Lesson Overview
The leader will introduce participants to the MyPlate Food Guide, lead a discussion and show examples of sample daily food plans for a typical adult who needs about 2,000 calories and a typical 4-year-old child who requires about 1,400 calories. The participants will be introduced to the four nutrients of concern (potassium, dietary fiber, calcium and vitamin D) and understand how these nutrients form the basis of MyPlate Food Group recommendations. The leader will emphasize how the blue dairy circle is not limited to fluid milk, but also represents yogurt, cheese and milk used in food preparation.

Participants will then break into small groups and participate in a problem solving activity using realistic scenarios that reflect real-life barriers to adopting a family eating plan that is based on the MyPlate Food Guide.

The leader will demonstrate one or more easy ways to incorporate more dairy into the diet. A handout with recipes for Wake Up Sunshine Smoothie, Easy Flatbread Pizza and Cinnamon Hot Chocolate is included.

Optional: Participants with computer access will be encouraged to use the choosemyplate.gov website to enter personal data and receive a customized Daily Food Plan.

Activities for Children
If children are present, include a separate area where a volunteer or staff member can provide care, serve a healthy snack and interact with young children while parents are learning about nutrition. Children can be exposed to healthy eating in some or all of the following ways:

- Read one or more of the following dairy-themed books to the children:

- Teach one of the following interactive lessons using the National Dairy Council Food Models, available on request from www.southeastdairy.org.
  - From Moo to You: tinyurl.com/7qcmmen
  - Get a Feel for Food: tinyurl.com/7wh5ftl
  - Let's Go on a Hunt: tinyurl.com/6ttoomo
  - Food Rainbow: tinyurl.com/7yjuh2z

- Provide children with white paper plates, blunt scissors, grocery flyers, gardening catalogs and/or magazine pictures of food. Ask the children to cut out pictures of food and create healthy meal or snack combinations on their plate.
Lesson Objectives

The participant will:
1. Briefly describe the MyPlate Food Guide, the five food groups, the nutrients of concern and how MyPlate reflects the proportions of a well-balanced diet.
2. Discuss the importance of Hitting the Blue Dairy Circle two to three times daily. Whether in a glass as milk or on the plate as yogurt or cheese, dairy provides nine essential vitamins and minerals children and adults need for strong bones and healthy bodies.
3. Participate in a small-group problem-solving activity focused on scenarios that highlight barriers to adopting an eating plan based on the MyPlate Food Guide.
4. Observe a food demonstration and sample nutrient-rich recipes that feature milk, yogurt and cheese.

Leader Background

The MyPlate Food Guide provides a graphic presentation of a healthful, balanced diet to remind Americans to eat all five food groups in the proper proportions.

The USDA Dietary Guidelines form the scientific basis for the MyPlate Food Guide. According to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans policy report (found at tinyurl.com/4ccej8xm):

"Americans eat too many calories and too much solid fat, added sugars, refined grains, and sodium. Americans also consume too little potassium; dietary fiber; calcium; vitamin D; unsaturated fatty acids from oils, nuts, and seafood; and other important nutrients. These nutrients are mostly found in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat milk and milk products."

The report highlights the nutrients of concern which are potassium, dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D. These food groups are the best sources of:

**Potassium:** Dairy, Fruits, Vegetables  
**Dietary Fiber:** Fruits, Vegetables, Whole Grains  
**Calcium:** Dairy  
**Vitamin D:** Dairy

It is notable that dairy foods, including milk, yogurt and cheese are a significant source of three of the four nutrients of concern. Older children, teens and adults need 3 servings a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ servings, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 servings. A serving is 8 ounces of yogurt or milk (white or flavored) and 1.5 ounces of cheese.  

*Continued on Page 3*
Some individuals avoid nutrient-rich dairy foods because they are lactose intolerant or lactose sensitive. However, many health experts agree that low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products are an important and practical source of key nutrients for all people – including those who are lactose intolerant. Practical solutions can help lactose intolerant individuals enjoy 3 servings of dairy foods every day without feeling discomfort. Review these tips to help teach participants how they can enjoy dairy:  

While the MyPlate guide is a helpful tool designed to guide Americans toward more healthful food choices, many barriers (both personal and societal) often make it difficult to make the right choices on a daily basis. That is why this lesson includes a small-group problem-solving activity that depicts some of the barriers to good eating faced by families.

Before teaching the lesson, review the following resources:
1. choosemyplate.gov
2. Interactive Daily Food Plan at tinyurl.com/3mhu8cz
3. www.southeastdairy.org

Materials Needed
1. MyPlate poster or graphic (download from choosemyplate.gov)
2. MyPlate Sample 2000 calorie Daily Food Plan for a typical adult and MyPlate sample 1,400 calorie Daily Food Plan for a typical 4-year-old
3. Flip chart or dry-erase board and markers
4. Setting a Place for MyPlate at Your Family Table activity sheet and leader guide
5. MyPlate: Fill in the Blue Dairy Circle Recipes

Teaching the Lesson
1. Begin by asking participants if they have seen the MyPlate Food Guide. Ask for their thoughts, comments and questions about MyPlate. Record their observations on a flip chart or board.
2. Explain to the group that most children and adults in America are not getting enough of four important nutrients. They are potassium, fiber, calcium and vitamin D. Write these four nutrients on the flip chart or board. Next, ask participants if anyone knows the foods that are the best sources of these nutrients. The correct answers are:
   - **Potassium**: Dairy, Fruits, Vegetables
   - **Fiber**: Fruits, Vegetables, Whole Grains
   - **Calcium**: Dairy
   - **Vitamin D**: Dairy
3. Ask participants to identify which food group is an important source of three of these four nutrients of concern. The correct answer is dairy foods, including milk, yogurt and cheese. Older children, teens and adults need 3 servings a day, while children four to eight years old need 2½ servings, and children two to three years old need 2 servings. A serving is eight ounces of yogurt or milk (white or flavored) and 1½ ounces of cheese. Point out that milk can be used in a variety of ways, e.g. substituted for water when making oatmeal or added to pancake batter, mashed potatoes and cream soups. Remind participants that the Dietary Guidelines recommends choosing low-fat and fat-free dairy foods.

**Continued on Page 4**
Lesson Overview

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Participants will then break into small groups and participate in a problem solving activity using realistic scenarios that reflect real-life barriers to adopting a family eating plan that is based on the MyPlate Food Guide. The leader will demonstrate one or more easy ways to incorporate more dairy into the diet. A handout with recipes for Wake Up Sunshine Smoothie, Easy Flatbread Pizza and Cinnamon Hot Chocolate is included.

Optional:
Participants with computer access will be encouraged to use the choosemyplate.gov website to enter personal data and receive a customized Daily Food Plan.

Activities for Children

If children are present, include a separate area where a volunteer or staff member can provide care, serve a healthy snack and interact with young children while parents are learning about nutrition. Children can be exposed to healthy eating in some or all of the following ways:

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- Provide children with white paper plates, blunt scissors, grocery flyers, gardening catalogs and/or magazine pictures of food. Ask the children to cut out pictures of food and create healthy meal or snack combinations on their plate.

4. Show participants a graphic of the MyPlate Food Guide, available at choosemyplate.gov. Explain how the MyPlate Food Guide emphasizes nutrient-rich choices from all five food groups in the proper proportions. Recommendations to include dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains address the nutrients of concern. The MyPlate website also includes a tool to determine individual eating plans. Pass out copies of both the the sample 2,000 calorie Daily Food Plan for a typical adult and the 1,400 calorie Daily Food Plan for a typical 4-year-old.

5. Ask participants their thoughts and opinions about the MyPlate guide. Discuss the key messages associated with each food group (Make at least half your grains whole, Vary your veggies, Focus on fruits, Get your calcium-rich foods, and Go lean with protein). Point out that while the MyPlate graphic is simple, the choosemyplate.gov website includes the details and tools needed to plan a healthy diet.

6. For participants with access to a computer, suggest that they go online and get a personalized diet plan for themselves and/or family members at tinyurl.com/3mhu8cz.

7. Break into small groups of 3-4 participants. Pass out the Setting a Place for MyPlate at Your Family Table activity sheet. Assign each group one scenario to work on.

8. Give participants time to work and devise a solution to their assigned scenario. Ask that they assign one participant as the “recorder” and another as the “reporter.”

9. Have participants take turns presenting and discussing their solutions for the role-playing scenarios.

Food Demonstration and Tasting

Demonstrate one or more of the recipes included on the MyPlate: Fill in the Blue Dairy Circle Recipes. Using proper hand-washing and sanitation, and show participants how to make quick and easy healthy recipes such as Cinnamon Hot Chocolate, Wake Up Sunshine Smoothie or Easy Flatbread Pizza. Discuss the food group/nutrient contribution of each recipe. Make copies of the recipe handout and distribute to participants.

Going Further

- Discuss beverage choices using the Rethink Your Drink handout, located at tinyurl.com/6rnw2pb.
- Pass out and discuss the handout Build My Bones available at tinyurl.com/6ohw5gg.
- Pass out and discuss the handout Calcium Connection available at tinyurl.com/729n33f.
- Pass out and discuss the handout Be a Healthy Role Model for Children, 10 Tips for Setting Good Examples, from choosemyplate.gov site at tinyurl.com/7n6jbws.
Working in small groups, think about ways to overcome some of the following barriers to healthy eating. Assign one person to report your ideas and suggestions to the larger group.

1. When you purchase fresh fruit and vegetables, you feel like you are wasting money because your family doesn't always eat the produce before it spoils.

2. Your spouse is lactose intolerant and never drinks milk. You worry that the children are picking up this habit. Your son even declares that he is "lactose intolerant" whenever he doesn't want to drink his milk.

3. You worry that your children are not good milk drinkers, even though you offer milk with every meal. You don't want to nag or bribe them, but you have run out of ideas for getting them to drink their milk.

4. It doesn't seem possible to purchase foods such as whole grains, yogurt, seafood and make "half your plate" fruits and vegetables on a really tight budget. Do you have any suggestions for eating healthy on a budget?

5. Most of the advertisements that your children see on TV are for sweets, fried snacks and fast food. Of course, your kids always ask for these foods after they see the commercials. What are some ways to counteract the food advertising and convince your children to choose healthy foods?

6. You understand that breakfast is important for learning, maintaining energy levels and even weight control. But you are always too tired to get up in time to eat and besides, you aren't hungry in the morning. Brainstorm ways to include a morning meal that fits the MyPlate guidelines.

7. Your children complain about the texture of whole grains and you don't want to waste money buying foods they will not eat. Are certain types of whole grains more appealing to kids?

8. You and your spouse both work long hours and it is difficult to find time to make home cooked family meals. Are there any shortcuts to preparing easy, healthy meals that don't cost a lot of money?
Some individuals avoid nutrient-rich dairy foods because they are lactose intolerant or lactose sensitive. However, many health experts agree that low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products are an important and practical source of key nutrients for all people— including those who are lactose intolerant. Practical solutions can help lactose intolerant individuals enjoy 3 servings of dairy foods every day without feeling discomfort. Review these tips to help teach participants how they can enjoy dairy:


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Fill in the Blue Dairy Circle

Three simple recipes to boost a nutrient-rich diet

**Easy Flatbread Pizza**
Makes 1 serving

*Ingredients:*
- 1 small whole grain pita or flatbread
- 1/4 cup prepared pasta or pizza sauce
- 1/3 cup grated part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup fresh vegetables (suggestions: diced pepper, sliced mushrooms, small broccoli florets, chopped spinach or arugula)

*Directions:*
Spread whole grain pita or flatbread with pizza or pasta sauce, top with choice of vegetables and shredded cheese. Place in a toaster oven or broil until cheese is melted and slightly browned.

**Wake Up Sunshine Smoothie**
Makes 2-3 servings

*Ingredients:*
- 1 large banana, peeled and frozen
- 1 6-ounce container of low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup canned mandarin oranges, drained
- 1/2 cup 1%, fat-free or lactose-free milk

*Directions:*
Place ingredients in the blender, blend until smooth and pour into cups.

**Cinnamon Hot Chocolate**
Makes 1 serving

*Ingredients:*
- 1 cup fat-free, 1% or lactose-free milk
- 1 tablespoon chocolate syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

*Directions:*
Mix together all ingredients and heat in the microwave for 1-2 minutes until hot.