



MyPlate Day is a full day of interactive, MyPlate-themed activities that emphasize healthy eating and physical activity.

## Objective

Increase awareness and skills needed to build a healthy plate using foods from the five food groups.

## The Event

MyPlate Day is made up of a variety of fun activities that reinforce classroom nutrition education and physical education while building school spirit. Students form teams according to the MyPlate food groups and participate in MyPlate-themed activities throughout the school day. These activities build on the lessons for grades 1–6 in Team Nutrition’s *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* materials (see appendix, page 94). To ensure students get the most out of MyPlate Day, work with the faculty to make sure learning modules are completed prior to the event.

Nutrition education activities could include:

- **MyPlate Design Challenge** – Students create posters showing a “MyPlate meal” with foods from each of the five food groups. Have the MyPlate planning team select the posters that best portray the MyPlate message (for example, posters where all five food groups are depicted, where half the plate is fruits and vegetables, or where foods lower in solid fats, added sugars, and sodium are shown). Once these posters are selected, students can be invited to vote for their favorite. Turn the winning posters into tray liners or a calendar to remind students, families, and school staff to eat foods from all five food groups.
- **MyPlate Living Photo** – Assign students to wear specific food group colors (green, red, orange, purple, blue) on MyPlate Day. At a designated time, have students gather on the field or in the gym to create a massive MyPlate photo. The school dance team or cheerleading squad can lead students in a dance to “Alive with 5” from the *Serving Up MyPlate* curriculum (see appendix, page 94).
- **Feed Your Brain Bowl** – At the end of the day, test fifth and sixth graders’ nutrition knowledge with a game. Split students up into small teams and explain that they will compete against one another to answer questions based on what they’ve learned during the rest of MyPlate Day. The MyPlate Quiz Show in *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum, Level 3, Lesson 1* (see appendix, page 94), can serve as a template for questions. For younger students, consider hosting MyPlate Bingo (there are many commercial options available or create your own). Ensure that all classrooms and grades are represented in the activity. To help students prepare for the game, incorporate lessons from *Serving Up My Plate, Levels 1 and 2*. (See appendix, page 94).

Physical activity opportunities could include:

- **MyPlate Relay** – Players team up into groups of five and line up together. Thirty feet from the starting line, place five open shopping bags, each labeled with a different food group name. Prepare a separate bag filled with images of various foods from each of the five food groups. (Do not include pictures of foods such as pizza that include more than one food group). When the relay starts, the first player in each line reaches into the picture bag and grabs one picture, running to place the picture in the correct food group bag. After successfully placing his or her picture in the right bag, each player runs back to the start and tags the hand of the next player in line. Play continues until all players have completed the relay. The team that finishes first and places its pictures in the correct food group bags wins.
- **Healthy Hopscotch** – Write the name of a food group in each hopscotch square. One at a time, each player throws a hopscotch marker onto a square. Before hopping, the player must name a food from that food group.

## The Event (cont'd)

- **MyPlate Obstacle Course** – Create stations named after healthy food choices from each food group. For example, try:
  - **Popcorn Pop and Hop** (players hop one leg at a time through tires or hula hoops in a zigzag pattern, jumping up and down like kernels popping)
  - **Apples on Top** (players balance red bean bag “apples” on their heads as they travel a course)
  - **Lettuce Leap** (players hop across green spot markers decorated like lettuce leaves)
  - **Carton Crasher** (players knock over empty milk cartons by rolling a soccer ball or kickball)
  - **Egg Relay** (players carry an egg on a spoon between two points)
  - **“Alive with 5” Jump Rope** – Have students use various jump-roping techniques to the beat of *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum*’s “Alive with 5” lesson (see appendix, page 94)

## Planning

**Plan with your MyPlate Day team.** Wellness committee members, teachers (particularly physical education teachers), the school nurse, your school’s parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO), students, the principal, and community volunteers can all contribute to planning the day. Pick a day to hold your MyPlate Day activities. Consider March, which is National Nutrition Month, or June 2 in honor of MyPlate’s birthday. If your school is year-round or if you operate a summer food program, consider holding this event in July. Look at the school schedule and consult with the administration, school staff, and teachers to determine how many activities the school can accommodate and what times of day work well. Once you have determined which activities you want to do, assign team members to lead each one.

**Gather materials and information for each event.** The events you choose for MyPlate Day will inform the supplies you need to gather. Make a list of everything you’ll need to host a successful event, such as arts and crafts supplies, cameras, tables and chairs, and obstacle course materials (e.g., bean bags, soccer balls, kickballs, jump ropes, spoons, milk cartons, and eggs).

**Generate anticipation and excitement.** Notify students of their food group teams the week before the event, and send out reminders for students to “wear” their food group color on MyPlate Day. (You may even want to have extra T-shirts on hand for students who forget.) On the day of the event, decorate with balloons and streamers in MyPlate colors and decorate the cafeteria with students’ MyPlate Design Challenge art.

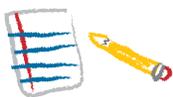
---

# Team Up Success



### School

- Display the MyPlate poster finalists around the school.
- Use your MyPlate Day as a launch event for your school’s work on meeting *HealthierUS School Challenge* criteria (see appendix, page 101).
- Schools can add a fundraising component to MyPlate Day by having students turn their MyPlate designs into real plates, using a service where designs can be mailed in to be manufactured into plates. Plates could then be auctioned off at a school fundraising event.



### Classroom

- Use the *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* (see appendix, page 94) and *Discover MyPlate* lessons (see appendix, page 94) to teach elementary students about healthy food choices while meeting core standards.

## Team Up for Success (cont'd)



### Cafeteria

- Display colorful signs on the lunch line counter that highlight the food groups represented in each menu item. The Team Nutrition Graphics Library is a source of free food group images (see appendix, page 99).



### Community

- Ask community businesses for donations of nonfood prizes for the Design Challenge and Brain Bowl winners, such as Frisbees, jump ropes, puzzles, or art supplies.



### Media

- Invite the media to watch the students pose for the school's human MyPlate.



### Home

- If students are participating in the *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* lessons (see appendix, page 94) in class, distribute the parent handout *MyPlate at Home* (see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library>).

---

## Schools **IN** Action

In **Fairfax County, VA**, middle school students participated in a *Colors That Jive! Derby* to learn about MyPlate and the importance of team skills such as communication, cooperation, self-control, encouragement, respect, friendship, and listening. Following a discussion about MyPlate and the importance of fruits and vegetables, students formed teams to construct cars made from produce. Each team received a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, plus bamboo skewers, rubber bands, toothpicks, and instructions for designing their car. A student on each team was selected as a “chief engineer,” and guided teammates in selecting fruits and vegetables for the cars. Using a derby ramp as a racetrack, each team’s car was judged on both distance traveled and creativity.

At **St. Joseph Catholic School in Wichita, KS**, the physical education teacher turned a traditional game of volleyball into a fun way for middle school students to learn about nutrition. First, students drew a paper food model out of a brown grocery sack for each point they scored during the game. Then, students placed those foods in the appropriate food group on a printout of MyPlate. The first team to fill up their plate correctly won!

At **Triplains USD 275 in Winona, KS**, high school students gave a presentation about nutrition to the third and fourth grade students as part of a Family and Consumer Science and Speech project. The presentation included a skit about a family eating dinner together, a quiz to test the students’ nutrition knowledge, and an activity to teach correct portion sizes. One of the students even created and wore a giant MyPlate costume. In turn, the fourth graders shared what they had learned from the presentation with the entire elementary school during lunch.



[Photo] A **Fairfax County** student prepares to race his team’s car.