



**KINDERGARTEN**  
**LESSON: MyPlate Protein**  
**SC STANDARD: Literacy Standards**

## MYPLATE PROTEIN

### OBJECTIVES:

- Understand what constitutes as protein
- Recognize that protein can come in many different forms
- Understand why protein is important for health

### LET'S GET STARTED:

- Identify what foods are included in the protein food group
- Explain why protein is an important part of the diet
- Discuss the importance of consuming different types of protein

### STORY:

- Read the story about Boss and his friends learning about different forms of protein while on a school field trip

### WRAPPING UP:

- Remind students of the health benefits of protein and the recommended daily intake according to MyPlate

## LET'S GET STARTED!

- This week we are going to talk about protein! Ask students if they can give examples of foods that would fit into the protein group. Explain how protein can come from many different sources and give examples.

### DIALOGUE BOX

- Today we are talking about protein! Remember that protein is a part of the MyPlate food groups that you should eat every day. Can anyone name some foods that have protein?
    - Meat, beans, eggs, fish
  - Anything that comes from animals has protein in it, whether it is fish (salmon, tuna, tilapia, or shellfish), meat (like chicken, turkey, beef, or pork), eggs (which come from chickens), or dairy products (which come from an animal's milk).
  - Some plants have protein in them as well. Beans are the most common source of vegetable protein, like black beans, kidney beans, peas, and white beans.
  - Nuts, which also come from plants, are another source of protein! Things like almonds, peanuts, walnut, and cashews have some protein in them.
  - Remember that foods can belong to more than one food group and often times overlap. Dairy products usually are also a good source of protein, and while beans are vegetables, they also have protein!
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- Explain that protein is an important part of the daily diet. If the "Introduction to MyPlate" lesson has already been taught, remind students about the protein section of the plate. If the lesson has not been taught, briefly discuss that protein is a food group that should be consumed every day. Discuss the health benefits of protein and why it is important to vary the type of protein you consume. Distribute the Protein Reference Guide.



## DIALOGUE BOX

- Protein is a very important part of what you eat every day. There is a whole section on MyPlate that suggests you should try to eat it with every meal!
- Protein is important for your health because it contains vitamins and minerals that your body needs, but can't get from the other food groups, like fruits and vegetables.
- Protein also gives you energy, helps build strong bones and muscles, and keeps your blood and skin healthy.
- Proteins that come from animals also have lots of fat in them. Things like hamburgers, bacon, sausage, and steak have lots of unhealthy fats in them and are mostly Whoa foods. It is important that you don't eat them too often because the unhealthy fats are not good for your body.
- Nuts are also high in fats, and while they have healthy fats, you still should not eat too many of them. Nuts are Slow foods because they have lots of healthy things in them too!
- There are so many different types of foods that have protein in them, and each one has something a little different that helps your body. It is important to vary the types of protein you eat so you get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs.
- Discuss how protein foods are found and raised in nature. Farms can grow beans, raise chickens to lay eggs, or raise other animals that will eventually become the meat you eat. Talk about rural, suburban, and urban areas and where farms are found.

## DIALOGUE BOX

- All food is grown on farms. It can be sent to factories to be processed into different foods, but originally it all comes from a farm. Farmers can grow vegetables or they raise animals. Farms are found in rural areas where there is plenty of land available to grow food or raise animals.
- Although food is grown in rural areas, it is transported to other places to be processed into other foods or sold in supermarkets. You are able to shop for food in the city even when there are no farms in sight because of food transportation.
- Rural areas are usually not very populated and have lots of land. Remember that urban areas are very developed, like big cities. Suburban areas are a mix between rural and urban areas. They are developed and have things like subdivisions and apartments, but they also have some open land, backyards, and parks.
- Farms that grow foods like fruits and vegetables or raises animals like cows, chickens, and pigs are found in rural areas. Farms take up a lot of space, so there must be a large amount of land available for plants and animals to grow and thrive.

## STORY

- Read the story about Boss and his friends going on a field trip for school, and learning about different ways to get protein

## WRAPPING UP

- Ask students if there any questions about the lesson on protein
- Remind students of the various ways they can get protein during the day



## Boss and His Buddies Go on a Fieldtrip

Boss was not always a fan of school, but what he did love was when he went with his class on a fieldtrip! Usually, the places they would visit would somehow fit in with what they were learning in school; so, if they were learning about history they would go to a museum or if they were studying different ways to paint a picture, they would visit an art museum. This time, they were studying how food grows, so what better place to go than a farm! One morning during the week, Boss and his friends all gathered together in their class room to get ready to go on their field trip to the farm! They were so excited, and could not wait to get there! Boss and Sally sat beside each other on the bus while Adam and Jake sat on the seats beside them! They talked about what all they thought they were going to see when they got to the farm and one of Boss buddies said, "I bet we will see a lot of corn," while another friend added, "I bet we will see some beans growing too!" Boss asked, "What is so healthy about beans? I know that they are kind of like vegetables, but they are different at the same time! Why are they supposed to be so good for us to eat?" Boss' friend Adam replied by saying, "Beans have something in them called protein! Protein is the part of certain foods that help build healthy tissue, like your skin and muscles, and it also helps your hair and nails! Everybody needs protein in their diet, but not all foods have protein. Chips, cookies, and even fruits are missing protein in them, but foods like Greek yogurt, peanut butter, beans, and even some vegetables have protein in them!" Boss asked, "what kind of beans do you have to eat to get the protein?" and Sally replied, "Oh you can get protein from almost any type of bean! There are white beans, black beans, kidney beans, soy beans, chick peas, Lima beans, and navy beans! All beans are great for you, but the darker ones are even better because they have even more nutrients in them plus all of the protein! Meat is another type of food that has a lot of protein in it!" Boss looked surprised when she said that and asked, "All meat has protein in it? I had no clue meat had protein like beans do! Which meats are the healthiest for you?" Sally turned in her seat on the bus and said, "Well, there is beef, pork, chicken, and fish, which all have a huge amount of protein in them! Any meat that you eat will always take a little longer for your body to process and digest, but other than that, meat has more protein than beans do sometimes! The best meats to eat are going to be chicken and fish, or an easier way of thinking of it is to eat the white meats and don't eat as much of the red meats, like beef!" Boss asked, "So you say that both meat and beans have protein? Does that mean they can kind of be in the same category when it come to food and nutrition?" Jake responded saying, "Well yes Boss. They can kind of be put into the same category! The main difference is that one comes from the earth and one comes from an animal! But when it comes to the protein, they are both great sources!" When they all arrived at the farm, not only did it have beans and corn, but they also had a few cows and chickens there too! Boss was so excited that his friends taught him about meat and beans on the bus ride over, and when the farmer pointed to the beans and asked, "Does anyone know what these are?" Boss raised his hand and new the exact answer!