

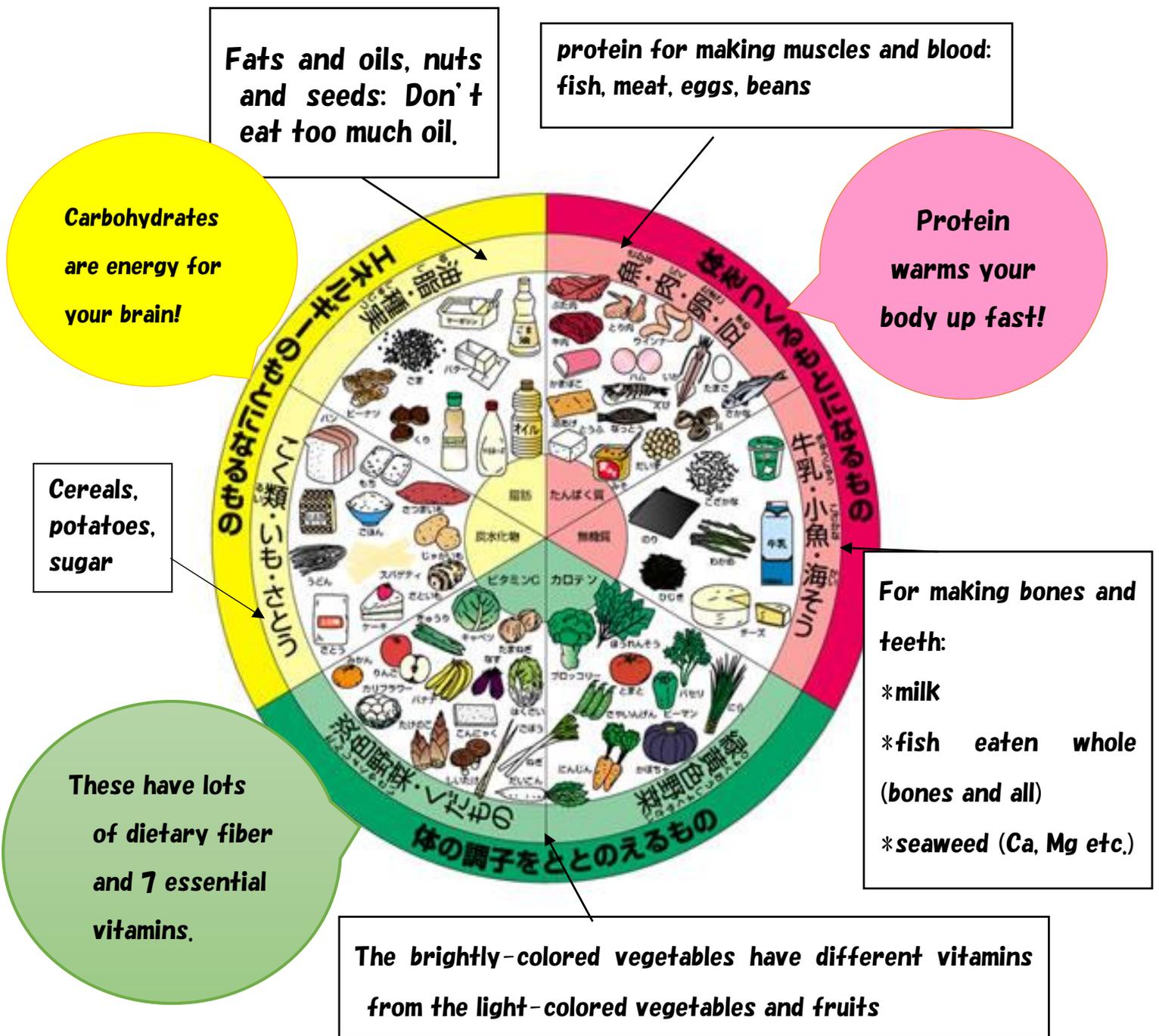
Let's learn about elementary school lunch in Japan!

A child enrolled in public elementary school in Kawasaki City spends most of their day at school. There's time for study, time for recreation, and time for school lunch.

Do you know how the lunches the children eat are put together?

A certified nutritionist takes into account nutritional balance, calories, preparation methods, seasonal ingredients and so forth and creates a well-balanced menu.

So, what exactly is a nutritionally-balanced meal?



from Three Colors Basic Food Groups



Try to eat something from each of the 3 colored groups at every meal! If you do, you'll be able to eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

(Example)



Why is it important to eat a balanced diet?

If you compare the bodies of 1st-year students to those of 6th-year students, you'll understand. The cute little 1st-year student grows into a big, strong 6th-year pupil. A balanced diet is important for this growth.

In the school lunch we try to provide roughly 1/3 of the nutrients the child will need for the day. Let's all try to make sure our children are getting a balanced diet at home as well.

The Purpose Of School Lunch

The school lunch program has other aims in addition to providing nutritionally balanced meals. We hope to teach:

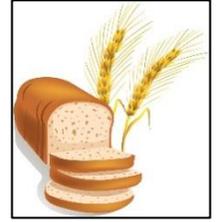
- **how to cooperate together to eat together**
- **about natural ingredients in food, to value them and eat without wasting them**
- **about all the people (school employees and others) who work to make school lunch possible, and to be thankful for their efforts**
- **about the food culture of the area where the children live**
- **about social structures**



What's In The School Lunch:

Bread

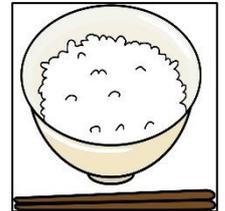
The main ingredients of the bread in school lunches are wheat flour, salt, shortening, and non-fat dry milk. Non-fat dry milk is used to provide extra calcium that growing children need.



Kinds of bread include large rolls, ordinary bread, brown bread, raisin bread, small rolls, sandwich bread, pumpkin bread, chocolate bread, etc.

Rice

Rice is served 2 or more times a week. Two or three times a month we have *mugi-gohan*, rice with barley mixed in. Sometimes they get sprouted brown rice. The rice is grown in Kanagawa Prefecture: newly-harvested rice comes in November.



Milk

The milk served at the school lunch is exactly the same as that sold in stores. It's packed at designated facilities and kept refrigerated at 10° C (50° F) or below at all times until it reaches the students. Milk contains lots of high-quality protein, calcium and vitamins that growing children need.



Side dishes

We try to serve a wide variety of things so the children will learn the names of many dishes and become able to enjoy many kinds of food. Foods that are fried, grilled, stir-fried, simmered, etc. from Japanese, Chinese and Western cuisines show up in school lunch. We also try to use seasonal ingredients as much as we can, and create many different and enjoyable lunches.





Special Events

Every year school lunches are planned to coincide with various events and celebrations on the school calendar. We try to use seasonal ingredients in these.



<p>April: celebrating new students and advancing to the next year</p> <p>May: Children's Day</p> <p>June: Dental and Oral Health Week</p> <p>July: <i>Tanabata</i></p> <p>September or October: moon-viewing</p>	<p>December, January, February: "Made in Kanagawa" School Lunch Day</p> <p>January: School Lunch Week</p> <p>March: the Dolls' Festival</p> <p>For <i>Setsubun</i> the lunch comes with roasted soybeans.</p>
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Schools' Own Lunch

One day every month each school gets to decide their own school lunch menu for the day, independently of the other schools. Meals are planned to suit the tastes of the school's own students.



Until today' s lunch is ready:

QUIZ

1. Do the people who make the school lunch wash their hands only before and after doing their work?

YES NO

2. Is food temperature monitored as the school lunches are made?

YES NO

3. Do all students, from 1st-years to 6th-years, get the same amount of food?

YES NO

4. Have you heard of *Kenshoku*?

YES NO

5. Do the children themselves serve out the school lunches?

YES NO

6. Are the white uniforms the children wear when serving the school lunch washed at the school?

YES NO

7. Do the parents/ guardians have to pay for school lunch?

YES NO



Answers:

1. NO

Hand-washing is extremely important for kitchen work. To prevent food poisoning due to bacteria or viruses the food workers have to wash their hands many times as they make the food. They also wash the ingredients.

2. YES

Just about all the food offered in school lunch is heated or cooked first. Thermometers are used to ensure that the food is cooked through to the center to at least 75° C (167° F) for at least 1 minute. Foods which are considered a risk for norovirus are cooked through to at least 85° C (185° F) for at least one minute, this also being confirmed by thermometer.

We are extremely thorough when it comes to food hygiene. (To prevent food poisoning we practice very strict hygiene maintenance.)

3. NO

The different years' students get different amounts of food. Elementary school students are divided into 3 groups, and each group gets its proper amount of food. The groups are:

1st- and 2nd-year students (lower school)

3rd- and 4th-year students (intermediate school)

5th- and 6th-year students (upper school)

4. *Kenshoku* is the practice of having a responsible person in each school eat of the food that is to be served to the students 30 minutes before lunchtime to confirm that it is safe. Then, samples of the food prepared for that day are frozen and stored away. These samples can be analyzed later if food poisoning occurs.

5. YES

The children take turns serving the school lunch. They have 45 minutes for school lunch. (total time, from serving it out to cleaning up afterwards.)

6. NO

Children whose turn it is to serve lunch borrow the white uniforms from the school. On Friday those children take the uniforms home, and wash and iron them. If you find the uniform is missing a button or string or the like, please repair it. Then on Monday the children bring the uniforms back to school.

7. YES

There is a charge to the parents for school lunch, but the money covers only the cost of ingredients. The costs of equipment, personnel, gas and electricity, etc. are borne by the City of Kawasaki. The money that is not spent on days when an event, school trip or the like prevents school lunch from happening, is used on days when the school makes its own special school lunch menu.

Today' s Menu:

Barley rice, milk, chicken curry, Chinese-style pickles of cucumber and *daikon* radish.