

Go 4 “Green Light” Eating

Pillar: Healthy Eating and Active Living

Division: II

Grade Level: 3-6

Core Curriculum Connections: Language Arts

I. Rationale:

This lesson includes a game based on the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY) and has been developed to help young children understand how to make healthy food choices. Students will participate in a food sorting relay race called, Go for “Green Light” Eating where they will categorize foods into three different categories based on their nutritional value: “choose most often”(green light foods), “choose sometimes” (yellow light foods), and “choose least often”(red light foods). This is a fun and active way to engage students in learning about nutrition and empower them to make healthy choices. Curriculum outcomes in Language Arts and Math are infused into this lesson to reinforce and expand upon this learning.

II. Healthy Eating Pillar Focus:

Students will be able to:

- identify foods that they should choose 'most often', 'sometimes', and 'least often'.
- explain the reasons ‘why’ they should choose green light foods most often, yellow light foods only sometimes, and red light foods least often.

III. Curriculum Outcomes: Language Arts and Math

L.A.	Math
<p>1.2 Clarify and Extend Combine ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group ideas and information into categories determined by an adult 	<p>Patterns and Relations General Outcome Use patterns to describe the world and to solve problems. Specific Outcomes: 3. Sort objects, using one attribute, and explain the sorting rule. [C, CN, R, V]</p>

IV. Materials:

- Eating Healthy Journal templates (attached)
- Large sticky note pad
- 3 large buckets or baskets (1 red, 1 yellow, and 1 green)
- Large reusable grocery bags or tubs (one per group)
- Picture food cards– (included or a large selection of imitation/toy food)
- Stoplight (enlarge for lesson)
- Teacher Background - [Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)- An Overview

- [Single Serving Packaged Food List](#)
- Eating Well with [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- Allergies (<http://www.allergysafecommunities.ca/pages/default.asp>)

V. Procedure:

TEACHER BACKGROUND: Read and review the "Alberta Nutrition Guidelines – An Overview", Allergy information and the "Single Serving Packaged Foods List" prior to teaching this lesson.

I. Activating Strategies:

Draw a large T-Chart on the board and write the heading "Everyday Foods" and " Sometimes Foods". Provide each student with a large sticky note and ask each of them to draw a picture of their favourite food. Then, have each student bring up their picture and stick in onto the T-chart under the appropriate heading.

II. Acquiring Strategies:

Part I:

1. To get the students thinking about the difference between foods that are nutritious and foods that are less nutritious, tally their responses to some statements. Remind them that they may only answer either "true" or "false". Have students show a thumbs up if the following statements are true and thumbs down if they are false (all parts of the statement must be correct in order for the statement to be true). Discuss the answers and the reasons why each statement is either true or false.

- Pizza, ice cream and green beans are all healthy everyday foods? (false)
- Healthy foods give you energy and help you grow? (true)
- All foods are healthy? (false)

2. Reinforce that nutritious foods help us learn, play, grow, and stay healthy. Less nutritious foods may feed us, but they don't build healthy bodies.

3. Put an enlarged stoplight on the board and tell the students that they are going to learn about how to make healthy food choices. Review what each color of the light means to a driver. Green means "go", yellow means caution or to "slow down", and red means to "stop". Explain that everything that we eat can be sorted into one of these three categories: Green light foods are foods that are a "go" to eat. We can eat these foods every day. Yellow light foods are "slow down" foods. When eating these foods, we need to limit the amount we eat. Red light foods are "stop" foods. These are foods that we should avoid most of the time and only eat a maximum of once per week. (Explain that there can be some exceptions such as birthdays, holidays, traditions etc.)

4. Use the "Food Rating System" section on the overview of the ANGCY provided at end of this lesson to guide your descriptions of each category. This information could be enlarged and posted beside the stoplight for reference purposes.

5. Green light foods are high in vitamins and other nutrients. They help to build healthy bodies and should be eaten daily. These foods give you energy, and help you grow and "go". Show Canada's Food Guide and identify all the "green light" foods in each food group (most foods on the food guide should be green,

exceptions may be flavoured yogurts, sugar cereals etc.). Also, share some examples of green light snack foods from the "Single Serving Packaged Food List".

6. Have the students draw and label many of their favourite green light foods on the "Green Light" journal page to illustrate that we should eat these foods every day.
7. Ask students to help you identify and move all the "green light" food pictures that they placed in the T-chart over beside the green light on the traffic light.

Part 2:

1. Now, talk about "yellow light" foods. These are foods that provide beneficial nutrients, but they tend to be higher in added sugar, salt, and unhealthy fat. Go through Canada's Food Guide again and talk about yellow light foods. Have the students name foods that they see in each food group that would be considered yellow light foods (These would be the high fat and sugar versions of the foods found on the food guide). Some types of granola bars, canned fruit, etc. would be "yellow light" foods because they contain added sugar, fat, or salt that your body does not need.
2. Have the students draw and label three or fewer foods that belong on the "yellow light" journal page to reinforce that should only be eaten three times a week or less, and not daily.
3. Now, have student volunteers help you transfer all the "yellow light" pictures from the T-Chart to the area beside the yellow light on the traffic light.

Part 3:

1. Discuss foods that do not fit within the four food groups on Canada's Food Guide and why these foods do not help your body. Explain why these foods are "red light" foods. You should "stop" before eating them and choose them 'least often'. Eating these foods are **not recommended**. One serving could be eaten once a week. Some examples of red light foods are donuts, fries, chips, candy, pop, and marshmallows. They contain a very high amount of sugar, salt, or fat and have little or no nutritional value.
2. Discuss food allergies. If a child is allergic to certain foods, then that food should also be avoided.
3. Have the students draw and label only one "red light food" on their journal page to reflect how often they can be eaten.
4. For the last time, have students help you move all the "red light" foods they have drawn over to the red light. Discuss the category that each student's favourite foods is in and talk about how often they should be eating that food.

Game: Go For “Green Light” Eating



Choose Most Often
High nutrient foods



Choose Sometimes
Moderate nutrient foods



Choose Least Often
Low nutrient foods

Part 4

(Before you begin this activity, place equal amounts of picture food cards or imitation food in separate tub or grocery bags - one per group)

1. Enlarge and post the large traffic light on the board as a visual reminder of the categories.
2. Review the meaning of each light's color and how it relates to the foods we eat.
3. Tell the students they are going to play a food sort game called, Go for “Green Light” Eating to practice what they have just learned about green light, yellow light, and red light foods.
4. Divide students into 3-4 different groups and have them line up in rows.
5. Give each group a tub or grocery bag containing imitation food items or a set of food cards with a variety of foods from the "choose most often", "choose sometimes", and "choose least often" categories (red, yellow, and green light foods). Dump the cards or food items into a pile on the opposite end of the room.
6. Place baskets or buckets (red, green, and yellow) in front of the rows of students. Explain to the students that this will be where they sort/place their food cards upon returning with their food items from the pile.
7. On the signal, “Go”, the first student in each row will run to their pile of food items/cards, select one item to bring one back, and then place it in the appropriate bucket or basket (red, yellow, green). Once the card/item has been sorted, the next student may go.
8. Once each group has retrieved all of their food items/cards from their pile, they sit down.
9. When all rows are finished, review the foods in each bucket to ensure they are sorted correctly.

Part 5

1. Pass out students' journals and envelopes containing picture food cards.
2. Remind students of the sorting activity from the previous day.
3. Tell the students that this time they are going to do their own sorting activity and make up their own sorting rule.
4. Model a few examples of rules that could be used to sort the foods using one attribute:
 - foods that are everyday foods that are sometimes foods
 - foods that are grown in the ground and foods that do not
 - foods that are fruits and vegetables and foods that are not

Have students come up with their own sorting rule, groups the foods accordingly, and then present back to the rest of the class.

VI. Extensions and Variations:

- Have students create a meal by cutting out pictures of food from magazines and gluing them onto a paper plate using only "green light" foods.
- Have students practice sorting with a large Venn Diagram: "red light" foods in one outside portion of the circle, "green light" in the other outside portion of the circle, and "yellow light" foods where the circles intersect.
- Have student journal what they eat for three days and then color code the foods according to the three categories.
- Have students create an alphabet book using "green light" foods.

Family Connections

- Plan a dinner for the family using "green light" foods. Help cook the dinner if appropriate.
- Buy an unfamiliar "green light" food for your student to try.
- Share Healthy Eating Journal with family.

VII. Assessment Ideas:

- For assessment, check the student journals to see if they are drawing correct foods for each category.
- Observe if students can sort foods into the correct categories using Venn diagrams.
- Have students sort the cards and explain their sorting rule.
- Have students "think-pair-share" three foods in each category.
- Using a "graffiti wall strategy" and have the students draw a food that fits each classification.

Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth – An Overview

The *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth* are designed to help assist Albertans to create an environment which provides healthy food choices and promotes healthy eating habits. These guidelines can be used wherever food is offered to children and youth in childcare facilities, schools and recreation/community centres.

The Food Rating System

The food rating system is a simple way to separate healthy foods from the less healthy foods. This rating system puts all foods into three categories, based on specific nutritional criteria. The three categories include Choose Most Often, Choose Sometimes and Choose Least Often.



Choose Most Often

High nutrient foods

These foods should be **consumed daily** and in amounts and appropriate portion sizes, based on age category. These foods are all recommended as healthy choices in *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.



Choose Sometimes

Moderate nutrient foods

No more than three servings from the Choose Sometimes category are recommended per week. While foods in the Choose Sometimes category may still provide beneficial nutrients, they tend to be higher in added sugar, unhealthy fat and sodium (salt).



Choose Least Often

Low nutrient foods

Eating these foods is **not recommended**. One serving could be eaten once a week.



The information in this handout is taken from the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (2008).

Tips for Implementing the Guidelines:

- Children and youth, parents, and staff must understand the food rating categories to be able to select healthy foods.
- For younger children, the rating categories can be simplified to familiar symbols such as "Go", "Yield" and "Stop".
- Adults are important role models for children and youth. Be consistent with the healthy eating messages in your facility and at home.
- Use only non-food items for rewarding children.
- Involve children and youth in taste testing and new food/menu item selection.

Using the Food Rating System

The following charts will help you find out which category foods belong to.

The food nutrient criteria is based on **one Canada's Food Guide serving**, so be sure to read the Nutrition Facts Label on prepackaged foods and note the serving size, as it may be different than that in the Food Guide.

A food must meet **all** criteria in the chart to fit into a specific category. For example:

- Low-fat milk (skim, 1%, 2%) and fortified soy beverage meet the nutrient criteria per serving for total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, fibre, and sodium. This is why they are classified as *Choose Most Often*.

If chocolate syrup is added for flavour, the fat(s) and sugar content is now higher. This is why chocolate milk belongs in the *Choose Sometimes* category.

When preparing meals or snacks, aim to use foods from Canada's Food Guide, and add only a little or no fat/sugar/salt. This may help fit your dish in the *Choose Most Often* category.

Vegetables and Fruit:

Canada's Food Guide recommends that vegetables and fruit be consumed more often than juice. The *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth* recommend that 100% fruit juice be limited to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.

Per Serving:	Total Fat	Fat	Protein	Sugar	Fibre	Sodium	Examples
Choose Most Often All fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit (low sodium and no added sugar) (1 medium or 1/2 cup/ 125 mL) 100 % pure juice(1/2 cup/ 125 mL)	≤ 5 g	Saturated ≤ 3 g Trans 0 g	All naturally occurring	All naturally occurring (no added sugar)	≥ 2 g	≤ 200 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canned fruit (in juice) ▪ Dried fruit or 100% dried fruit leather ▪ Raw vegetable sticks
Choose Sometimes Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit, with added sodium or sugar (1 medium or 1/2 cup/ 125 mL) Some potato/ vegetable chips very lightly salted or unsalted and baked	≤ 10 g	Saturated ≤ 6 g Trans 0 g	No specified amount	≤16 g 20 g juice beverages	≥ 2 g	≤ 400 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canned fruit (in light syrup) ▪ Dried fruit with added sugar ▪ Fruit/ apple chips ▪ Vegetable/ potato chips, very lightly salted and baked ▪ Lower sodium salsa

Grain Products:

Grain Products should contain whole grains, and be lower in fat, sugar and salt. Serving sizes should be consistent with Canada's Food Guide.

Per Serving:	Total Fat	Fat	Protein	Sugar	Fibre	Sodium	Examples
Choose Most Often Whole grain bread (1 slice), crackers (3-4), pasta (1/2 cup/ 125 mL) Whole grain naan, pita or wrap (1/2 of a 7" 17 cm diameter) Cereal without added sugar (3/4 cup/ 175 mL to 1 cup/ 250 mL or 30 g) Small portion, lower fat baked items (35 – 55 g) e.g. muffins	≤ 5 g	Saturated ≤ 3 g Trans 0 g	≥ 1 g	≤12 g	≥ 2 g	≤ 200 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low fat and low sodium crackers ▪ Whole grain cereal ▪ Low fat small whole grain cookies ▪ Whole grain bran and granola bars ▪ Small, low fat muffin
Choose Sometimes White enriched breads (1 slice), crackers (3-4), pasta (1/2 cup/ 125 mL) Naan, pita or wrap (1/2 of a 7" 17 cm diameter) Cereal with added sugar (3/4/ 175 mL to 1 cup/ 250 mL or 30 g) Small portion, low fat baked items (35- 55g) e.g. muffins Low fat, lightly salted, corn or grain snacks	≤ 10 g	Saturated < 6 g Trans 0 g	≥ 2 g	≤16 g	≥ 2 g	≤ 400 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low fat crackers ▪ Low fat small cookies ▪ Granola or energy bars that meet criteria ▪ Lower fat small portion tortilla chips, cereal mix, or pretzels ▪ Baked pita chips

The food nutrient criteria is based on one Canada's Food Guide Serving unless otherwise noted.

< means "less than" ≤ means "less than or equal to"

Milk and Alternatives:

Select Milk and Alternatives that are lower in fat and added sugar. Provide children under the age of two homogenized (whole) milk only.

Per Serving:	Total Fat	Fat	Protein	Sugar	Fibre	Sodium	Examples
Choose Most Often Low fat milk (skim, 1%, 2%) or unflavored fortified soy beverage (1 cup/ 250 mL) Low fat hard cheese and cheese strings (50 g) Plain yogurt and kefir (3/4 cup/ 175 mL)	< 5 g/ 1 cup milk ≤ 20% MF cheese ≤ 2% MF yogurt	Saturated ≤ 3 g Trans 0.5 g	≥ 8 g	12 g naturally occurring ≤ 9 g added to fortified soy beverage	n/a	≤ 200 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skim, 1% and 2% milk Unflavored fortified soy beverage Cheese strings Plain yogurt
Choose Sometimes Homogenized milk (1 cup/ 250 mL) Flavoured low fat milk or fortified soy beverage (1 cup/ 250 mL) Hard cheese (50 g) Sweetened yogurt and flavoured yogurt drinks (3/4 cup/ 175 mL)	< 10 g/ 1 cup milk > 20% MF cheese > 2% MF yogurt	Saturated ≤ 5 g milk ≤ 10 g cheese ≤ 3 g yogurt Trans 0.5 g	≤ 20 g	26 g (12 g naturally occurring + 14 g added) 26 g added to fortified soy beverage	n/a	≤ 400 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flavored lower fat milk or soy beverage Hard cheese Cottage cheese Fruit flavoured yogurt

Meat and Alternatives:

Select Meat and Alternatives that are lower in fat and sodium. Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils, and tofu often.

Per Serving:	Total Fat	Fat	Protein	Sugar	Fibre	Sodium	Examples
Choose Most Often All lean meats (no added salt) (2.5 oz/ 75 g or 1/2 cup) Tofu/ soy protein (3/4 cup/ 175 mL) Legumes/ lentils (3/4 cup/ 175 mL) Unsalted nuts & seeds (1/4 cup/ 60 mL) *(high allergy/ choking risk)	≤ 9 g except nuts and seeds	Saturated ≤ 3 g Trans 0.5 g	21 g meat, poultry and fish ≥ 7 g lentils and beans	1 g lentils, beans 7.5 g baked beans	2 g lentil, beans	≤ 200 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked, broiled, boiled, poached or roasted lean meats, poultry and fish Canned light tuna Lean luncheon meats Nuts or peanuts, unsalted
Choose Sometimes Luncheon meat (2.5 oz/ 75 g) Salted beans and legumes (3/4 cup/175 mL) Salted nuts & seeds (1/4 cup/ 60 mL) *(high allergy/choking risk)	≤ 10 g except nuts and seeds	Saturated ≤ 6 g Trans 0.5 g	21 g meat, poultry and fish ≥ 7 g lentils and beans	16 g added	Occurs naturally in lentils and beans	≤ 400 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwich luncheon meat Nuts or peanuts Trail mix Stews or soups (reduced in sodium) Lower fat hot dog (e.g. turkey dog)

The food nutrient criteria is based on one Canada's Food Guide Serving unless otherwise noted.

Mixed Dishes:

Mixed dishes should be combined with foods from the other food groups so that there is a source of protein (Meat and Alternatives or Milk and Alternatives), a source of whole grains and a vegetable or fruit.

Per Serving:	Total Fat	Fat	Protein	Sugar	Fibre	Sodium	Examples
Choose Most Often Soups (1 cup/ 250 mL) Stews, chili, dahl, casseroles (1 cup/ 250 mL) Packaged meals (300 to 400 g per package) A serving should contain at least one serving from three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide.	≤ 9 g except nuts and seeds	Saturated ≤ 3 g Trans 0.5 g	21 g meat, poultry, fish ≥ 7 g beans, lentils	Added sugars not in the first three ingredients	≥ 2 g	≤ 700 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low sodium soups, stews, dahl ▪ Baked casseroles ▪ Chili ▪ Macaroni and cheese containing meat, poultry, fish or legumes ▪ Meat, poultry, fish, or tofu stir fries
Choose Sometimes Soups (1 cup/ 250 mL) Stews, chili, dahl, casseroles (1 cup/ 250 mL) Packaged meals (300 to 400 g per package) A serving may contain one serving from one of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide.	≤ 15 g	Saturated 6 g Trans 0.5 g	21 g meat, poultry, fish ≥ 7 g beans, lentils	12 g added	2 g preferred	≤ 1000 mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soups, stews, dahl ▪ Baked casseroles ▪ Chili ▪ Macaroni and cheese containing meat, poultry, fish or legumes ▪ Meat, poultry, fish, or tofu stir fries

The mixed dishes are not based on one Canada's Food Guide Serving, but are based on the serving of food as identified by the manufacturer.

Choose Least Often

Foods from this category are very low in nutrients and higher in calories, fat, sugar, and salt. For this reason, these foods do not meet the nutrition criteria of the *Choose Most Often* or *Choose Sometimes* categories. These foods should be limited to small portions and offered no more than once a week. The following examples are based on 100 calories per serving.

Example	Serving Size
Chips and crackers	30 g, 1 cup/ 250 mL
Sugary cereal ≥ 16 g	30 g, 1 cup/ 250 mL
Cookies and granola bars, ≥ 16 g sugar ≥ 10 g fat	30 g or greater Cookie (2) Granola bar (1)
Chocolate bars or candy	20 g (1 mini)
Bakery items including, but not limited to pastries, muffins and doughnuts	55 + grams
Frozen desserts, including, but not limited to ice cream, in a dish or frozen on a stick	85 g or ½ cup serving
Pop or fruit flavoured drinks	8 oz/ 237 mL

Additional Resources

For more nutrition information that complements the *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth*, refer to the nutrition resources list below.

From Alberta Health and Wellness:

- *Feeding Baby Solid Foods: From 6 to 12 months of age*
- *A Guide for Food Serving Sizes for Babies 6 to 12 months of age*
- *Healthy Eating Active Living For your 1 to 5 year old*
- *Food Guide Serving Sizes for 1-5 years*
- *Healthy Eating Active Living For your 6 to 12 year old*
- *Healthy Eating Active Living For Ages 13 to 18 years*
- *Food Guide Serving Sizes for 6-12 Years*
- *Food Guide Serving Sizes for 13 to 18 Years*

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/public/growing.html>

From Capital Health:

- *Healthy Drinks, Healthy Kids*
- *Healthy Kids, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Weights for Ages 2+*
- *Label Reading the Healthy Way*
- *Quick and Easy Meals*
- *Healthy Rewards for Children*
- *Healthy Food Choices for Schools*
- *Developing Healthy Eating Guidelines for Schools*

<http://www.capitalhealth.ca/EspeciallyFor/SchoolsandPreschools/default.htm>



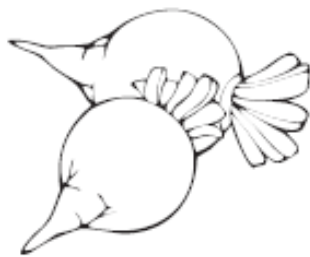
My Eating Healthy Journal

Name _____

Picture Food Cards — Teacher



eggs



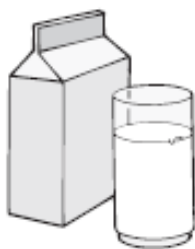
beets



strawberries



peanuts



soy milk or milk



bananas



tomatoes



pie



oranges



soda

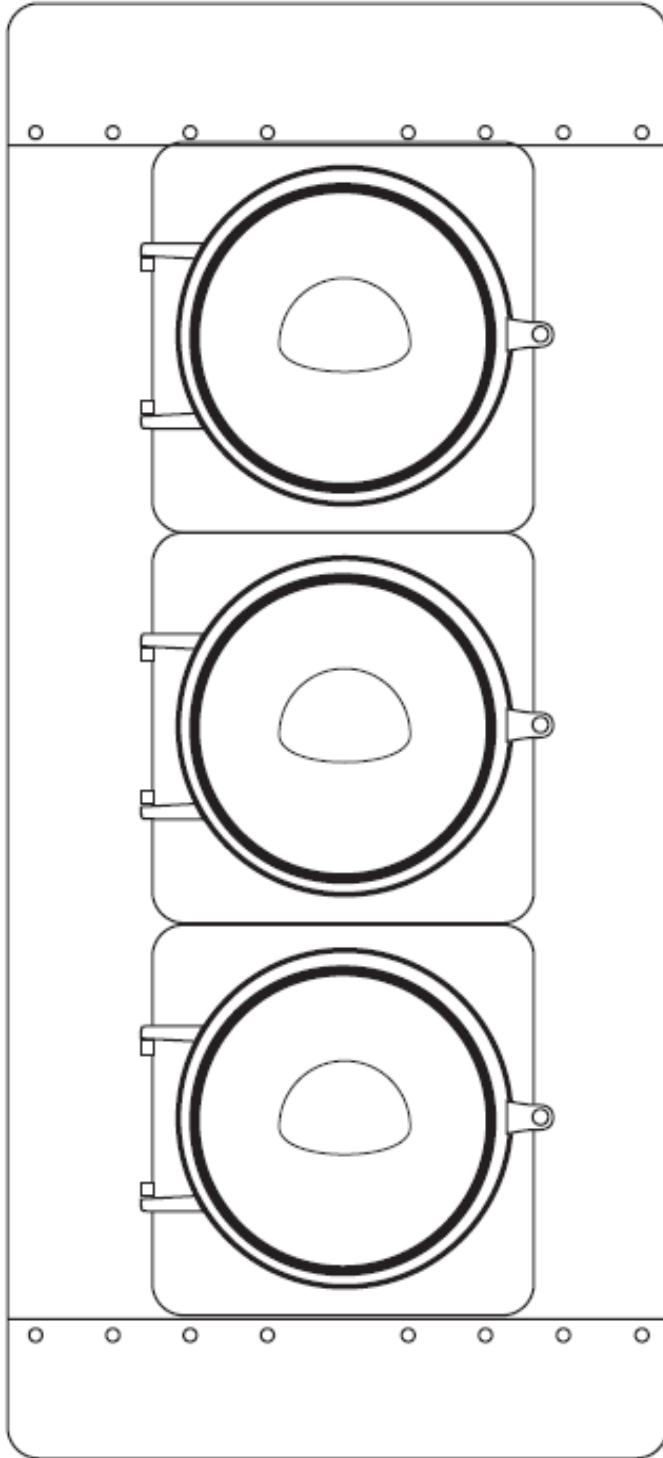


cheese & chips



birthday cake

Stop Light





Choose Most Often
High nutrient foods

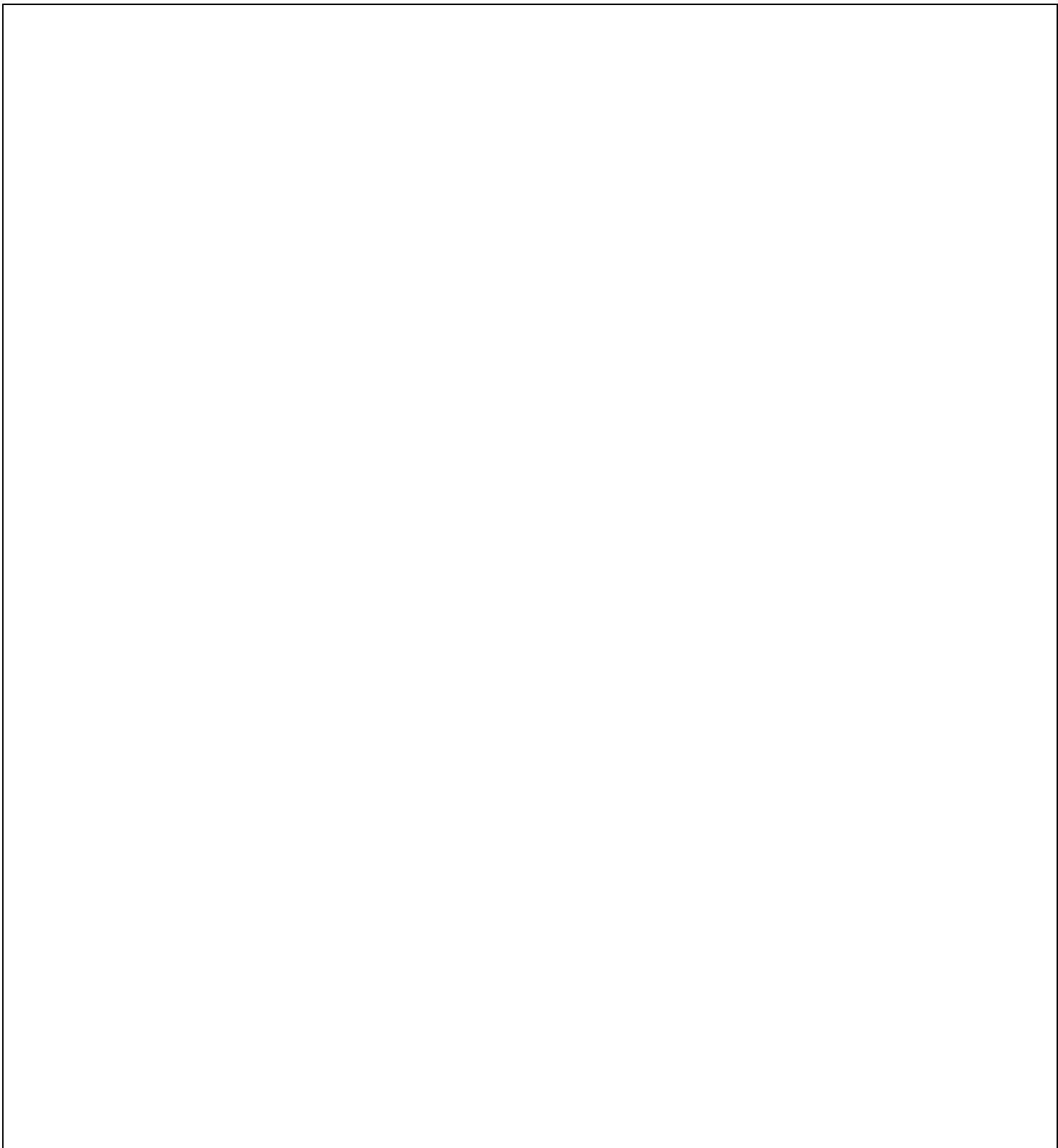
Green Light Foods

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for listing or describing green light foods.



Choose Sometimes
Moderate nutrient foods

Yellow Light Foods



Choose Least Often
Low nutrient foods

Red Light Foods

