

Lunch at the Library's HEALTH TIP OF THE WEEK



This healthy tip of the week was adapted from "KidsHealth from Nemours," kidshealth.org/en/parents/strong-bones.html. For more tips, visit kernlibrary.org or kidshealth.org.

MyPlate: Is a Symbol for Healthy Eating

MyPlate is the model for healthy eating in the United States. Experts at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the agency in charge of nutrition, created the colorful plate to help people remember to:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods.
- Eat less of some foods and more of others.

The plate features four sections: vegetables, fruits, grains, and protein — plus a side order of dairy in blue. The big message is that fruits and vegetables take up half the plate, grains and protein take up about one-quarter of the plate. The divided plate also helps keep portion sizes in check. Super-big portions can cause weight gain.

What's a Grain Again?

You know what fruits and vegetables are. But here's a reminder about what's included in the three other food groups: protein, grains, and dairy:

- **Protein:** Beef; poultry; fish; eggs; nuts and seeds; and beans and peas like black beans, split peas, lentils, and even tofu and veggie burgers. Protein builds and maintains the tissues in your body.
- **Grains:** Bread, cereal, rice, tortillas, and pasta. At least half of the grains you eat should be whole-grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice. Whole grains have more fiber and help you feel full.
- **Dairy:** Milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy milk. With MyPlate, the dairy circle could be a cup of milk, but you also can get your dairy servings from yogurt or cheese. Choose low-fat or nonfat dairy most of the time.

The plate can be used for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That may make you wonder: Do I really have to eat vegetables with breakfast? The answer is no, but aim to eat a variety of food groups at each meal. And if your breakfast doesn't include a veggie, consider a vegetable at snack time or more vegetables at dinner. The plate also shows how to balance your food groups. There's a reason the protein section is smaller: You don't need as much from that group. Eating more fruits and vegetables will help you eat fewer calories overall, which helps you keep a healthy weight. Eating fruits and veggies also gives you lots of vitamins and minerals. To learn more about MyPlate, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov.

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