



Sometimes Foods Sample Lesson: 5th Grade



Learning Outcome: Identify foods with added sugar, salt and solid fats; read and analyze a nutrition label

Supplies: **MyPlate** poster

Student Handout: **Nutrition Facts Label Comparison**

1. Display the **MyPlate** poster for your students to see; review the five food groups on **MyPlate** and ask students how they moved their bodies over the last week.
2. Begin a discussion by asking students to think about what makes them choose the foods they eat. Do they choose foods they like based on how they taste, smell, or look? What makes them willing to try something new? (*Accept all answers.*) Explain that people generally like to eat foods that taste good. But how do we know what is in the foods we eat? How do we know that a muffin has carrots in it, or soup has vegetable broth? Is there a way to figure out what is in food, aside from tasting it? And why is it important to know what's inside our food? (*Answers may vary, but we need to know a food's ingredients so that we can make healthier decisions. The Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list on packaged food items provide information about the food's contents and nutrients.*)
3. Explain that there are some foods that have "hidden" ingredients which we should eat some of the time and in smaller amounts. Ask students whether they can think of any foods that we should eat only sometimes, and why? (*Accept all answers.*) Health experts recommend we eat foods that are lower in solid fats, sodium (salt), and added sugars. Ask students why eating too many foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and sodium (salt) is not good for the body. (*Filling up on these foods means they probably are not getting enough of the other healthier food choices in the five food groups — and all of the nutrients they need to grow, learn, play, and be healthy. Eating too many foods that are high in solid fats and added sugars also makes it harder to stay at a healthy weight. Too much sodium (salt) or solid fats is not good for our hearts, and foods that are high in added sugars can cause tooth decay, which can lead to cavities.*)
4. Now that they know why it's important to eat healthy foods from each food group and limit foods that are high in solid fats, sodium, and added sugars, ask students if they have any ideas on how they can make better choices. Accept all answers. If no one suggests reading the food packaging ingredients list or Nutrition Facts label, hold up a container of packaged food (for example, a box of cereal), and point to the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list.

5. Next, distribute the **Nutrition Facts Label Comparison** handout and divide the class into pairs. Direct the class to look at the far-left label (Plain Fat-Free Yogurt). Invite students to share what information they notice and explain what they think it means. Can students identify any of the following from the label?
- **Serving Size:** Ask students to look for the words “Serving Size” on the label. In this example, the serving size is 1 cup. What if they ate everything in the package? How many servings would that be? (4) The information on the label is based on one serving. When they eat more, they need to multiply the nutrient information by the number of servings they ate.
 - **Calories:** Next, have students find the number of calories in a single serving of the plain fat-free yogurt and the vanilla-flavored yogurt. Calories are a measure of the amount of energy the food provides. The vanilla-flavored yogurt has more calories than the plain fat-free yogurt, because it contains more solid fats and added sugars. Solid fats and added sugars add calories to a food.
 - **Solid Fats:** Students can tell the amount of solid fats in the food by looking at the grams of saturated fat and trans fat on the label. These are two types of solid fats. For trans fat, look for foods that have 0g of trans fat. For saturated fat, the label also provides the percent daily value (% DV). The % DV is a number that tells you if there is a lot or a little of something in a serving of the food. A % DV of 5 or less is low; 20% or more is high. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat.
 - **Vitamins and Minerals:** At the bottom of the label, students will find numbers followed by percent signs. This is where they find the amounts (% DV) of nutrients that the product contains, such as calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C. 5% Daily Value or less of a nutrient is low; 20% Daily Value or more is high, and therefore a better choice.
 - **Sodium:** Have students find the % DV for sodium. Which snacks are lowest in sodium? The Nutrition Facts label does not identify the amount of added sugars in a product. You can find added sugars by looking at the ingredient list. Some other names for added sugars are: high-fructose corn syrup, sugar, sucrose, dextrose, fructose, lactose, maltose, honey, anhydrous dextrose, brown sugar, confectioner’s powdered sugar, and corn syrup. Tip! If one of those is in the first three ingredients, you can be sure that added sugar is a major ingredient.
6. Next, give students 15 minutes to work with their partners to compare and analyze the nutrition labels. They should study and compare the four snack foods. After evaluating the data, they will decide which are the healthier options and explain their reasoning.

