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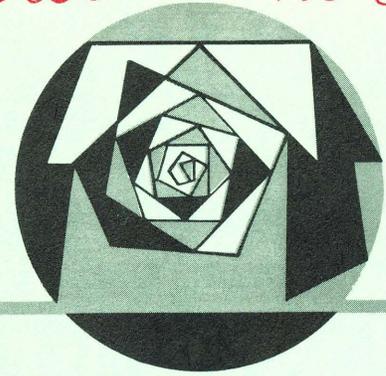
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Meal Patterns - Expanded Nutrition & Family Programs
Michigan State University
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Expanded Nutrition & Family Programs



Meal Patterns (A/V)

THE BIG IDEA (Your Goal)

When I (the aide) have taught this lesson, the homemaker will be able to:

1. **Understand** that a meal pattern that suits the family's schedule and way of life can make meal planning easier and more interesting.
2. **Describe** a meal pattern that will fit her family.
3. **Fill in** the pattern with foods that are different in nutritional value, flavor, color, texture, shape, temperature, and method of preparation.

FACTS BEHIND THE BIG IDEA

Remember the Basic Four!

The **Basic Four Food Groups** show what a person must have for good health. Pick foods from these groups for meals and snacks. Family members will vary in the number of servings they need.

The **MILK GROUP** provides calcium. Serve milk at every meal. Children need it. So do adults.

Main dishes usually come from the **MEAT GROUP**. This group provides protein to build our bodies.

The **FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROUP** supplies vitamins and minerals we need every day.

The **BREAD AND CEREAL GROUP** contains high energy foods, minerals and vitamins.

Desserts? Desserts can fill in gaps in a meal pattern. Pick desserts from one of the **Basic Four Food Groups**. How about custard, pudding, ice cream, or fruits? All are nutritious and good tasting.

USE A MEAL PATTERN

Just like making a dress, you can use a pattern to make a meal. That way you are sure of having all the pieces you need.

A meal pattern, if it allows for a variety of foods, helps assure a good diet—and one that will please a hungry family.

Most people eat three or four times a day. Others eat six or more times a day. The number of meals and the time they are served at your home are probably much the same each day.

On the next page are a day's meals planned according to a pattern. All four food groups are included.

Encourage your homemaker to try the pattern for planning some meals for her family. Ask her how it worked.

Help the homemaker make a pattern that best suits her family's schedule of activities and way of life. Meal patterns may change with seasons and on weekends.

ADD PIZAZZ TO YOUR PATTERN

Your sense of taste, smell, sight, feeling, and even hearing are involved in the enjoyment of food. Fruits, vegetables and salads add many of these contrasts and can satisfy many of these senses. Soft, bland, and pale foods have less appeal than colorful, tasty, and crunchy foods with a tantalizing aroma. But delicious, nutritious meals include both kinds of food.

Change your meals from "Ho-hum" to "Yum!" with foods that vary in:

- **Nutritional value**—For good balance, distribute the high protein and starchy foods among the different meals. Wide variety helps keep each day's meals well balanced.
- **Flavor**—Bring out contrasts by using a strong flavor with a mild one, a sweet with a sour. Avoid using the same food twice in the same meal.
- **Color**—A red slice of tomato, a sprig of dark greens, or any bright-colored food makes a whole meal look and taste better. In season, carrots, squash, oranges, and grapefruit add a spot of brightness at little cost. Cantaloupes and strawberries, in season, also add color at low cost.
- **Texture**—A combination of smooth, crisp, soft, crunchy, and chewy foods gives variety in texture to a meal.
- **Shape**—Add interest to the way food looks

EXPANDED NUTRITION & FAMILY PROGRAMS

SAMPLE MEAL PATTERNS

| Pattern: | Example: |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Morning | |
| Fruit or juice | Orange juice |
| Main dish and/or cereal | Oatmeal with milk |
| Bread | Toast |
| Beverage* | Cocoa |
| Noon | |
| Main dish | Cheese omelet (or scrambled eggs with cheese) |
| Vegetable or fruit | Tossed dark green salad with tomato |
| Bread | Cornmeal muffins |
| Dessert (if you wish) | Cookies |
| Beverage* | Milk |
| Snack: | |
| Anything from four food groups | Fruit |
| Evening | |
| Main dish | Hamburger-noodle casserole |
| Vegetable or fruit | Green beans Carrot-raisin salad |
| Bread | Bread |
| Dessert (if you wish) | Pudding |
| Beverage* | Milk |

*Milk to drink: Children should have milk with each meal; adults should have it once each day.

on a plate by having some served in mounds and others in slices or strips.

- **Temperature**—Even on a hot day, one hot dish served along with cold foods can make a meal seem tastier. Vary the meal with hot, cold, warm, and cool things.

- **Method of Preparation**—Try a couple: broil, boil, fry, roast, toast, steam, or serve raw.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE VISIT

Cut pictures of foods or whole meals out of magazines. You can use these to reinforce what you say about variety. See how many **simple** ways you can find to add pizzazz to a meal. If you can't find pictures, maybe you can find recipes in your EFNEP materials.

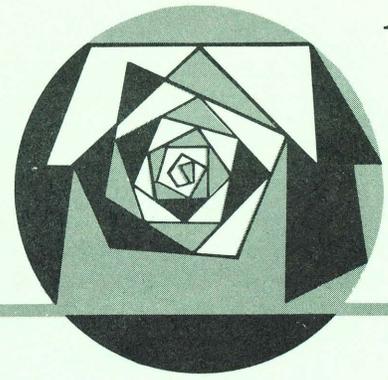
HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE LEARNED?

This isn't easy. The proof comes when the homemaker prepares food. Listen for her to mention now she fits foods into a meal pattern and adds variety to meals.

REFERENCES (Available in Your State)

Expanded Nutrition & Family Programs

1-b



Meal Patterns (A/V)

(Take this sheet on home visits)

THE BIG IDEA

A **meal pattern** that suits a family's needs and way of life can simplify meal planning. Help the homemaker fill in the blanks on the homemaker's handout sheet. A pattern also gives variety to foods required for a nutritious diet.

HOW TO PRESENT THE BIG IDEA

Chat with the homemaker about advantages (and disadvantages) of planning meals at least a day at a time.

Write down a meal pattern for lunch or supper. The homemaker's handout sheet has a lunch pattern. Is this the way she plans now? How do the Basic Four Food Groups fit in? What could she plan for a meal tomorrow using this pattern?

Spread out the recipes or pictures and **point out** how they combine foods of different textures, colors, and flavor to add variety to a meal.

List at least six ways to serve a common food—carrots, for example. Does she use the spices and herbs she has?

Ask if she would like to see what new way the two of you could prepare a food she is planning to serve. Even a can of soup or slice of bread can take on a new flavor, shape, or texture with a little "hocus-pocus".

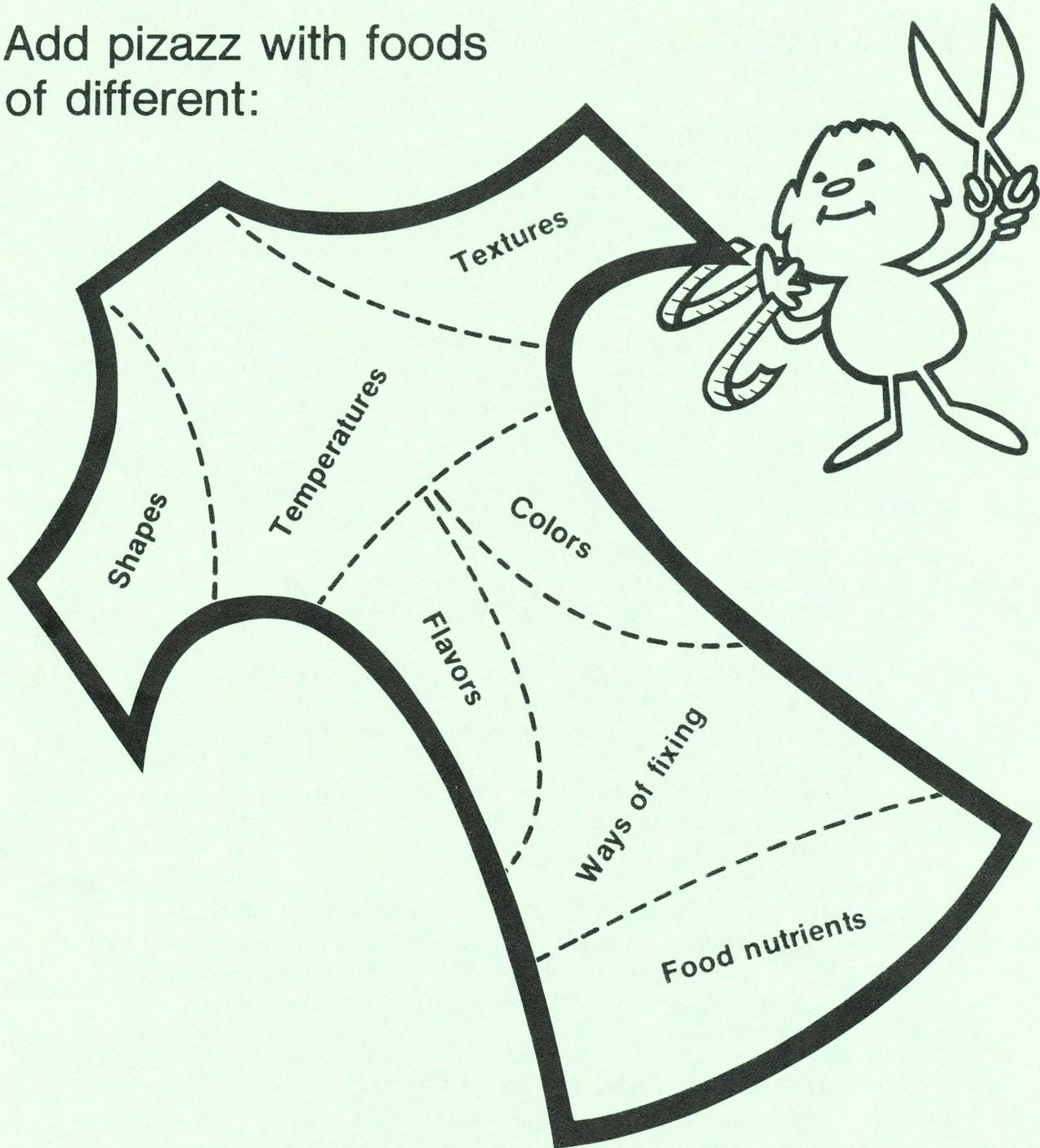
HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE LEARNED?

How does the homemaker think her family will react if she adds variety to meals? **Suggest** that she try to add variety in color, texture, shape, temperature, or preparation method. Ask her to keep track of her family's comments.

EXPANDED NUTRITION & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Fit a meal pattern
to your family.

Add pizzazz with foods
of different:



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