

MyPlate: Dairy

Let's focus our attention on the dairy group, the blue section of MyPlate. Dairy products provide your body with many of the nutrients you need to stay healthy, like calcium for your bones and teeth. As well as milk and calcium-fortified soymilk, you can find yogurt, cheese, ice cream and pudding in this group.

In general, adults should try to get 3 cups of calcium-rich foods each day. But some dairy products can be high in fat and calories. To avoid this, fill up those 3 cups of dairy with fat-free or low-fat dairy products.

One cup of milk, one eight-ounce container of yogurt, or 1 1/2 ounces of hard cheese, like cheddar, are all one serving size from the dairy group. Or, picture a serving of cheese as equal to four dice.

Consider drinking low-fat milk with each meal to get the 3 cups of dairy needed for a healthy body. If you drink whole milk right now, try to gradually switch to a lower-fat version. You will adjust your tastes slowly while still getting the calcium and nutrients you need each day.

If you have problems digesting lactose, an enzyme found in milk and milk products, try not to let that stop you from getting the nutrients you need. There are low-lactose and lactose-free alternatives available.

Download the Start Simple with MyPlate app to set goals within the dairy group and see your progress in real-time.