Healthy Plate

The Healthy Plate is divided into four wedges to represent the basic food groups — fruits, vegetables, grains and proteins. The cup represents the dairy group.

It is meant to be a simple reminder to be more mindful of the foods that we’re eating.

The logo is a reminder to help consumers make healthier food choices consistent with the new USDA dietary guidelines, which are updated every five years based on the latest nutrition science and research on eating habits.

Basically a “balanced” and nutritious meal using the "plate method" for planning food portions is as follows:

- 50 percent as assorted fruits and vegetables (both green and red)
- 25 percent as protein (e.g. poultry, fish, beans)
- 25 percent as whole grains (e.g., brown rice)

Food Groups and Healthy Nutrition: USDA Recommendations

USDA's recommended nutritional guidelines to follow for a healthy eating plan:

- Focus on fruits and vegetables: Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Go for low-fat dairy: Consume at least three cups of low-fat or fat-free milk each day or the equivalent in cheese, yogurt, or other calcium-rich foods.
- Choose whole grains: Get at least six to eight servings of whole grains each day.
- Avoid trans and saturated fats and limit sodium (salt) and sugars. Fat should only comprise about 20 to 35 percent of total calorie intake.
- Choose lean proteins. About 15 percent of your total calories should come from proteins, such as skinless poultry, fish, beans, nuts and lean meats.
Guidelines to Get You Going

If you keep these general nutrition rules in mind, you'll be on the right track toward healthy eating for life:

- Vary your food choices to make sure you get a wide variety of vitamins and other nutrients
- Know the recommended daily calorie intake for your age, weight, height, activity level, and gender
- Don't deprive yourself of foods you love; just enjoy them in moderation

Little Things, Small Steps:

- Don't skip meals
- Drink a glass of water before meals and drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Use smaller plates (= smaller portions)
- Decrease salt (sodium)
- Increase your activity level
- Healthy choices - replace processed food with “real” food whenever possible. Eat foods that are as close as possible to the way nature made it.
- Read food packaging labels
- Moderation, moderation, moderation

Shop the perimeter of the grocery store

In general, healthy eating ingredients are found around the outer edges of most grocery stores, while the center aisles are filled with processed and packaged foods. Shop the perimeter of the store for most of your groceries (fresh fruits and vegetables, fish and poultry, whole grain breads and dairy products), add a few things from the freezer section (frozen fruits and vegetables), and visit the aisles for spices, oils, and whole grains (like rolled oats, brown rice, whole wheat pasta).

Helpful Website:

www.choosemyplate.gov