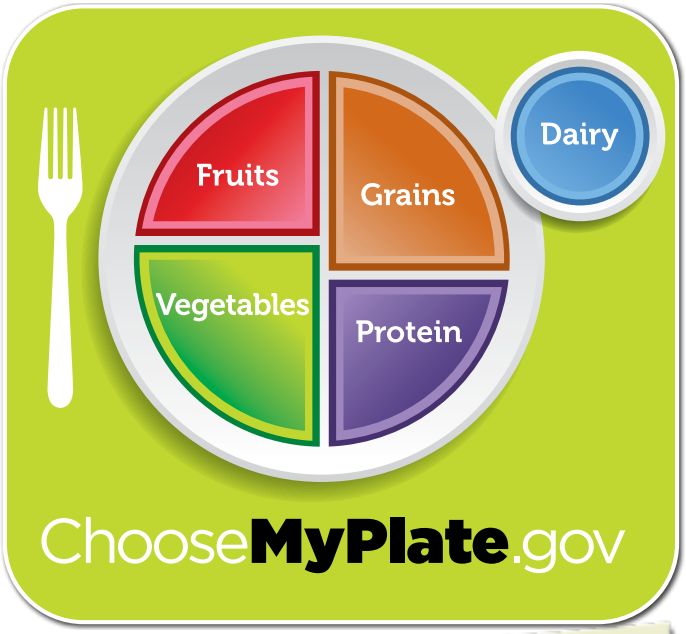
MyPlate at Home

Dear Parents,

Our class is starting a unit called ***Serving Up MyPlate.*** Your child will explore how to make healthy food choices and be physically active, while also building skills in Math, Science, and English Language Arts. Our school hopes these lessons will support your efforts at home to help your child develop healthy eating habits.

This booklet from the United States Department of Agriculture's Team Nutrition initiative offers some fun and easy tips for building healthier family meals that include the five food groups. Be on the lookout, as well, for class work coming home that will show what we are learning at school about making healthy choices. This is a great opportunity to talk with your child about nutrition, try new foods together, and get your child involved in making healthier meals and snacks.

Enjoy!



This week, my family will:

- ❑ Eat a dark-green, red, or orange vegetable at dinner.
- ❑ Switch to a whole-grain cereal at breakfast.
- ❑ Drink fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk at meals.
- ❑ Eat beans or peas at dinner at least once.
- ❑ Drink water instead of soda or other sweet drinks.
- ❑ Enjoy fruit for dessert.

Find recipes and more on the Team Nutrition Web site: http://teamnutrition.usda.gov.

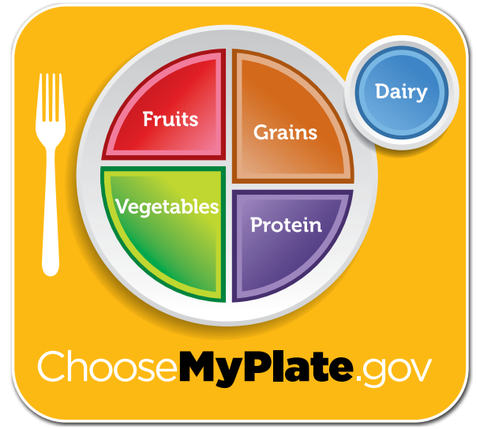
What's for Dinner? Healthier Choices Made Easier

Vary your protein foods. Include beans and peas at dinner at least once a week.

- Dairy: fat-free milk, low-fat cheddar cheese
- Fruits: kiwi, strawberries, bananas
- Vegetables: onions, carrots, corn, red bell pepper, sweet potato, tomatoes
- Grains: cornbread
- Protein: black beans

Make half your grains whole grains. They are good for your heart and digestion and can help you maintain a healthy weight and good overall health.

- Dairy: fat-free milk
- Fruits: orange slices
- Vegetables: red and green cabbage, leaf lettuce, carrots, tomatoes
- Grains: whole-wheat tortilla
- Protein: baked fish (or chicken)



Tips for Families With School-Age Children

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables—*on a budget*

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all smart choices. Look for sales and buy some of each to last until your next shopping trip.
- Choose frozen vegetables that do not have added fat, salt, or sugars.
- Buy canned fruits packed in "100% juice" or water.
- Look for canned vegetables that say "No added salt."

Start every day the whole-grain way

- Serve whole-grain versions of cereal, bread, or pancakes at breakfast.
- Whole grains with more fiber will help your kids feel fuller longer so they stay alert in school.
- Choose foods with "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grains" on the label. Or check the ingredient list to see if the word "whole" is before the first ingredient listed (for example, whole-wheat flour). If it is, it's whole grain.

Milk matters

Children of every age, and adults too, need the calcium, protein, and vitamin D found in milk for strong bones, teeth, and muscles.

- Drink fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk at meals.
- If you're lactose intolerant, try lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk or calcium-fortified soy beverages.

Eat your colors. Offer dark-green, red, or orange vegetables at dinner.

- Dairy: fat-free milk, Parmesan cheese
- Fruits: peaches
- Vegetables: broccoli, tomato sauce
- Grains: whole-wheat pasta
- Protein: lean (90% or leaner) ground beef

Strong bodies need strong bones. Offer fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk at meals.

- Dairy: fat-free milk
- Fruits: pineapple
- Vegetables: green lettuce salad, carrots, tomatoes, green onions
- Grains: brown rice
- Protein: pork trimmed of fat (or skinless chicken breast)

Kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity **each day.**

Make family time *active* time!

- Take a family walk after dinner.
- Go on a bike ride.
- Play together — toss a ball, shoot some hoops, jump rope, play tag.
- Weed the garden, rake leaves, shovel snow.
- Walk to school with your kids.
- Play on a playground or hike at a local park.

Fun ways to get moving indoors...

- Play some music and have a family dance party.
- Blow up balloons and play indoor volleyball.
- Go bowling or indoor skating.
- Have a treasure hunt. See how fast everyone can find clues scattered around your home.
- Walk in the mall.

Sip **smarter**

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Kids can fill up on sweetened drinks and not have an appetite for foods they need for growth and health.
- A cold glass of low-fat (1%) milk is also a tasty way to quench your kids' thirst after play or school.

Did you know...

There are about 10 packets of sugar in a 12-ounce can of soda? Fruit drinks and sports drinks are other types of sugary drinks.