyramid

Grain

The USDA recommends 48 servings or six ounces from the Grain Group daily.

What foods are in the Grain Group?
Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product.

Grains are divided into two subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel – the bran, germ, and endosperm. Whole grains are healthy choices because they are high in fiber. Fiber lowers cholesterol levels, aids the digestive system, helps maintain a healthy weight, and helps prevent certain diseases. Make at least half of your grains whole every day! Examples of whole grains include:

- Whole wheat flour
- Whole wheat crackers
- Whole wheat pasta
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Oatmeal
- Whole cornmeal
- Brown rice

Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grain a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are:

- White flour
- White bread
- White rice

Most refined grains are enriched. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word "enriched" is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains.

Source: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/>

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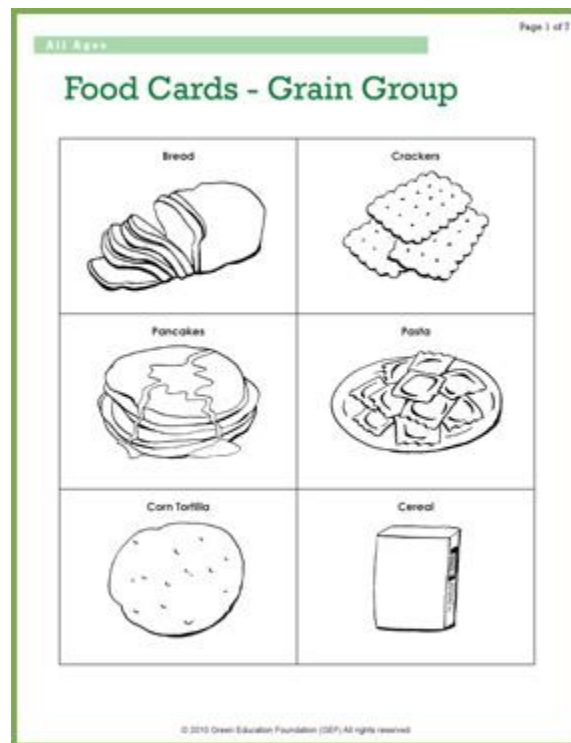
The Blank Food Pyramid

MyPyramid

Get Right, Exercise More Fun.
[mypyramid.gov](#)

GRAINS VEGETABLES FRUITS MILK MEAT/BEANS

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To view full-size lesson plan and print, follow these directions:

1. Click on the image above
2. Click on the small "print" icon at the top left of the lesson
3. Make sure your "Page Scaling" is set to "Fit to Printable Area"
4. Click "OK" and your lesson will be printed!

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