

Make a Meal Healthier



Objective: Given a meal with foods/beverages from each group, students will suggest ways to make the meal healthier.

Nutrition Notes: No foods (even sugar, oil, butter and candy) are considered “bad,” because they all contain some nutrients; however, some foods are much more nutritious than others. This activity challenges students to evaluate a meal and make suggestions for making it a little (or a lot) more nutritious. It also teaches students that even if a meal has all five food groups, it is not necessarily a healthy meal.

Equipment/materials: None

Preparation: Write the foods and drinks included in a sample meal that contains at least one item from each of the food groups. An example is listed below.

Write the following on the board:

Vegetable = side step

Fruit = arm circles

Grain = pretend dribble

Meat & Beans = tap backs

Milk = swimming movement with arms

None = march in place

Year Long:

 VARIETY

FRUITS/VEGS

HEALTHY SNACKS

FOOD SAFETY

Make a Meal Healthier continued

ACTIVITY

1. Tell students that you have created a meal that contains all of the food groups but could be made healthier:
 - Grain: white roll
 - Meat: chicken nuggets
 - Fruit: apple juice
 - Vegetable: broccoli
 - Milk: ice cream
2. Have students stand next to their desks.
3. Tell them to think of ways to improve the meal and then do the appropriate movement to indicate which food group they wish to improve. For example, a student who has a suggestion for improving the milk group would do swimming movements.
4. Call on students to make a change to the meal based on the movement they are doing. After “their” food group has been improved, they should switch to a different movement. If they can’t think of any improvements, they should march in place.

Suggested Changes:

- A whole-grain or whole-wheat roll has more fiber than a white roll.
- Baked chicken has less fat than nuggets.
- Apple juice has very few nutrients and often has added sugar—replace it with 100% orange juice or include any fruit with this meal.
- The broccoli is fine.
- Ice cream is fine once in a while, but a healthier choice would be low-fat yogurt, milk or cheese.

