

Kids in Nutrition

HEALTH BEGINS IN YOUTH.

Food Sustainability Program
Weekly Newsletter

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Lesson 3: Animals

The overconsumption of meat is one of the major forces behind climate change. In fact, the average American eats 6.5x more meat than the recommended intake deemed by dietary experts. Currently at over 7 billion people, Earth's population is expected to reach its maximum capacity of 10 billion by 2050, and global meat consumption is estimated to rise by 73%. Establishing a balance between growing food for an increasing population and maintaining a healthy environment and ecosystem are critical to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. By following the Planetary Health Diet, eating less red meat and dairy, and switching to chicken, eggs, and/or plant-based proteins, human health and sustainability have the potential to significantly improve.

Lesson Objectives

- Understand different foods and their environmental impacts.
- Explain what a planetary health diet is.
- Describe different types of plant-based proteins.
- Understand overfishing and sustainable fishing.

Planetary Health Diet

Characterized by a variety of high quality plant-based foods and lower amounts of animal sourced protein, dairy foods, refined grains, added sugars, and unhealthy fats, the science-based Planetary Health Diet was created by the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#) to meet nutritional requirements and promote health while also staying within global planetary boundaries. This flexible guideline emphasizes a plant-forward diet optimal for both human health and environment sustainability. Meat and dairy constitute important parts of the diet, but we can choose how much, how often, and what kind of animal protein to consume.



Weekly Challenge!

This week, try one of the following:

- Substitute plant-based protein for animal-based protein 1-3 times
- Meatless Mondays
- Vegetarian by day and small servings of meat (animal proteins in moderation)
- Try not to waste meat

Plant-Based Proteins

Because food items differ significantly in the environmental impact their production generates, individuals have the ability to mitigate climate change through dietary choices (i.e. incorporating more plant-based foods and moderating resource-intensive animal-based foods). Some plant-based protein options include tofu, lentils, quinoa, seeds (chia seeds, sunflower seeds), beans (chickpeas, kidney beans, edamame), and nuts (almonds, pistachios, cashews) and nut butters.



Overfishing

Overfishing—catching fish for food faster than they can reproduce—is an urgent issue and one of the biggest threats to ocean ecosystems. Roughly 1/3 of assessed fish populations are overfished, and over half are fully-fished, resulting in a decline in wild fish populations, a loss in biodiversity, and extinction of some species. To prevent this, **sustainable fishing** methods that respect marine habitats and maintain balanced fish populations are encouraged. For example, by following [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch](#) guide, you can not only make informed decisions on what sustainable seafood to eat, but also push suppliers to source more environmentally responsible products.

Look for these colored labels to indicate the Seafood Watch® rating of each of our wild-caught products:			
Abundant, well managed and caught in environmentally friendly ways.	Some concerns with how caught or with health of habitat due to other human impacts.	Presently caught in ways that harm other marine life or the environment.	Not yet rated.