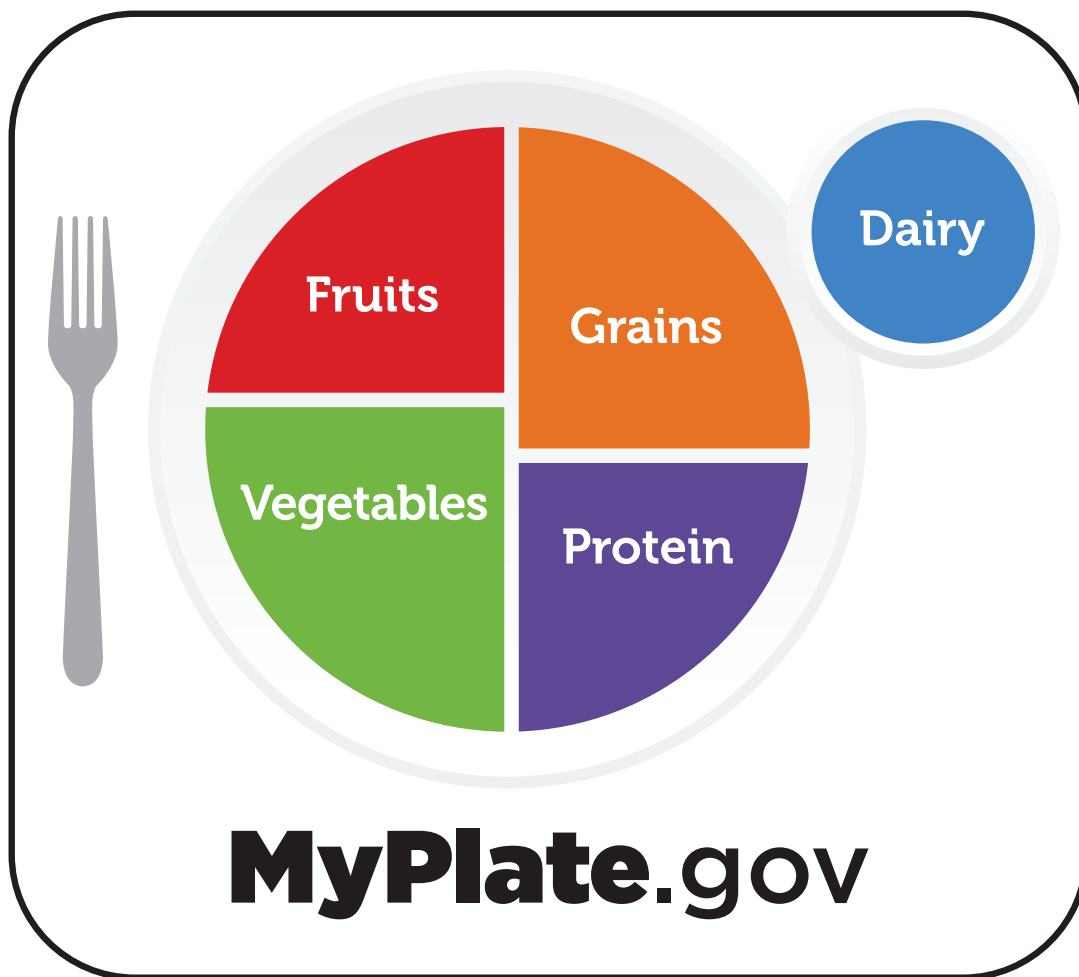


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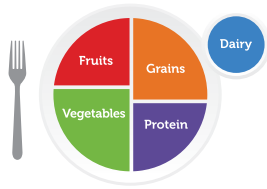
Foods on MyPlate Explained MyPlate.gov



collated by Dr Marlene MD
DrMarleneMD.com



Start *simple*
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Focus on Whole Fruits

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what fruits to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Include fruit at breakfast

Top cereal with your favorite seasonal or frozen fruit, add bananas or chopped apples to pancakes, or mix raisins into hot oatmeal.



Take fruit on the go

Fruits like oranges, bananas, and apples are great portable snacks. You can also bring along a can of mandarin oranges or pineapple chunks packed in water.



Make your own trail mix

Combine one or two favorite breakfast cereals with dried cranberries and raisins. Bring for a snack in a small sealable bag or container.



Enjoy fruit as a snack

Make fruit kabobs using melon chunks, bananas, and grapes. Top with a light yogurt sauce for a fruity snack or side dish.



Add fruit at dinner

Chop up a combination of tropical or seasonal fruits to make a fruit salsa to top fish or chicken, or add fruit like grapefruit sections, apple wedges, or grapes to a tossed salad.



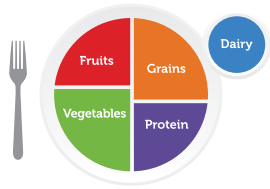
Keep fruit on hand

Cut up fruit and place in a bowl in the refrigerator. Put the bowl at the front of the shelf so that it's the first thing you see when you open the door.





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Vary Your Vegetables

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what vegetables to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Start your day with vegetables

Add leftover cooked vegetables to your omelet or breakfast wrap. Or, add spinach to a morning smoothie and enjoy a burst of flavor and nutrition!



Add variety to salads

Make your salad pop with color and flavor by including corn kernels, radish slices, or diced red onions. Include seasonal vegetables for variety throughout the year.



Try a stir-fry

Stir-fry vegetables like carrots, shredded cabbage, greens, and low-sodium jarred mushrooms for a quick meal. Add some tofu as a protein source.



Spruce up your sandwich

Add spinach or some thinly sliced sweet onions to your favorite sandwich or wrap for extra flavor and a little crunch.



Go for a dip or a dunk

Enjoy baked potato wedges, cucumber slices, or cauliflower pieces with a homemade Italian dressing or dunked into a low-fat dip or hummus.

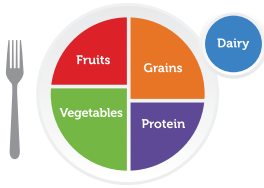


Take vegetables on the go

Carry along some crunchy carrot, celery, or jicama sticks. A small container of cherry tomatoes or sugar snap peas also makes an easy snack.



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Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what grains to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Have whole grains at breakfast

Enjoy a whole-grain hot cereal. Oatmeal is a favorite but consider trying a grain that's new to you, like buckwheat or millet. You might find a new breakfast favorite.



Enjoy a multigrain bowl

Create a one-dish meal by layering a mixture of grains like barley or wild rice with some colorful veggies and some low-fat cheese. Add your favorite protein and a dash of hot pepper sauce.



Swap your sandwich bread

Look for sandwich-type breads made with whole grains. Pita, tortillas, naan, sliced breads, and rolls are all available as whole grains.



Choose whole-grain takeout

Ask about whole-grain options when dining out or ordering take-out food. For example, make a switch to whole-wheat pasta or brown or wild rice.



Experiment with a new grain

Cook a new grain like quinoa, amaranth, or millet. You can find cooking tips and recipes online. Grains are pretty versatile and also have lots of important nutrients.

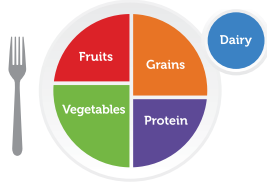


Switch up pizza night

Create individual, homemade pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins or tortillas. Or, make a traditional pizza using a premade whole-wheat flour. Don't forget the veggie toppings.



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Vary Your Protein Routine

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what protein foods to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Include protein in your snack

Try peanut or nut butter as a dip for apple or celery slices, or as a spread on whole-grain crackers. A hard-cooked (hard-boiled) egg with a dash of pepper also makes a good protein snack.



Keep seafood on hand

Canned seafood, such as salmon, tuna, or crab, is quick to prepare and enjoy. Canned items also store well.



Add protein to your salad

Grilled chicken or shrimp adds tasty protein to a salad of mixed greens. Chickpeas or black beans are delicious, budget-friendly options, too.



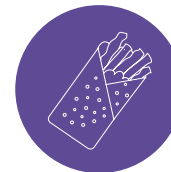
Take protein on the go

Pack a mixture of unsalted nuts and sunflower seeds for a crunchy snack. Add some dried fruit like raisins, cranberries, or chopped dates for a touch of sweetness.



Get creative with beans, peas, and lentils

Make chili or stews with kidney or pinto beans, have a bowl of split pea soup for lunch or dinner, or enjoy lentils as a side dish. Check online for recipe ideas.

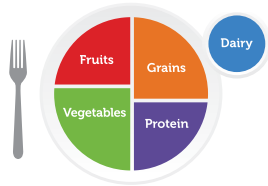


Serve up lean beef

Broil lean beef cuts like sirloin, top round, or flank steak. Sliced into strips, they're great over greens, in a sandwich, or as is.



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Move to Low-Fat or Fat-Free Dairy

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what dairy or fortified soy items to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Include dairy in the morning

Enjoy a bowl of unsweetened cereal with low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or soy beverage. Or, top plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt with a serving of fruit and nuts to include two more food groups.



Look for calcium sources

If you don't consume milk, look for calcium-fortified foods—some breads and orange juices, and soy products like tofu and soy yogurt. Some leafy green vegetables, like kale and collard greens, are also good sources of calcium.



Fit dairy into meals

Prepare oatmeal and canned condensed soups with low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or fortified soy beverage instead of water. Adding milk or soy beverage to smoothies, quiche, and mashed potatoes is another good idea.



Create your own dressing

Blend plain low-fat or fat-free dairy yogurt, lemon juice, and dried or fresh herbs such as basil and parsley for a salad dressing. This can also be a quick and healthy veggie dip.



Drink up!

Grab a glass of milk. A cup of low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or fortified soy beverage is an easy way to drink a healthy calcium snack.

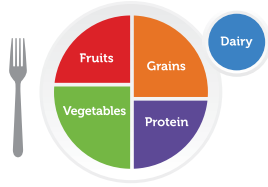


Snack on homemade cheese spread

Blend low-fat ricotta cheese with herbs such as oregano and dill, and sprinkle on some chopped green onions. Serve with whole-grain crackers.



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Make Better Beverage Choices

At every age, what you drink can be as important as what you eat. When deciding what to drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start simple with these tips today:



Drink water

Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. Regular soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sweetened drinks usually contain a lot of added sugars.



Encourage kid-friendly drinks

Make water, low-fat or fat-free dairy milk, or unsweetened seltzer the go-to options for your kids. Serve 100% juice only on occasion.



Compare food labels

Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) when shopping for beverages. Check and compare calories, amounts of added sugars, and servings per containers.



Cut coffee calories

Skip the whipped cream and chocolate or caramel drizzle. Go with low-fat milk and a sprinkle of cinnamon or nutmeg for a lower calorie coffee.



Grab a bottle on the go

Carry a clean, reusable water bottle in your bag to fill up throughout the day. Tap water is usually easy to find.



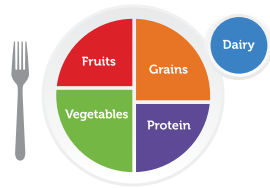
Jazz up your drink

Perk up your plain water or seltzer water with lemon, lime, or orange slices. Maybe even try some fresh mint leaves or a few fresh or frozen berries.





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Rethink Fats

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Check the label first

Read the [Nutrition Facts label](#) on packaged foods. Choose products that are lower in saturated fat since these types of fat are less healthy.



Eat foods with healthy fats

Eat nuts, seeds, and fatty fish like tuna, salmon, and sardines. These foods, as well as vegetable oils like olive and canola, are good sources of unsaturated fat—a healthier fat option.



Limit saturated fat

Build meals around protein foods that are naturally low in saturated fat such as beans, peas, and lentils, as well as soy foods, skinless chicken, seafood, and lean meats.



Skimp on “solid fats”

“Solid fats” such as butter, shortening, and fat from meats are high in saturated fats. Switch to olive or canola oil for cooking and trim the fat when possible.



Swap the spread

Switch from butter and cream cheese on your toast to a nut butter or a spread of avocado and a squeeze of lemon. These spread options contain healthier fats.



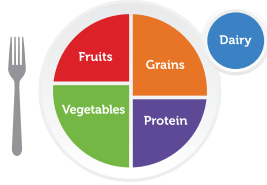
Customize your order

Order baked or steamed options instead of fried foods, especially deep-fried foods. A dash of hot sauce or a spoonful of salsa adds flavor without adding fat.





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Be Salt Smart

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Read the label

The **Nutrition Facts label** shows you how much sodium is in packaged foods. Choose lower sodium foods—especially if you have high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease.



Eat fruits and veggies

Enjoy a variety of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables—almost all of them are naturally low in sodium. Look for canned vegetables labeled “no added salt.”



Look for cue words

Items that are “pickled,” “brined,” or “cured” tend to be high in sodium. Include these foods in your meals sparingly.



Put together meals at home

Making your own meals gives you more control over the salt you eat. Taste your food before adding salt from the shaker.



Go easy on the sauce

Be mindful of how much sauce, gravy, salsa, ketchup, soy sauce, marinade, or dressing you’re using. The sodium from these can add up quickly.

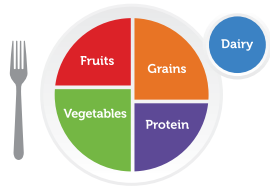


Spice it up

Flavor your foods with fresh or dried herbs and spices instead of salt. Pick spice blends that do not list salt or sodium on the ingredients list.



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Enjoy Vegetarian Meals

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Make simple changes

Create main dishes such as pasta primavera with vegetables and chickpeas, pizza topped with vegetables, veggie lasagna, tofu-vegetable stir-fry, and spicy bean burritos.



Think about plant-based protein

Eat a variety of plant protein foods such as black or kidney beans, cooked split peas, and yellow or green lentils. Nuts and seeds are also great options to help you meet protein needs.



Build strong bones with calcium

If you skip dairy, get calcium from fortified products like soy beverages, tofu, and some breakfast cereals and orange juices. Dark-green leafy vegetables like collard greens, spinach, and kale are sources of calcium, too.



Add nuts to your day

Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, or use them in salads or main dishes to bump up your protein, dietary fiber, and healthy fats. Slivered almonds or crushed walnuts are great on a green salad.



Have beans for lunch or dinner

Try a bean-based chili, three bean salad, or split pea soup. Because of their high nutrient content, beans, peas, and lentils, which are excellent sources of protein, fiber, folate, and several minerals, are recommended for everyone—vegetarians and nonvegetarians alike—because of their high nutrient content.

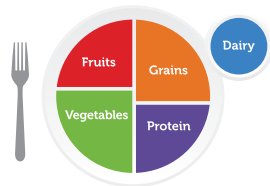


Enjoy a veggie snack

Snack on raw veggies and hummus—a Middle Eastern dip made from blended chickpeas (garbanzo beans). Hummus is rich in protein, dietary fiber, and several important minerals.



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Cut Back on Added Sugars

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Think about your drinks

Balance your meal by drinking water instead of sugary drinks like soda, lemonade, or sports drinks. Try some sparkling water with a lemon wedge or a small piece of fresh fruit.



Enjoy a sprinkle or two

Skip the sugar and top your coffee with a dash of cinnamon, nutmeg, or cocoa powder instead. This adds a little variety to the flavor of your coffee.



Satisfy your sweet tooth

Indulge in a naturally sweet dessert—fruit! Enjoy a fresh fruit salad, baked apples with cinnamon, or a piece of fruit right out of the fridge.



Split the sweets

Share dessert with a friend. Half a pastry or slice of cake means only half the added sugars (and calories) for each of you.



Pick lower sugar options

Choose packaged foods that have less or no added sugars such as plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt, unsweetened applesauce, or canned fruit packed in its own juice or water.



Check the label

Added sugars are now prominently displayed on the [Nutrition Facts label](#) of packaged foods. Use this information to compare added sugars on similar products. Keep in mind that there are many names for added sugars, such as fructose, dextrose, maple syrup, and cane juice.



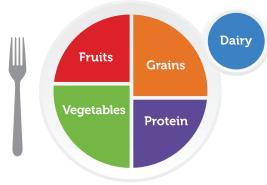
Go to [MyPlate.gov](https://www.MyPlate.gov) for more information. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**The benefits of healthy eating
add up over time, bite by bite.**

FNS-905-9
March 2022



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Healthy Snacking With MyPlate

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on a snack, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Build your own

Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts and add-ins such as seeds, dried fruit, plain popcorn, or a sprinkle of chocolate chips.



Prep ahead

Portion snack foods into reusable containers when you get home from the store so they're ready to grab-and-go.



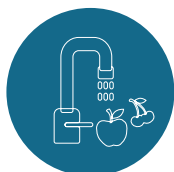
Make it a combo

Use the food groups to build a satisfying snack: yogurt and berries, apple with nut butter, or whole-grain crackers with turkey and avocado.



Eat vibrant vegetables

Try raw vegetables with dips. Try dipping bell peppers, carrots, or cucumbers in hummus, guacamole, or a low-fat yogurt sauce.



Wash and enjoy

Apples, pears, grapes, and fresh berries are great go-to snacks when you are looking for a quick sweet treat.



Stock your fridge

Keep cut up fruits and vegetables visible and within reach in the fridge for a convenient anytime snack.



Make Half Your Plate

Fruits & Vegetables



There are so many ways to eat **Fruits & Vegetables** every day.



Tomatoes, carrots, celery, and onions are key to this whole-grain **Spaghetti and Quick Meat Sauce**, paired with broccoli florets. Finish with warm **Roasted Pears and Vanilla Cream**.



Flavorful herbed green beans and roasted potatoes round out this **Smoky Mustard-Maple Salmon**. For dessert, enjoy a fruit, granola, and yogurt parfait.



Pineapple, carrots, and tomatoes add tang to this **Sweet and Sour Pork**, served with a colorful salad. Finish with nonfat frozen yogurt.



Enjoy the crunchy, juicy goodness of apples and grapes in this **Chicken Waldorf Salad**, served on mixed greens and topped with low-fat dressing. End your meal with **Blueberry-Lime Yogurt**.

Find these recipes and more ideas at ChooseMyPlate.gov

