

My Plate

According to Connie Diekman, Director of University Nutrition at Washington University in St. Louis, "Nutrition education needs to start in prenatal classes and move through the entire education system. Many kids, and their parents, simply do not know what they ought to be eating".

MyPlate is a concept that illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet is using a familiar image—your plate. Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl.

Fruits and Vegetables

Half of your plate at each meal should be fruits and vegetables. Choose from all the colors (red, green, yellow, orange, blue/purple and white). Eating from all the colors of the rainbow gives you the full range of vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants to stay healthy.

Learn how fruits and veggies in fresh, frozen, canned, dried or as juice are all good for you.

Want some new fruit and veggie options? Check out Know Your Fruits and Veggies™ or see what's in season.

10 Tips for adding more veggies to your diet.

Grains

A little over one quarter of your plate should be made up of grains. Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal is considered a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products.

Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, Whole Grains and Refined Grains.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm.

Refined grains have been milled to remove the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Most refined grains are enriched. This means certain B vitamins and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains.

Half of your grains you eat each day should be of the whole grain variety.

Protein

Meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts and seeds, processed soy products and beans and peas are also sources of protein. Beans and peas are unique because they are also part of the vegetable group called legumes.

American's tend to have more than enough protein in their diets. Most people can maintain health with 5 – 6 oz of lean protein per day.

Dairy

The dairy group includes: milk, yogurt, cheese and calcium fortified soy milk. It is recommended that people consume between 2 – 3 cups of dairy per day. 1 ½ ounces of hard cheese equals 1 cup.

Oils

Oils are fat in a liquid form and come from a variety of plant sources. Oils are not considered a food group though they do contain some essential nutrients. Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. Oils from plant sources (vegetable and nut oils) do not contain any cholesterol. Oils should be used sparingly.

Some commonly eaten oils include:

canola oil

corn oil

cottonseed oil

olive oil

safflower oil

soybean oil

sunflower oil

Some oils are used mainly as flavorings, such as walnut oil and sesame oil. A number of foods are naturally high in oils, like:

- nuts
- olives
- some fish
- avocados

Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine.

Source: http://www.defeatdiabetes.org/self_management/text.asp?id=My_Plate