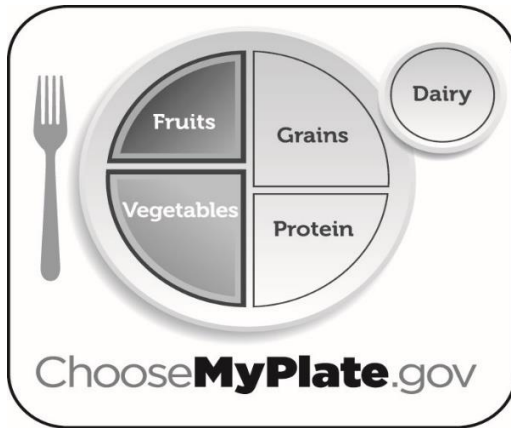


FRUITS AND VEGGIES: MORE MATTERS



We have all heard we need to eat more fruits and vegetables, but it seems so complicated. To make healthy eating much simpler to understand, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has replaced the food pyramid with a plate diagram to improve the understanding of proportions of each food group for healthy eating.

- As you can see, the largest portion of MyPlate is **fruits and vegetables**. My Plate stresses the key concept of filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables. (Sorry, potato chips, veggie snack sticks and gummy bears don't count!).
- **Grains and protein** each represent less than one quarter of the plate. Whole grains are best with whole grains in breads, rice and pastas. The protein group was once known as the meat group, over the years it has changed to incorporate other protein-rich foods such as fish, shellfish, poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- **Dairy** has been moved to a circle next to the plate and defined as fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.

Overall, the new plate image **encourages a more plant-based diet**.

- ❖ And ... the plate icon is an easy enough tool for children to use too! Children and parents can learn to eat healthfully while sitting around their dinner plates.

Creating a healthy eating plan doesn't have to be complicated! Instead of worrying about the minor details, focus on these key guidelines:

- ❖ Boost your fruits and veggies:
 1. Fill **half your plate** with fruits and veggies at every meal and snack.
 2. **Add extra** fruits and vegetables to dishes, even if they already contain/call for them in the recipe.
 3. **Substitute** fruits & veggies in any meal; they're lower in calories than many other foods.
 4. **Always Stock** frozen and canned fruits & veggies for quick meal prep. Choose canned fruit and vegetables without added sugar, syrup, cream sauces, or other ingredients that will add calories.
 5. **Steamed** vegetables make great sides. Add flavor with low-calorie or low-fat dressings and herbs and spices.
 6. **Grab & Go**. Always have fresh fruits and vegetables in easy-to-grab places (a fruit bowl, sliced in the fridge, trail mix)
- ❖ Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- ❖ Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- ❖ Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- ❖ Avoid oversized portions.
- ❖ Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals, and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- ❖ Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

Visit www.myplate.gov to create a balanced eating plan specific to you and to get more information.

To Your Health,

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Resources: www.myplate.gov

www.healthfinder.gov; www.nal.usda.gov