How to Build a Healthy Plate

The new food guide was created in 2011 and is now called “Choose MyPlate.” It is suggested for all people ages 2 and up. It shows you the types of foods to eat and their serving sizes to reach your best health. It helps you to make good choices about the foods you eat and their value.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed a guide called “Choose MY Plate.” MyPlate is made up of five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet. Each color on the plate is a specific food group. They provide certain nutritional benefits. This plate model shows the importance of a varied diet with foods from each food group. The purpose of this design is to help you make healthier and smarter food choices. Let’s see what each color in MyPlate represents:

- **The red section of the plate is fruits.** This quarter of the plate can be any kind of fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried. It can be served whole, cut-up or pureed. The amount you need for the day depends on your age, sex and amount of daily activity. The daily recommended amount is 1 serving for kids 2 years and older up to 2 servings for an adult.

- **The green section of MyPlate is vegetables.** Vegetables are divided into five groups: dark green, starchy, red and orange, beans and peas, and other vegetables. The amount you need depends on your age, sex, and activity level. The daily suggested amount starts with 1 serving for kids 2 years and older. An adult man should get a total of 3 servings. All age groups should eat from each of the five vegetable groups every week.

- **The blue circle is dairy that is high in calcium.** Dairy includes milk, yogurt, cheese, milk-based desserts and soy milk. Everyone should have at least 2-3 servings of dairy daily. Again, it is based on age and sex.

- **The orange part of MyPlate is grain.** Any food made from wheat, oats, cornmeal, barley or any other cereal grain is called grains. Types of grains include bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereals, tortillas and grits. Grains are divided into two groups – whole grains and refined grains. At least half of all grains eaten each day should be whole grains. Kids between age 2 - 8 should eat between 3 - 6 servings every day. Adults need about 5 - 8 servings of grains with a minimum of 3 servings being whole grain.

- **The purple section of MyPlate is protein.** All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood and eggs are considered part of the protein group. Beans and peas, processed soy products, nuts and seeds are also in the protein food group. Each day kids between ages 2 - 8 should eat between 2 - 6 servings. Adults should eat about 5 - 6 servings a day.

For more information on serving sizes please see [How to Control Portion Sizes for a Healthy Weight](#).

Sources:
USDA ChooseMyPlate A Snapshot of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
Accessed June 26, 2018

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 Eighth Edition
Accessed June 26, 2018

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