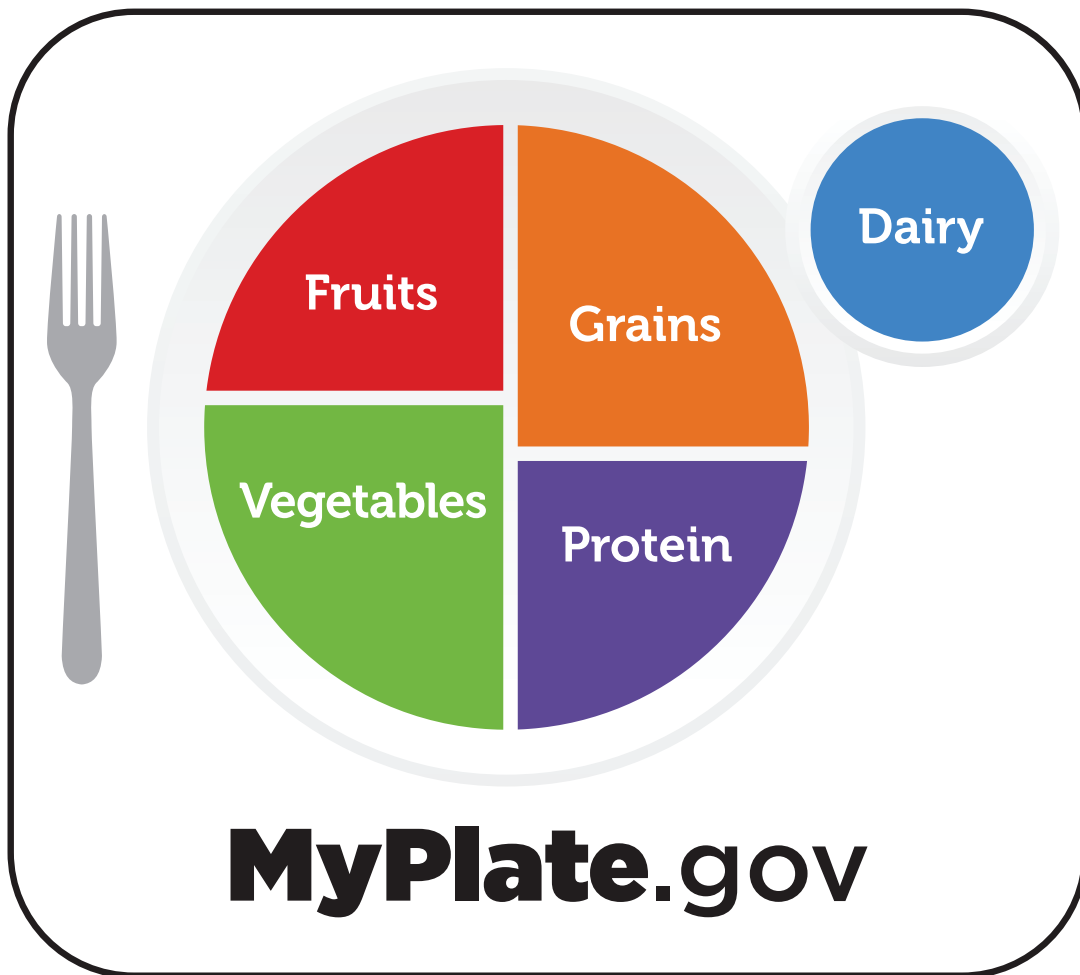


MyPlate

Healthy Eating by Age & Stage

MyPlate.gov

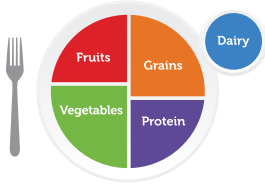


collated by Dr Marlene MD

DrMarleneMD.com



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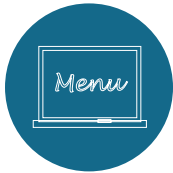
Healthy Eating for Families

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



Connect at mealtimes

Sit down together for a meal when you can. Turn off the TV and put away screens and devices, so you can “unplug,” interact, and focus on each other.



Plan out meals

Reduce stress at mealtimes by planning out meals before the week starts. Include quick and easy dishes, or leftovers, on nights that are extra busy.



Let everyone help

Kids learn by doing. Younger ones can mix ingredients, wash produce, or set the table, while older kids can help with ingredients. Everyone can help clean up.



Serve a variety of foods

Include choices from each food group—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives—in meals and snacks throughout the week.



Let kids choose

Get kids engaged with meal preparation at home. Serve meals “family style” to encourage kids to be creative with their plates.

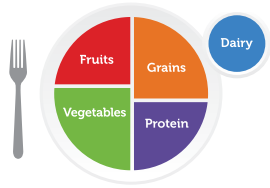


Offer nonfood rewards

Foods aren't the only rewards that kids like. Younger kids may enjoy gathering points toward a special outing, and older kids could earn extra screen time or an allowance.



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Healthy Eating for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

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:



Eat a variety of healthy foods

It's important to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Choose options for meals, beverages, and snacks that have limited added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium (salt).



Get your Plan

Calorie and nutrient needs are different during pregnancy and when you are breastfeeding. Get your [MyPlate Plan](#) to learn your estimated calorie needs and how to meet your food group goals.



Make smart seafood choices

Eating seafood during pregnancy may benefit your baby's growth and is a healthy protein source for you during both pregnancy and breastfeeding. Choose options lower in methylmercury, like cod, salmon, or tilapia. Learn more at FDA's [Advice About Eating Fish](#) webpage.



Ask about supplements

In addition to a healthy diet, your doctor may recommend a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement to help you meet your needs. After pregnancy, your doctor may recommend switching from a prenatal to a multivitamin supplement during breastfeeding.



Keep food safe

You and your baby are at higher risk for foodborne illness. Only eat foods that have been cooked to the proper temperature and avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk or juice, raw sprouts, unwashed produce, cold deli meats, or soft cheese made from unpasteurized milk. See [FoodSafety.gov](#) for more information.

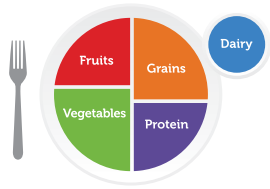


Avoid all alcohol

Pregnant women and women who may become pregnant should not drink any alcohol. Talk with your doctor before considering drinking alcohol while you are breastfeeding.



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Healthy Eating for Infants

Healthy eating is important at every age. When it's time for solid foods, offer babies a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and lower in sodium and avoid added sugars. Start with these tips:



Feeding your young baby

If possible, feed your baby only breast milk from birth to about 6 months of age, and continue through at least the first year of life—longer if desired. If breast milk is unavailable, feed your baby iron-fortified infant formula. Talk to your healthcare provider about vitamin D supplements for your baby.



Look for cues

When babies are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Babies may be full if they close their mouth, turn their head away from breast or bottle, or relax their hands. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self-regulate their intake.



Starting solid foods

At about 6 months, infants may show signs that they're ready for solid foods, such as bringing objects to the mouth or swallowing food rather than pushing it out. Do not put infant cereal or other solid foods in an infant's bottle, but small amounts of water may also be introduced when your baby starts solid foods.



Serving first foods

Introduce a variety of foods, flavors, and textures from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for breastfed infants. Examples include lean meats, fortified infant cereals, and beans.



Prevent choking

Make sure your baby is sitting in a highchair or other safe, supervised place for meals and snacks. Offer foods that are the appropriate size, consistency, and shape for your child's age and eating skills.



Serving safe foods

Avoid feeding your baby any foods that contain raw or cooked honey. Honey can contain bacteria that could cause serious illness or death among infants. Also avoid unpasteurized foods or beverages, such as juices, milk, yogurt, or cheeses, as they could contain harmful bacteria.



Behavioral Milestones



The preschool years are an important time for developing healthy habits for life. From 2 to 5 years old, children grow and develop in ways that affect behavior in all areas, including eating. The timing of these milestones may vary with each child.



2 YEARS

- Can use a spoon and drink from a cup
- Can be easily distracted
- Growth slows and appetite drops
- Develops likes and dislikes
- Can be very messy
- May suddenly refuse certain foods



3 YEARS

- Makes simple either/or food choices, such as a choice of apple or orange slices
- Pours liquid with some spills
- Comfortable using fork and spoon
- Can follow simple requests such as "Please use your napkin."
- Starts to request favorite foods
- Likes to imitate cooking
- May suddenly refuse certain foods



4 YEARS

- Influenced by TV, media, and peers
- May dislike many mixed dishes
- Rarely spills with spoon or cup
- Knows what table manners are expected
- Can be easily sidetracked
- May suddenly refuse certain foods



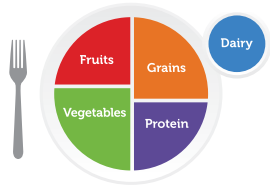
5 YEARS

- Has fewer demands
- Will usually accept the food that's available
- Dresses and eats with minor supervision





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Healthy Eating for Toddlers

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



Provide foods full of nutrients

Offer your toddler a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars and choose those with lower sodium.



Look for cues

When children are hungry, they usually let you know. But fullness cues are not as obvious. Children may be full if they push food away, close mouth, turn head away from food, or make sounds to let you know. Recognizing and responding to these cues helps children learn how to self-regulate their intake.



Prevent choking

Have toddlers sit at a table for meals and snacks and not wander around with food in their mouth. Foods such as hot dogs, candy, nuts and seeds, raw carrots, grapes, popcorn, and chunks of peanut butter can be choking risks. See the [USDA Team Nutrition worksheet](#) for more.



Drinks matter too!

Did you know the only beverages your toddler needs are water, milk, and, if available, breast milk? Avoid drinks with added sugars like soda, flavored milks, juice drinks, and sports drinks.



Try new foods

Try serving a new food alongside a familiar food in the same meal. It may take up to 8 to 10 tries for a child to accept a new food.



Serve safe food

Help your child learn to wash their hands before eating. Only serve foods that have been cooked properly and avoid serving your toddler unpasteurized (raw) juice or milk.



Dietary
Guidelines
for Americans

Go to [MyPlate.gov](#) for more information.

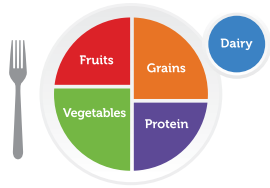
USDA is an equal opportunity provider,
employer, and lender.

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

FNS-905-15
March 2022



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Healthy Eating for Preschoolers

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



Model healthy behaviors

Preschoolers tend to copy what parents or caregivers do at the table. If you eat your veggies, they'll eat their veggies. And, it's good for both of you.



Think about their drinks

Sugar-sweetened beverages like sodas and fruit drinks are sources of added sugars that are often high in calories. Beverages with no added sugars like water, unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk (including low-lactose or lactose-free options), or fortified soy beverages should be the primary choice for children.



Prevent choking

Encourage children to sit at a table for meals and snacks and not wander around carrying food. Check out the [USDA Team Nutrition worksheet](#) for foods that are choking hazards at different ages.



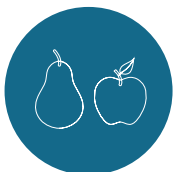
Try new foods

Let children choose a new food to try at the grocery store. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.



Get kids involved

Preschoolers can help at mealtimes by washing produce, tearing lettuce, stirring mixes, scooping ingredients, or setting the table.



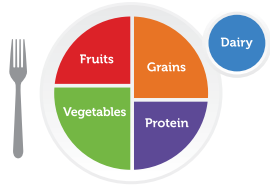
Offer choices

Like adults, preschoolers like to have a say in what they eat. "A pear or an apple?" "Whole-wheat toast or some crackers?" You offer the healthy options, but they get to choose.





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Healthy Eating for Kids

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



Offer variety

Include choices from each food group—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives—in meals and snacks during each day.



Connect at mealtime

Eat meals together whenever possible. Turn off the TV and put away phones and tablets, so you can “unplug” and focus on healthy foods and each other.



Make good nutrition easy

Designate a shelf or a drawer in your fridge for your kids. Stock it with cut-up fruits and vegetables, yogurt, nut butters, and whole-wheat mini bagels and crackers.



Think about their drinks

Make water and low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or fortified soy alternatives easy options to grab in your home. Have ready-to-go containers filled and in the fridge to take on outings.



Get kids involved

Depending on their age, kids can peel fruits, assemble salads, measure, scoop, and slice. Let them create and name their own side dish.

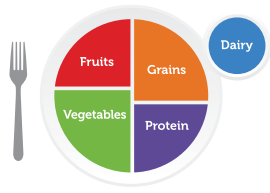


Have a shopping buddy

Let kids participate in grocery shopping online or in the store. Reward them by letting them choose their favorite fruit or maybe a new one.



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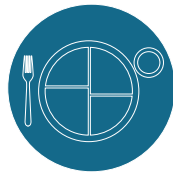
Healthy Eating for Teens

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:



Learn what YOU need

Do you know what foods and what amounts are best for YOU? Get your own personalized [MyPlate Plan](#).



Eat a variety of foods

Make choices from all food groups—fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy and fortified soy alternatives—every day. Each group provides you with different nutrients and you need all of them.



Be active

Squeeze in some physical activity between homework, going out, and other activities. Walk the dog, ride your bike with a friend, or do an online workout.



Keep water handy

Water is a better option than most drink choices. Keep a reusable water bottle in your bag and skip the sugary sodas, fruit drinks, and energy and sports drinks.



Build strong bones

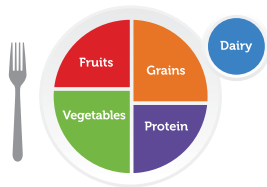
Get the calcium and vitamin D that your growing bones need! Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy milk, soy milk, and yogurt. You can get vitamin D from sunshine, too!



Get active in the kitchen

Learn how to make a few dishes. Include extra fruits and vegetables for added flavor and nutrients. For recipes, visit the [MyPlate Kitchen](#).

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Healthy Eating for Young Adults

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:



Maintain a healthy diet

Follow the basics of healthy eating: eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein foods, and fat-free or low-fat dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Vary your protein with seafood, lean meats, poultry, beans, peas, lentils, nuts, and eggs.



Keep fruit handy

Keep fruit where you can see it—on the counter or on the top shelf of the fridge. Make it easy to reach for fruit when you need a snack.



Choose a variety of vegetables

Brighten a stir-fry with colorful vegetables, such as (orange) sweet potatoes, (red) cabbage, and (yellow) squash. Decorate a salad with (orange) shredded carrots and (green) edamame.



Include whole grains

Fuel your body with nutrient-packed whole-grain foods. Make at least half your grains whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, cereal, and, yes, even popcorn!



Enjoy a variety of protein foods

Choose lean or low-fat cuts of meat, skinless chicken or turkey, and seafood (at least twice a week). Plant-based foods such as beans, peas, and lentils are good choices, too.

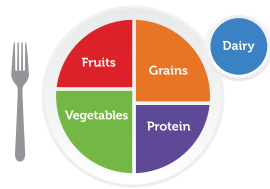


Don't forget dairy

Include foods like fat-free and low-fat dairy milk, yogurt, lactose-free versions, or calcium-fortified soy beverage to help to build and maintain strong bones.

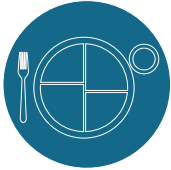


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Healthy Eating for Adults

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:



Eat a healthy diet

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein foods, and fat-free or low-fat dairy or fortified soy alternatives are healthy choices. Include a variety of protein foods such as seafood, lean meats, poultry, beans, peas, lentils, nuts, and eggs.



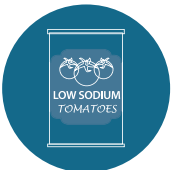
Enjoy fruits and vegetables

No matter your age, fruits and veggies provide key nutrients and dietary fiber. Their colors, flavors, and textures make meals more enjoyable.



Be mindful of your nutrient needs

Focus on dietary changes that increase your dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D, and decrease added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Make the best choice for your needs by comparing nutrition and ingredients information by reading the [Nutrition Facts label](#).



Go easy on the salt

Choose fresh foods when possible or low-sodium packaged foods. Add flavor to foods with spices and herbs and skip the salt shaker at the table.



Shift your sweet tooth

Choose foods with little or no added sugars and drink water or unsweetened sparkling water in place of soda or juice. Fruits are naturally sweet and packed with nutrients.

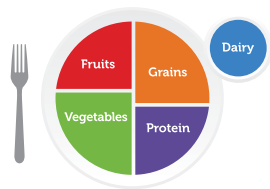


Strive for a healthy weight

Make food and beverage choices from all five food groups to achieve or maintain a healthy weight. Get the [MyPlate Plan](#) to find out what is right just for you.



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Healthy Eating for Older Adults

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 eating a social event

Enjoy meals with friends or family members as often as possible. Take advantage of technology to enjoy meals virtually with loved ones in different cities or States.



Drink plenty of liquids

You may not always feel thirsty when your body needs fluids, and that's why it's important to drink beverages throughout the day. Enjoy coffee and tea if you like, or some water, milk, or 100% juice.



Add a touch of spice

Limiting salt is important as you get older. Fresh and dried herbs and spices, such as basil, oregano, and parsley, add flavor without the salt.



Make the most of your food choices

Older adults need plenty of nutrients but fewer calories, so it's important to make every bite count. Foods that are full of vitamins and minerals are the best way to get what you need.



Be mindful of your nutrient needs

You may not be getting enough nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin B12, and also protein. Read the [Nutrition Facts label](#) on packaged foods and also speak with your healthcare provider about possible supplements.



Keep food safe

Discard food if it has an "off" odor, flavor, or texture. Refer to the "use by" dates for a guide to freshness. Canned or frozen foods store well if shopping trips are difficult.