

Iowa Nutrition Education Lessons for Middle School Students

This page provides an overview of suggested lessons for middle school student nutrition education. Iowa Team Nutrition has developed a series of lessons that can complement the [Fueling My Healthy Life](#) curriculum or can stand alone as a set of general nutrition education lessons. The [Fueling My Healthy Life](#) lessons are a set of nutrition education curriculum for middle school students developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition.

A brief overview of the lessons is provided below to inform the selection of which lessons should be taught in local districts. The instructor/teacher may select which lessons to teach based on class readiness. It is recommended that they select lessons that teach general concepts first (example: Lesson 1. Food Groups or [Start Right With Breakfast](#)) prior to focusing on more detailed concepts (example: Lesson 4. School Lunch or [The Truth About Snacking and Sodium](#)). If general nutrition concepts have already been taught using a different curriculum, the instructor/teacher should assess if it may be appropriate to start with the more detailed content. Based on local preferences, the content of the curricula could be combined or rearranged.

Overview of the Iowa Nutrition Education Lessons for Middle School Students:

Each lesson will include a taste test.

1. The Food Groups lesson provides an introduction to food groups, tips for balanced eating and focused learning about a variety of fruits and vegetables (one 45-minute class period).
2. The Nutrition Facts labels lesson educates students on how to use the Nutrition Facts label and provides an overview of key nutrients. Students compare snack choices using the Nutrition Facts label (two 45-minute class periods).
3. The Macronutrients lesson provides students with fun learning experiments and a brief overview of the functions of macronutrients in the body-specifically how they provide energy, build structural components and regulate body functions (three 45-minute class periods).
4. The Micronutrients lesson introduces students to the role of vitamins and minerals in our bodies (one 45-minute class period).
5. The School Lunch lesson has students categorize the foods offered by food groups and introduces the federal regulations surrounding school meals. Students are asked to engage the school nutrition team (two or more 45-minute class periods).
6. The Balanced Meals lesson has students record their intake and reflect upon their dietary choices. Students are tasked with creating a menu plan using the balanced eating concepts they have learned. Students are asked to apply balanced eating concepts to dining out by selecting an order from a restaurant menu (two 45-minute class periods).

Education Standards: Middle school lessons align with health education and health literacy standards for increasing knowledge of core concepts, unless noted otherwise.

Overview of the Iowa Food Groups Around the World lessons:

The Food Groups Around the World lessons are a short series that encourages students to explore how nutrition needs are met by various people from different countries, communities and cultures around the world.

Overview of the USDA Team Nutrition [Fueling My Healthy Life](#) nutrition education lessons:

- The [Start Right With Breakfast](#) lessons discuss how general nutrition concepts apply to breakfast (three sessions, 60 minutes each).
 1. Session one provides general nutrition education related to breakfast and asks students to review and consider their breakfast choices.
 2. Session two provides additional detail on healthy eating concepts and takes a brief look at food sourcing.
 3. Session three highlights Breakfast Around the World and applies healthy eating concepts to cultural breakfast choices.

Note: This content can be appropriate for all middle school students. Although the lessons are designed for 6th grade, the general nutrition content in the Start Right With Breakfast lesson would be appropriate for older grades with limited previous nutrition education.

- The [What's Your Healthy Eating Style?](#) lessons discuss added sugars found in beverages (three sessions, 60 minutes each).
 1. Session one introduces the basics of added sugars in beverages. Suggestions for simple switches are provided and the effects of food choices on the body are discussed.
 2. Session two goes into additional detail on added sugars and has students explore a website about the added sugar content of different beverages.
 3. Session three looks at added sugars on the Nutrition Facts label. Then students are tasked to create a promotional campaign encouraging other students to avoid added sugars.
- [The Truth About Snacking and Sodium](#) lessons discuss the sodium content of snacks (three sessions, 60 minutes each).
 1. Session one introduces the basics of sodium and discusses the effects of a high sodium diet on long-term health.
 2. Session two has students explore an interactive website about the sodium content of various snacks. Then students spend time creating a brochure to educate other students on the sodium content of popular snacks.
 3. Session three has students compare the sodium content of snacks using the Nutrition Facts label.

Education Standards: The education standards are identified within the Teacher Lesson Plans (example on page 8).
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Note: As a part of the Iowa Team Nutrition Sub-Grants, guidance is provided for offering a fruit or vegetable taste test to accompany the nutrition education lessons. One taste test should be offered during each class period to complement the nutrition education. If possible, taste tests are encouraged to accompany nutrition education whether or not a grant is received.



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