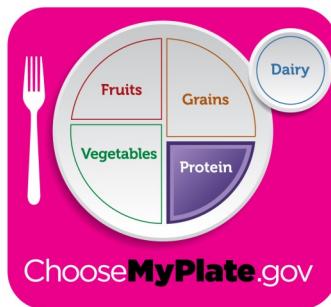


What We Learned Today

Got Protein?

During today's ChildcareAlive! activity, your child learned about the Protein Group. Growing children need protein to help them grow and build strong muscles. Proteins are also the building blocks of many other body parts, including hair, nails, skin, and even our internal organs.



Beans: Vegetable or Protein?

Beans are one of the most commonly eaten foods around the world for a number of reasons. They are rich in a variety of nutrients, including fiber, folate, iron, and protein. Beans are a part of the vegetable group on MyPlate, but because they contain so much protein, they can also fit into the protein group. This makes beans very special, because they can actually take the place of meat in meals.



In addition to the protein beans provide, they also contain cancer-fighting antioxidants and have been shown to fight against heart disease and obesity. Nutrition experts say that beans are a food that all Americans need to eat more often. Try a new bean recipe today!

More Beans, Please

Adding more beans to your diet can be as easy as simply adding cooked beans to the foods you already enjoy. Beans can be added to chili, burgers, quesadillas, pasta, soup, salads, or even some baked goods (see back of this page for some recipes).



Beans are even delicious as part of a salsa. Your child helped make a very simple corn and black bean salsa today. Try making this at home (recipe on back), or experiment with different ingredients in salsa, like fresh tomatoes, bell peppers, or cilantro.

Spilling the Beans

Easy Black Bean and Corn Salsa

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 ½ cups fresh, frozen/thawed, or canned corn (drained and rinsed)
- 2 cups chunky salsa

Directions:

Mix ingredients and refrigerate. Serve as a dip with whole wheat crackers or chips.

You may also wish to ask your child what else they might like to add to a salsa—bell pepper? Cilantro? Tomato?

Recipe Source: FN1584, "Let's Preserve Salsa II," available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1584.pdf

Did You Know??

Diets high in sodium can increase the risk for high blood pressure and heart disease. Canned beans contain a significant amount of sodium; however, you can reduce this sodium by 41% just by rinsing and draining canned beans (or any canned vegetable) before use. This also helps lessen the gas-causing effects of beans.

Sweet & Special Bean Recipes

Black Bean Brownies

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz) can black beans
- 3 eggs
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup white sugar
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease an 8x8" baking dish. Combine all ingredients except chocolate chips in a blender; blend until smooth; pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Sprinkle with chocolate chips. Bake until top is dry and sides start to pull away from the baking dish; about 30 minutes.

Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service, www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart

Chocolate Chip Bean Muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 (16 oz) cans white beans (Great Northern, navy, or white kidney)
- ⅓ cup low fat milk
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup butter
- 3 eggs
- 3 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips




Directions:

Combine beans and milk in food processor or blender until smooth. Mix sugar and butter in a large bowl; beat in eggs and vanilla. Add bean mixture, mixing until well blended. Fold in flours, baking soda, and salt (do not overmix). Add in chocolate chips. Spoon mixture into 16 muffin tins about half full. Bake at 375° F for 20-25 minutes.

Recipe/Photo Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service, www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart

Suggestion: Try serving these two recipes instead of cupcakes or cake for a healthier celebration, like a birthday or holiday party.

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