



## Story General Information

### Eat Right – What Does That Mean? (🌈 A Physical Health Story) (5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 10-11 yrs.)

This story tries to make sense of what we know (and what we are still learning) about eating to stay healthy.

- 🌈 All animals need to eat to get energy and nutrients that our body and brain needs to survive.
- 🌈 There are so many ideas about **what** we should be eating to keep our body and our brains healthy. The more that we learn about our bodies and our brains, the more we understand the kinds of foods that we should be eating. (Note-this information changes as science gives us more info.)
- 🌈 There are no good or bad foods, there are just foods that give us what we need and other foods that do not. Taste and society play a big role in what, and even how, we eat.

The facilitator begins with an introduction of themselves, neuroscience, and an overview of the program, Brain Health: It's SPEctacular. In this story, the focus is Physical Health. For the body and brain to function, they need nutrients and energy from food. In this story, food groups are not identified as "good" or "bad." The value is placed on how the food can help the body and brain overall. The children learn about different foods and what each type can provide (energy/nutrients) for the body and brain. They also learn how this knowledge about food can help in making thoughtful and smart choices about which foods to consume to stay happy and healthy!

The idea of "eating right" is often everywhere and there are conflicting views about what is the best or healthiest diet for people. There is information everywhere from numerous sources. The facilitator shares with the children that information they see about food can come from companies selling/making food, scientists, and many other sources. It is important to know who the information comes from to evaluate its authenticity and objective in providing the information. For example, companies want to sell lots of food to make more money. It may be more food than the body and brain need! Yet, what does it actually mean to "eat healthy"? Scientists continue to research food and its effects on the body to learn as much as they can. This idea is every changing and evolving. Eating healthy can look different for each person.

The reason people and animals eat is to provide energy and nutrients for the body and brain to function properly. Therefore, when choosing foods to eat it is best to choose foods that provide both: energy and nutrients. All foods provide energy. Some foods provide energy that can be used right away. Other times, energy can be stored away in fat cells. Everyone has fat cells. Storing energy can have both positive and negative effects on the body. To retrieve energy from fat cells, the body and brain must work extra hard. People also do not know exactly how much energy is needed to do tasks. Therefore, how much food to eat is often a guessing game. The brain and stomach do work together to let people know when it is time to eat and get more energy. The stomach can signal the brain. Therefore, part of eating right is listening to the brain and body.

The body and brain need different nutrients. Nutrients are the proteins, vitamins, and minerals the food can provide. Proteins help make new cells and repair current cells. Vitamins and minerals help the body grow and function correctly. Scientists are still researching vitamins and minerals to understand more about what

specifically the body and brain need and what foods provide which vitamins and minerals. For now, eating foods from protein, vegetable, and fruit food groups will help the body and brain grow strong and healthy!

To help the children understand more about how to manage which foods and how much of them to eat, the facilitator introduces the science-based concept of “My Plate.” The divided plate is displayed as the facilitator discusses each food group (protein, vegetables, fruits, grains, and dairy) and gives examples along with showing the recommended serving of each group. The facilitator also emphasizes that the “My Plate” concept can change based on new information scientists learn.

To wrap up the story, the facilitator reminds the children that all foods we eat provide us energy. There are no “good” foods or “bad” foods. However, there are some foods (such as candy, sweets, processed foods) that taste yummy and are fun to eat, but they only provide energy and often, that energy will be stored energy. Therefore, when choosing to eat these kinds of foods, enjoy them in moderation! Foods that give us both energy and nutrients for the body and brain need to be the majority and primary focus of a diet. When the brain and body receive energy and nutrients they need, it’s SPECTacular!

**Story Objectives:**

- Students will recognize that information about food and healthy eating comes from multiple sources.
- Students will identify contributing factors in the decision-making process when choosing what to eat.
- Students will explain why people/animals eat.
- Students will describe how bodies store and use energy from food.
- Students will describe how the stomach and brain communicate.
- Students will identify the five food groups and explain the “MyPlate” theory on recommended eating habits.
- Students will identify foods to eat in moderation and discuss why that is important for a healthy brain.
- Students will explain what it means to “eat right” in terms of brain health.