



Nutrition

UConn 4-H

Background

Eating a balanced diet is a key way to keep your body healthy. There are five key parts to a balanced meal: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. How much you eat of each food group matters too! For example, half of your meal should be fruits and vegetables. It's okay if every meal you eat doesn't include all 5 food groups, but taking steps to eat healthy meals is important. This week, challenge yourself to eat more fruits and vegetables, more whole grains, and less sugary sweets. Work with a trusted adult to learn more ways you can improve your eating habits, and check out the United States Department of Agriculture's [MyPlate resources for kids](#) to learn more!

Interested in putting your nutrition knowledge to the test? Ask an adult to lead this group activity called \$10 or Less. (Source: Cooking Matters for Teens).

Supplies and Tools

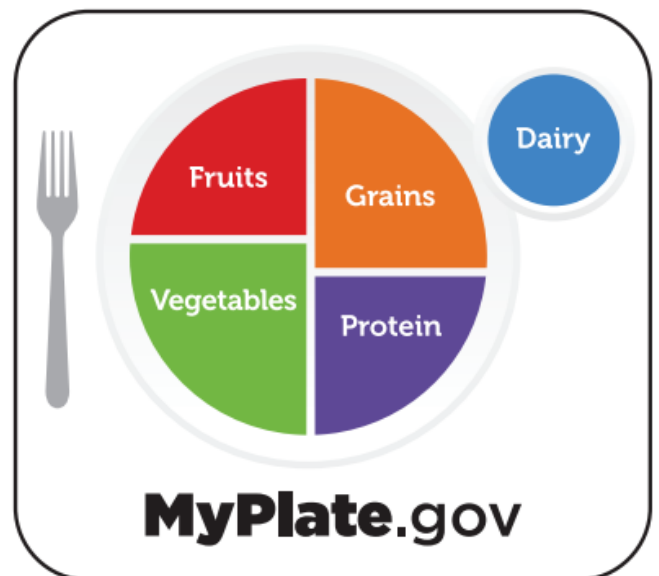
Copies of weekly grocery store flyers, one for each group

Copies of coupons, one set for each group

Pencils or pens

Blank paper

Calculator



Activity Steps

Notes

1. Explain that today youth are going to plan a meal they could make at home for their families. Point out that chefs don't just cook meals - they have to plan them too! Ask youth what they think is involved in planning an entire meal (e.g., choosing the meal, making sure it will fit everyone's preferences or allergies, shopping for the ingredients, making sure the ingredients are within budget, etc.).

2. Divide youth into teams. Provide each group with paper, pen, and copies of the grocery store flyers and coupons.

3. Ask youth to take 15 minutes to review the flyers and coupons as a group and choose items to make a meal that would cost less than \$10 (in total). The food they choose should:

- Make at least one complete meal that will serve a family of four.
 - Reflect at least some of the information they learned about MyPlate.
 - Take advantage of sale or coupon items as appropriate.
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4. When 15 minutes are up, call time. Have each group share the items they chose for their meal. Ask them questions like:

- What meal did you choose to make? What foods did you choose to buy to make? How did you make your choices?
 - How many food groups does your meal include? How many different colors of fruits or vegetables?
 - Does your meal include whole grains? Which ones?
 - Does your meal include lean proteins? Which ones?
 - Does your meal include dairy foods? Are they nonfat or lowfat?
 - Did you choose any sale or coupon items? Which ones?
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5. Award points to the team that planned the healthiest meal for the lowest cost.

Tip: While reviewing the youth's choices, point out that sale items are not always the best buy. Also, be prepared to provide appropriate costs of common items that may not be included in the store flyers.

If you enjoyed this project, visit 4-h.extension.uconn.edu to learn more about UConn 4-H. Check out the [UConn 4-H New London County](#) webpage to view the video associated with this activity.

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