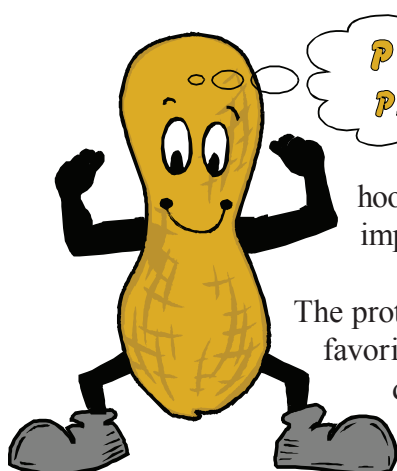




Dear Parent or Guardian,

Today I introduced the protein group of MyPlate. It is the purple section and it is rather small. Its size gives you a clue. You don't need a lot of this food group to stay healthy. That's because it's jam-packed with nutrients, especially protein.



P IS FOR
PROTEIN

This group is very important because it contains "grow" foods. Protein foods help you grow longer bones and stronger muscles. They also help build strong blood, hair and fingernails. Or, in my case, protein builds strong hooves! Protein is in every cell in your body. Eating from this group is really important for children and teens. It helps them grow to healthy adult size.

The protein group includes both animal and plant protein. We named some favorite animal foods: beef, chicken, eggs, fish... and *moose*! We also discovered that many delicious plants are in this group. Dried beans, nuts and seeds are a few we like. We sampled a snack made from vegetable protein today in class. Ask your child to show you or tell you about how to prepare it.

Did you know that humans should try to eat beans three times a week instead of meat? There is a very good reason for this. Beans are some of the leanest protein foods in our world. Most animal proteins have unhealthy fat in greater amounts than we need for good health.

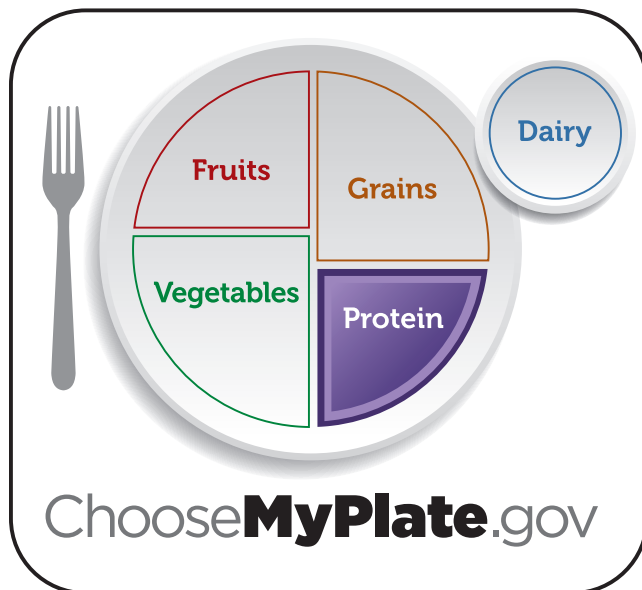
I'm not saying all fat is bad. Fat is necessary for good health. Fat cushions your organs. It carries some vitamins through your blood. It also stores some vitamins. Fat keeps you warm and gives you energy. It also adds flavor to food. Just remember to "go lean with protein" as often as you can. I put some tips for lowering fat from animal foods on the back of this letter.

Stay tuned for next week's letter when we explore *It's the Cup, Not the Claw!*

Yours truly,



Marty Moose



Tips for Lowering the Fat in Animal Foods

Animal foods are high in protein, but many of the affordable cuts of meat and poultry are high in saturated fats. These are not good for your health. It is best to remove and avoid as much fat as possible. Here are some tips to lower the fat:

Meats & Poultry:

- Cut away most of the visible fat (usually white) before cooking.
- Broil, roast or grill so that the melted fat drips away from the food source.
- Remove any fat still on the edge of meat before serving.
- Buy leaner types of hamburger; or after cooking, drain and pat with a paper towel.
- Remove the skin from chicken before serving.

Other Tips

- Serve more fish. Fish contains healthy oils.
- Game, such as venison, is a very lean protein food.
- Increase vegetable protein as a main dish.
- Avoid flavoring soups, beans, and legumes with bacon or other animal fat. Instead, substitute a little oil.



Mighty Moose Bean Dip in a Bag

Ingredients

- * ¼ cup canned beans (pintos work great)
- * 1 teaspoon plain non-fat yogurt or sour cream
- * 1 teaspoon mild salsa
- * Small sealable plastic bag
- * Whole wheat crackers or baked chips



Directions

Open canned beans and drain. To reduce sodium content, rinse. Place beans in the small plastic bag, squeeze out air and seal the bag. Mash the beans with your fingers. Re-open the bag and add the yogurt and salsa. Seal the bag again and mix all ingredients with your fingers. Snip a corner of the bag off with scissors and squirt the dip onto your crackers or chips. Refrigerate leftovers immediately.