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## Feeding Children

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# Feeding Children

## Your Goal as a Teacher

After teaching this lesson, expect the homemaker to:

- Offer healthy choices to the children.
- Understand the relationship between good nutrition and healthy growth.
- Follow the Dietary Guidelines when planning meals and snacks for her family.
- Serve appropriately sized portions to the children.
- Offer new foods to her children.
- Teach her children to make healthy choices in restaurants.
- Understand food jags and choosy eaters.
- Encourage family meals.
- Offer breakfast to the children within two hours of their waking.
- Encourage her family to be physically active.

## Before You Visit the Homemaker

1. Read carefully: *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* (NEP-201), *What Counts as One Serving?* (NEP-201A) and *Signs of Good Health* (NEP-201B).
2. Review: MyPyramid; Steps to a Healthier You mini poster (USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion CNPP-15), MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels chart (USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion), and MyPyramid Food Intake Patterns chart (USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion).
3. Read: *Feeding Children: A Parents Guide* (NEP-213); *Feeding Children: How Much is Enough?* (NEP-213A) and *Feeding Children: For Growing Bones—Which Milk?* (NEP-213B).
4. Check the homemaker's food recall and the Nutrition Analysis. Does her food recall indicate certain food groups or key nutrients that need emphasis?
5. Check the adult enrollment form to review the number and ages of children in the home.
6. Gather the adult- and child-sized food models. Be sure to include several from each food group.
7. Answer these questions:
  - Are there overweight or underweight children in the family?
  - Do the children exhibit signs of good health?
8. Check to see if the homemaker or any of her children are enrolled in the Women, Infant & Children (WIC) program. If yes, find out what health risk factors qualified each participant for the program.
9. Gather the Food and Nutrition calendar.

## Teaching Tools

### For the Homemaker

- *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* fact sheet (NEP-201)
- *What Counts as One Serving?* (NEP-201A) and *Signs of Good Health* (NEP-201B)
- Nutrition Analysis of food recall, if available
- MyPyramid; Steps to a Healthier You mini poster (USDA CNPP-15)
- MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels chart
- MyPyramid Food Intake Patterns
- MyPyramid work sheet
- Discretionary Calories handout
- *Feeding Children* (NEP-213, NEP-213A, NEP-213B)
- Food and Nutrition Calendar
- Child and adult sized food models
- Dairy Council comparison cards

## Lesson Points to Stress

### NEP-213

1. Each child is unique and special. They all grow at different rates, like different foods, and play in different ways. Children thrive when parents nurture and respect their individual differences. The young years are a time when children learn to eat and enjoy a variety of foods. Children need this variety of food for healthy growth. Offering a variety of food is especially important for children, so that they can get all of the nutrients needed for proper growth and development. Following the dietary guidelines and [mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov) is extremely important.
2. Refer to the Eat Right the MyPyramid Way (NEP-201) facilitators guide for nutrients found in each food group and emphasize the relationship between the nutrients and growth.
3. For appropriate child-sized portions, refer to *Feeding Children: How Much Is Enough?* (NEP-213A). Compare the child portion sizes to the adult portion sizes. Point out the different serving sizes depending on the age and activity level of the child. A child naturally knows how much to eat, unless urged to eat more. Leave it up to children to choose how much to eat from what is offered.

4. It is important for children to learn healthy food habits at a young age.
  - By letting the child help with shopping and cooking, they are more likely to eat those foods.
  - For a child to eat healthy foods, the parent must be a good role model.
  - At a fast food restaurant, help the child make healthy choices. For example, choose milk or juice instead of soda; choose a salad instead of fries.
  - Meals and snacks should be served around the same time of day. This will discourage children from continuous nibbling and result in the easier planning of healthy snacks and meals.
5. Parents should encourage children to try new foods. Serve the new food along with the child's favorite foods, and do not give up when the child refuses to taste the new food. Encourage "hello bites" to get the child accustomed to the new texture, smell or taste of the food. Small portions of the new food may need to be served several times before the child is willing to try it.
6. "Choosy" eaters may be more reluctant to try new foods. Or, they may want the same food day after day for a period of time. This is normal. Just continue to offer other foods with the preferred food, and the "food jag" will disappear. As long as the child is healthy and growing, and the food is a healthy one as well, there is not a lot of need to worry.
7. Children get more from mealtime than just food. Developing good family communication is important. Turn off the TV, and sit at the table. Encourage children to use good table manners. Make the meal time fun and enjoyable.
8. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Small stomachs are especially empty after they have not had food for many hours. The breakfast needs to include food from at least three food groups if possible. The food does not have to be typical "breakfast foods" but should include a quarter to a third of the daily calories needed for the child. Refer to *Breakfast Makes a Difference* (NEP-214).
9. Because children's stomachs are small, snacks are extremely important. Children cannot always eat enough food at one meal to get all of the nutrients they need. Therefore, healthy snacks add the extra nutrients which are not received during the meals. Make sure the snacks compliment the meals and provide the needed nutrients.
10. Parents need to encourage their children to be physically active. Often, parents need to go outside with the child to play. Turn off the TV. Take a walk, jump rope, or play catch. If your child is overweight, do not make an issue of it. Instead, talk about the importance of physical activity and the health benefits from it. Help your child to accept his body. Encourage the child to make healthy food choices, eat proper portion sizes, and limit the junk food.

## Ideas for Teaching Homemakers

1. Discuss with the homemaker each child's favorite food. Then discuss with her a food that the child does not like or will not taste. Using the food models, help her to plan a meal including both foods.
2. Show a cereal box, and three different sizes of bowls. Ask,
  - "What size bowl would you use for yourself?"
  - "How much would you usually pour into the bowl?"
  - "How does that compare to the amount of the serving size on the label?"
  - "How much is needed for your child?"
  - Discuss the importance of portion sizes, and the concept of children judging when they are full. By using your hands, show the homemaker proper portion sizes for adults and youth. Refer to the Food and Nutrition calendar for illustrations.
3. Using the Food and Nutrition calendar, pick out a new recipe that she thinks her children will try for the first time.
4. Show magazine pictures of families doing different types of physical activity. Ask,
  - "Which pictures show how you and your children spend their day?"
  - "Which activities build bones?"
  - "Which activities are good for your lungs?"
  - "Which activities get the heart beating faster?"
  - Discuss ways to include more physical activity in each day.
5. Using the rubber food models or pictures of foods, let the homemaker plan two snacks or a quick breakfast for her children.

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