

Making Healthy Food Choices With a Healthy Plate

Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with non-starchy vegetables and fruit

one half plate • non-starchy vegetables & fruits

Drink more water

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with whole grains and/or starchy vegetables

one quarter plate • grain & starchy vegetables

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean protein (a 2–3 oz. cooked portion)

one quarter plate • lean meat / protein

9" plate

Why create a healthy plate?

- **REDUCES HEALTH RISKS** — Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup, glass, or bowl. Vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fruits, and lean protein foods are all great choices. Eating these foods can reduce risks of developing diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer.
- **IMPROVES PORTION CONTROL AND FOOD CHOICES** — Food portions and food choices are very important for reaching and keeping a healthy weight.

How to Build a Healthy Plate

Choose a 9-INCH OR SMALLER PLATE.

Use a ruler and measure across your plate. Use a 9-inch plate or smaller to prevent overfilling the plate and eating too much.



Fill ½ of the 9-inch plate with NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES and FRUITS.



- Choose a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red, and orange vegetables.
- Shop for vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces, and don't add these when cooking. Limit fruit with added sugars or syrup.
- Non-starchy vegetables are low in calories and full of fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Examples of non-starchy fiber-rich vegetables include carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, asparagus, and peppers.
- Select whole fruit over juice, but if you choose juice, look for 100% fruit juice. 
- Vegetables and fruits can be fresh, canned, or frozen. Eat only small amounts of dried fruits as these can be high in calories. Dried fruits are healthy quick snacks. 
- Enjoy a wide range of colorful vegetables and fruit. Select what is in season for variety and flavor. 

How to Build a Healthy Plate

Fill ¼ of the 9-inch plate with LEAN PROTEIN CHOICES (about 3 ounces cooked or the size of a deck of cards).



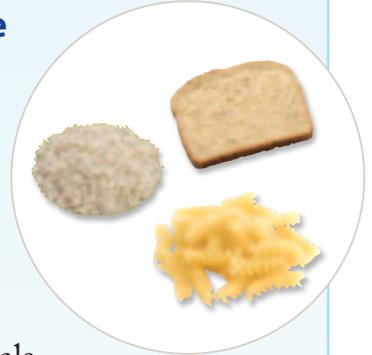
- Examples of protein foods include seafood, beans, peas, and nuts, as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs. Limit to one egg per day.
- Eat seafood (fish and shellfish) or other meatless protein in place of meat

or poultry at least twice a week.

Select some seafood that is higher in oils and lower in mercury (salmon, trout, and herring). Meatless protein sources include soy (tofu, tempeh, edamame) and legumes (kidney, garbanzo, and black beans).

- Select lean meats and poultry. Choose meat cuts that are low in fat and ground beef that is extra lean (at least 90% lean). Trim or drain fat from meat and remove poultry skin before cooking or eating.
- Try grilling, broiling, poaching, or roasting. These cooking methods do not add extra fat.
- Drain fat from ground meats after cooking. Avoid breading on meat and poultry, which adds calories.

Fill ¼ of the 9-inch plate with WHOLE GRAINS and/or STARCHY VEGETABLES.



- Consume at least half of all grains as whole grains. Eat 3 ounces or more of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta each day. One ounce is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose whole grains that are a good or excellent source of dietary fiber.
 - Good sources of fiber contain 10–19% of the Daily Value per serving.
 - Excellent sources of dietary fiber contain 20% or more of the Daily Value per serving.
- Check the ingredient list and look for the first or second ingredient to include the words “whole” or “whole grain.”
- Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat pasta, whole-grain breads, brown rice, and whole-grain hot and cold cereals.
- Examples of starchy vegetables include potatoes, corn, peas, winter squash, yams, and legumes (kidney, garbanzo, and black beans).



Include **HEALTHY DAIRY** selections.

- Increase intake of fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and milk products, such as yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese.



- When selecting cheese, choose low-fat or reduced-fat versions.
 - If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try fortified soy beverages. You can also ask your dietitian about an enzyme supplement.

Key Points:

- **MAKE THE BEST CHOICES** when you prepare or order foods.
 - Select foods that are grilled, broiled, baked, boiled, roasted, poached, stir-fried, or steamed instead of fried.
 - Add flavor to foods with herbs, spices, and low-fat seasonings — avoid using salt or seasonings containing sodium.
 - Include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and protein foods that provide fewer calories and more nutrients.
 - Avoid preparing or ordering foods that are creamy, fried, breaded, battered, or buttered. Use small portions of dressings, syrups, dips, and sauces.
 - Eat fewer foods that contain solid fats. The major sources of dietary fat are cakes, cookies, ice cream, and other desserts (often made with butter, margarine, or shortening); pizza; cheese; and processed and fatty meats (like sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ribs).
- Limit foods containing partially hydrogenated oils, a major source of unhealthy trans fats.
- Cut back on foods and drinks with added sugars or caloric sweeteners (sugar-sweetened beverages). Choose water, fat-free milk, 100% fruit juice, or unsweetened tea or coffee as drinks rather than sugar-sweetened drinks.
- **DO NOT SKIP MEALS.** Skipping meals can lead to cravings, low energy, and over-eating at the next meal.
- **EAT SLOWLY!** It takes about 20 minutes for our brains to register that we are full. Take time to enjoy the taste of the foods on your healthy plate.