

# Food Power

Eating a properly balanced diet helps you do your best. Poor eating habits can make you tired, cranky, and even sick! Score some points for good nutrition by doing this badge.



### 1. Track It

Check whether you are eating the balanced diet you need. Record everything you eat for one week. Keep track of the food groups, the number of servings you had from each group, and those you missed. After a week, compare your list with the Food Guide Pyramid on the next page. How could you improve what you ate for one meal each day?

### 2. Keeping It Balanced

Keeping healthy and fit is a balancing act. The "healthy pyramid" outlines healthy habits that can put you on the right track for health. Using the pyramid on the next page as a guide, create your own healthy pyramid. Make one section for eating right, another for fitness, and a third one for healthy living habits. Cut out pictures from magazines or draw your own pictures that represent each category. Glue these pictures into the appropriate boxes of the pyramid.

### 3. Create a Food Advertisement

Design an ad for a healthy food. Your ad can include a catchy slogan about the benefits of the food that people will remember. Show your ad to others.

### 4. Understand Food Labels

Food labels can help you make healthy decisions about what to eat. Create a chart to track three items found on food labels. The chart can include: calories, fat, or vitamins. Gather three labels from different brands of the same type of food. What are the differences in those items, if any, among the three different brands?

### 5. Messages

Watch several hours of children's television programming. (Saturday mornings are a good time.) Count the number of food commercials that are shown. In what ways do commercials teach good or poor eating habits? Find out which advertised products are nutritious and which are not.



### 6. It's All About Choice

Try this fun way to eat healthier foods. With at least two other friends, brainstorm a list of healthy food categories. For example, your list might include foods high in vitamin C or calcium, green foods, or healthy snacks. Write each category on a separate piece of paper and fold them up. The first player draws a piece of paper and reads the category out loud. Using a timer, give each player one minute to write down as many items as they can that fit into that category. Players get points for each correct answer.

### 7. Balanced Lunch?

Look over your school's lunch menu for a week. Use the Food Guide Pyramid to find out how well-balanced the meals are. Write a letter to your school principal letting her/him know what you discovered. If the menu is well-balanced and tasty, congratulate the menu planners. If not, give your school suggestions.

### 8. End Hunger

Do a service project to help fight hunger. Around the world, children, women, and the elderly are the most likely to live with poor nutrition and hunger. Here are a couple of ideas to try out with the members of your family or friends:

- Collect canned or boxed food that fit in the groups of the Food Guide Pyramid. Find a local food pantry, soup kitchen, or international organization to donate to. Include manual can openers for canned food!
- Volunteer to help distribute food in a soup kitchen.

### 9. Speak Your Mind

What advice would you give the President of the United States to end hunger in this country? Speak to your friends and family about this, then write the President by letter at: Mr. President, The White House, Washington, DC 20505, or send an e-mail ([president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)).

### 10. Scavenger Hunt

When looking at food labels, note how much of each nutrient is present. In each serving, if there's 5 percent or less of the recommended daily allowance of a nutrient, that food is not considered a significant source for it. If the food contains 20 percent or more of the recommended daily serving, it is considered a major source. Identify five nutrients that are important for your health, such as calcium, zinc, vitamin C, protein, and carbohydrates. With a friend, go on a scavenger hunt in a grocery store or in your own cabinets. Your goal is to identify foods that provide the highest percentages of those important nutrients.

## The Food Guide Pyramid

