

MyPlate: Introducing MyPlate

MyPlate is a nutrition tool you can use to help yourself choose healthy foods more often. Healthy foods in combination with physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight, avoid long-term health problems like heart disease and diabetes which leads to a healthier you.

MyPlate divides foods into 5 groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein. Try to eat a variety from these groups each day. Notice that not all the sections of MyPlate are the same size. To be the healthiest possible, fill more of your plate with foods from the largest sections – the vegetables and grains groups.

Add a variety of fruits, protein, and dairy to each of your meals to get all the nutrients you need. You have the power to make healthier choices within each food group as well. When choosing grains, make at least half your grains whole. Try whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, popcorn, or oatmeal.

Choose a variety of vegetables each day for overall good health. Try corn on the cob one day and a leafy spinach salad the next. Fruits are loaded with nutrients and fiber. When choosing fruits, choose fruits from all the colors of the rainbow for the best health. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. Together, fruits and vegetables should make up half your plate so get in the habit of including them as part of a well-balanced meal.

When choosing protein, make your choices low in fat. Lean cuts of beef, chicken, and pork, as well as fish, beans, and eggs are all healthy sources of protein. Do not forget the dairy. Dairy products are an important part of a healthy diet. If you have not already, gradually switch from higher fat dairy products to low-fat or non-fat ones. This can give you the nutrients you need while reducing the amount of unhealthy fats you eat.

There are countless amounts of foods available. To get a variety of foods while still making your choices healthy, get to know more about the foods in each food group. Then when faced with a food decision, you can use MyPlate as a tool to make a healthier choice.

Log onto www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to learn more about making healthy food choices. Or download the Start Simple with MyPlate app to set daily foods goals and get tips to help you meet your goals.