

MyPlate Can Help You Get Healthy

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Choose MyPlate/ 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

On June 2, 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) unveiled MyPlate, a new icon to remind consumers to eat healthfully. MyPlate replaces MyPyramid to provide a visual guide for proportions of food to eat from each food group at meals for optimal health. MyPlate also emphasizes key points in the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*:

- **Build a healthy plate.**

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables, such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, in main and side dishes. Fruit adds a sweet touch to meals and also makes a healthy dessert. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and high in fiber and antioxidants for cancer-protection benefits.

Make at least half your grains whole grains. Choose 100 percent whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta. Check the ingredients list on food packages to find whole-grain foods. Whole grains contain more fiber and other nutrients than refined grain products. Grain foods should make up approximately one quarter of your plate.

Vary your protein choices. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate. Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean. Eat beans, a natural source of fiber and protein. Protein foods, formerly “Meat and Beans” on MyPyramid, also should make up approximately one quarter of your plate.

Switch to skim or 1% milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories. Try calcium-fortified soy products as an alternative to dairy foods. Dairy foods, called the “Milk Group” on MyPyramid, can be consumed as a beverage or dessert with meals.

- **Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt.**

Make major sources of saturated fats – cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs – occasional choices, not everyday foods. Select lean cuts of meats or poultry and fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. Switch from solid fats to oil when preparing food. Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy – it all adds up. Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals – and choose the foods with lower numbers. Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt. Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars. Drink water instead of sugary drinks; there are about 10 packets of sugar in a 12-ounce can of soda. Eat sugary desserts less often. Choose 100 percent fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored drinks.

- **Eat the right amount of calories for you.** Enjoy your food, but eat less. Think before you eat – is it worth the calories? Avoid oversized portions and use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Stop eating when you are satisfied, not full. Cook more often at home, where *you* are in control of what’s in your food. When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options. Check posted calorie amounts and choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits, and/or whole grains. Order a smaller portion or share an entrée.

- **Be physically active your way.** Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Adults should aim for at least two hours and 30 minutes of moderate intensity or one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity every week. Children and adolescents, ages 6 to 17, should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity every day. Every bit adds up, and the health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

For a personalized eating plan and more information on healthy eating and lifestyle choices, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Sources: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/MyPlate.htm>; <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/index.html>

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