

SPECIALIZED FAMILY CARE
Provider Training

Category:	Pre-Service Training
Title:	Nutrition
Materials:	Handouts from US Dept. of Agriculture, ChooseMyPlate.gov http://www.choosemyplate.gov
Goal:	Provider practices good nutrition
Credit Hours:	1 Hour
Date Developed:	June 2011 September 2016: Updated by Carol Brewster, SFC Program
Developed by:	Donna McCune, SFC Program Updated by Carol Brewster, SFC Program

This skill-building instruction has been approved for Specialized Family Care Provider training by:



12/29/2016

Specialized Family Care Program Manager

Date



09-09-2016

Content Reviewed and updated by: Carol Brewster, FBCS

Date

Training Objectives:

- Specialized Family Care Provider knows the US Dept. of Agriculture, ChooseMyPlate nutrition recommendations
- Specialized Family Care Provider knows the food groups which are part of ChooseMyPlate
- Specialized Family Care Provider understands the nutritional requirements/expectations for a Specialized Family Care Person in Placement

Training Procedures:

- Specialized Family Care Provider initiated self-study
- Test completed by Specialized Family Care Provider
- Review of test responses by Family Based Care Specialist and Specialized Family Care Provider

I certify that I have completed all the materials associated with this training module. I feel that I have a basic understanding of the material completed.

Specialized Family Care Provider	Start Time	End Time	Date
Reviewed by: _____			
Family Base Care Specialist			Date

This Program is funded by the WV Department of Health & Human Resources, Bureau for Children & Families and administered by the Center for Excellence in Disabilities, West Virginia University.

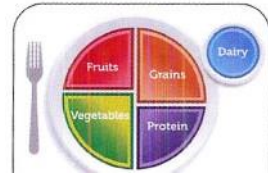
10 tips

Nutrition

Education Series

choose MyPlate

10 tips to a great plate



Choose My Plate.gov

Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips. Use the ideas in this list to *balance your calories*, to choose foods to *eat more often*, and to cut back on foods to *eat less often*.

1 balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie level. Being physical active also helps you balance calories.

6 switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

They have the same amount of Calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer Calories and less saturated fat.



2 enjoy your food, but eat less

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.



7 make half your grains whole grains

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

3 over sized portions

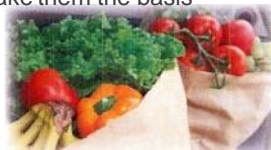
Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

8 foods to eat less often

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

4 foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.



5 make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

9 compare sodium in foods

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," or "no salt added."



10 drink water instead of sugary drinks

Cut Calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, Energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and Calories, in American diets.

USDA Center for Nutrition
Policy and Promotion

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information

DG Tip Sheet No. 1
June 2011
USDA is an equal opportunity
Provider and Employer

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines: Answers to Your Questions

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are:

Everything you eat and drink over time matters. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. Start with small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy.

Find your healthy eating style and maintain it for a lifetime. This means:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

- Focus on whole fruits.
- Vary your veggies.

- Make half your grains whole grains.

- Move to low-fat and fat-free milk or yogurt.

- Vary your protein routine.

- Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

Updated February 5, 2016

USDA



CHOOSE A VARIETY OF FOODS

FROM THE FOOD GROUPS by ChooseMyPlate.gov

Choose a variety of foods and beverages from each food group to build healthy eating styles. Include choices from all the MyPlate food groups to meet your calorie and nutrient needs when planning or preparing meals and snacks.

FOOD GROUPS

Fruits



Focus on whole fruits. Whole fruits include fresh, frozen, dried, and canned options. Choose whole fruits more often than 100% fruit juice.

Vegetables



Vary your veggies. Vegetables are divided into five subgroups and include dark-green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, legumes (beans and peas), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables. Choose vegetables from all subgroups.

Grains



Make half your grains whole grains. Grains include whole grains and refined, enriched grains. Choose whole grains more often.

Protein Foods



Vary your protein routine. Protein foods include both animal (seafood, meat, poultry, and eggs) and plant sources (nuts, beans and peas*, seeds, and soy products). Choose a variety of lean protein foods from both plant and animal sources.

*Note: Beans and peas are also part of the Vegetable Group.

Dairy



Move to low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt. Dairy includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and calcium-fortified soy beverages (soymilk). Choose fat-free (skim) and low fat (1%) dairy foods.

OILS

Oils are part of healthy eating styles because they provide nutrients for the body, like fatty acids and vitamin E. They also enhance the flavor of your food. Some oils are eaten as a natural part of the food such as in nuts, olives, avocados, and seafood. Other oils are refined and added to a food during processing or preparation such as soybean, canola, and safflower oils. Choose the right amount of oil to stay within your daily calorie needs.

What foods are in the Fruit Group by ChooseMyplate.gov?

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

How much fruit is needed daily?

The amount of fruit you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the table below.

DAILY FRUIT TABLE		
DAILY RECOMMENDATION*		
Children	2-3 years old	1 cup
	4-8 years old	1 to 1 ½ cups
Girls	9-13 years old	1 ½ cups
	14-18 years old	1 ½ cups
Boys	9-13 years old	1 ½ cups
	14-18 years old	2 cups
Women	19-30 years old	2 cups
	31-50 years old	1 ½ cups
	51+ years old	1 ½ cups
Men	19-30 years old	2 cups
	31-50 years old	2 cups
	51+ years old	2 cups

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

What counts as a cup of fruit?

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the Fruit Group. This table below shows specific amounts that count as 1 cup of fruit (in some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your daily recommended intake.

CUP OF FRUIT TABLE		
AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF FRUIT		OTHER AMOUNTS (COUNT AS 1/2 CUP OF FRUIT UNLESS NOTED)
Apple	½ large (3 ¼" diameter) 1 small (2 ¼" diameter) 1 cup, sliced or chopped, raw or cooked	½ cup, sliced or chopped, raw or cooked
Applesauce	1 cup	1 snack container (4oz)
Banana	1 cup, sliced 1 large (8" to 9" long)	1 small (less than 6" long)
Cantaloupe	1 cup, diced or melon balls	1 medium wedge (1/8 of a med. melon)
Grapes	1 cup, whole or cut-up 32 seedless grapes	16 seedless grapes
Grapefruit	1 medium (4" diameter) 1 cup, sections	½ medium (4" diameter)
Mixed fruit (fruit cocktail)	1 cup, diced or sliced, raw or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Orange	1 large (3 1/16" diameter) 1 cup, sections	1 small (2 3/8" diameter)

CUP OF FRUIT TABLE

AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF FRUIT		OTHER AMOUNTS (COUNT AS 1/2 CUP OF FRUIT UNLESS NOTED)
Orange, mandarin	1 cup, canned, drained	
Peach	1 large (2 ¾" diameter) 1 cup, sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained 2 halves, canned	1 small (2" diameter) 1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Pear	1 medium pear (2 ½ per lb) 1 cup, sliced or diced, raw cooked, or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Pineapple	1 cup, chunks, sliced or crushed, raw, cooked or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Plum	1 cup, sliced raw or cooked 3 medium or 2 large plums	1 large plum
Strawberries	About 8 large berries 1 cup, whole, halved, or sliced, fresh or frozen	½ cup whole, halved, or sliced
Watermelon	1 small (1" thick) 1 cup, diced or balls	6 melon balls
Dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots, etc.)	½ cup dried fruit	¼ cup dried fruit or 1 small box raisins (1 ½ oz)
100% fruit juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit, etc.)	1 cup	½ cup

Why is it important to eat fruit by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

Eating fruit provides health benefits — people who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.



Nutrients

- Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol.
- Fruits are sources of many essential nutrients that are underconsumed, including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate (folic acid).
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Fruit sources of potassium include bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, and orange juice.
- Dietary fiber from fruits, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as fruits help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber; fruit juices contain little or no fiber.
- Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of all body tissues, helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.

Health benefits

- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- Eating a diet rich in some vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers.
- Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as some vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating vegetables and fruits rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- Eating foods such as fruits that are lower in calories per cup instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie

Tips to help you eat fruits



In general:

- Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate cut-up fruit to store for later.
- [Buy fresh fruits in season](#) when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor.
- Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.
- Consider convenience when shopping. Try pre-cut packages of fruit (such as melon or pineapple chunks) for a healthy snack in seconds. Choose packaged fruits that do not have added sugars.

For the best nutritional value:

- Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits dietary fiber provides.
- Select fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, and orange juice.
- When choosing canned fruits, select fruit canned in 100% fruit juice or water rather than syrup.
- Vary your fruit choices. Fruits differ in nutrient content.

At meals:

- At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or peaches; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, mix fresh fruit with plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
- At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat, or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy and convenient.
- At dinner, add crushed pineapple to coleslaw, or include orange sections or grapes in a tossed salad.
- Make a Waldorf salad, with apples, celery, walnuts, and a low-calorie salad dressing.
- Try meat dishes that incorporate fruit, such as chicken with apricots or mangoes.
- Add fruit like pineapple or peaches to kabobs as part of a barbecue meal.
- For dessert, have baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad.

As snacks:

- Cut-up fruit makes a great snack. Either cut them yourself, or buy pre-cut packages of fruit pieces like pineapples or melons. Or, try whole fresh berries or grapes.
- Dried fruits also make a great snack. They are easy to carry and store well. Because they are dried, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup is equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of other fruits.
- Keep a package of dried fruit in your desk or bag. Some fruits that are available dried include apricots, apples, pineapple, bananas, cherries, figs, dates, cranberries, blueberries, prunes (dried plums), and raisins (dried grapes).

- As a snack, spread peanut butter on apple slices or top plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt with berries or slices of kiwi fruit.
- Frozen juice bars (100% juice) make healthy alternatives to high-fat snacks.

Make fruit more appealing:

- Many fruits taste great with a dip or dressing. Try fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a dip for fruits like strawberries or melons.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit. Try bananas, peaches, strawberries, or other berries.
- Try unsweetened applesauce as a lower calorie substitute for some of the oil when baking cakes.
- Try different textures of fruits. For example, apples are crunchy, bananas are smooth and creamy, and oranges are juicy.
- For fresh fruit salads, mix apples, bananas, or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple, or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.

Fruit tips for children:

- Set a good example for children by eating fruit every day with meals or as snacks.
- Offer children a choice of fruits for lunch.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up fruits.
- While shopping, allow children to pick out a new fruit to try later at home.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with fruit slices.
- Top off a bowl of cereal with some berries. Or, make a smiley face with sliced bananas for eyes, raisins for a nose, and an orange slice for a mouth.
- Offer raisins or other dried fruits instead of candy.
- Make fruit kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, and berries.
- Pack a juice box (100% juice) in children's lunches instead of soda or other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Look for and choose fruit options, such as sliced apples, mixed fruit cup, or 100% fruit juice in fast food restaurants.
- Offer fruit pieces and 100% fruit juice to children. There is often little fruit in "fruit-flavored" beverages or chewy fruit snacks.

Keep it safe:

- Rinse fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing.
- Keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.



What foods are in the Vegetable Group by Choose MyPlate.com

Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

Based on their nutrient content, vegetables are organized into 5 subgroups: dark-green vegetables, starchy vegetables, red and orange vegetables, [beans and peas](#), and other vegetables.

How many vegetables are needed?

The amount of vegetables you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended total daily amounts and recommended weekly amounts from each vegetable subgroup are shown in the two tables below.

DAILY VEGETABLE TABLE

DAILY RECOMMENDATION*

Children	2-3 years old	1 cup
	4-8 years old	1 ½ cups
Girls	9-13 years old	2 cups
	14-18 years old	2 ½ cups
Boys	9-13 years old	2 ½ cups
	14-18 years old	3 cups

DAILY VEGETABLE TABLE

DAILY RECOMMENDATION*

Women	19-30 years old	2 ½ cups
	31-50 years old	2 ½ cups
	51+ years old	2 cups
Men	19-30 years old	3 cups
	31-50 years old	3 cups
	51+ years old	2 ½ cups

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

Vegetable subgroup recommendations are given as amounts to eat WEEKLY. It is not necessary to eat vegetables from each subgroup daily. However, over a week, try to consume the amounts listed from each subgroup as a way to reach your daily intake recommendation.

WEEKLY VEGETABLE SUBGROUP TABLE

	DARK GREEN VEGETABLES	RED AND ORANGE VEGETABLES	BEANS AND PEAS	STARCHY VEGETABLES	OTHER VEGETABLES
	AMOUNT PER WEEK				
Children					
2-3 yrs old	½ cup	2 ½ cups	½ cup	2 cups	1 ½ cups
4-8 yrs old	1 cup	3 cups	½ cup	3 ½ cups	2 ½ cups
Girls					

WEEKLY VEGETABLE SUBGROUP TABLE

	DARK GREEN VEGETABLES	RED AND ORANGE VEGETABLES	BEANS AND PEAS	STARCHY VEGETABLES	OTHER VEGETABLES
	AMOUNT PER WEEK				
Girls					
9-13 yrs old	1 ½ cups	4 cups	1 cup	4 cups	3 ½ cup
14-18 yrs old	1 ½ cups	5 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
Boys					
9-13 yrs old	1 ½ cups	5 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
14-18 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
Women					
19-30 yrs old	1 ½ cups	5 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
31-50 yrs old	1 ½ cups	5 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
51+ yrs old	1 ½ cups	4 cups	1 cup	4 cups	3 ½ cups
Men					
19-30 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
31-50 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
51+ yrs old	1 ½ cups	5 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	5 cups	4 cups

What counts as a cup of vegetables?

In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the Vegetable Group. The table below lists specific amounts that count as 1 cup of vegetables (in some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your recommended intake.

CUP OF VEGETABLE TABLE		
	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF VEGETABLE	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1/2 CUP OF VEGETABLES
Dark Green Vegetables		
Broccoli	1 cup, chopped or florets 3 spears 5" long raw or cooked	
Greens (collards, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale)	1 cup, cooked	
Spinach	1 cup, cooked 2 cups, raw	1 cup, raw
Raw leafy greens: Spinach, romaine, watercress, dark green leafy lettuce, endive, escarole	2 cups, raw	1 cup, raw
Red and Orange Vegetables		
Carrots	1 cup, strips, slices, or chopped, raw or cooked 2 medium 1 cup baby carrots (about 12)	1 medium carrot About 6 baby carrots
Pumpkin	1 cup, mashed, cooked	
Red peppers	1 cup, chopped, raw, or cooked 1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3 3/4" long)	1 small pepper

CUP OF VEGETABLE TABLE

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF VEGETABLE	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1/2 CUP OF VEGETABLES
Tomatoes	1 large raw whole (3") 1 cup, chopped or sliced, raw, canned, or cooked	1 small raw whole (2 1/4" diameter) 1 medium canned
Tomato juice	1 cup	1/2 cup
Sweet potato	1 large baked (2 1/4" or more diameter) 1 cup, sliced or mashed, cooked	
Winter squash (acorn, butternut, hubbard)	1 cup, cubed, cooked	1/2 acorn squash, baked = 3/4 cup
Beans and Peas		
Dry beans and peas (such as black, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, or soy beans, or black-eyed peas or split peas)	1 cup, whole or mashed, cooked	
Starchy Vegetables		
Corn, yellow or white	1 cup 1 large ear (8" to 9" long)	1 small ear (about 6" long)
Green peas	1 cup	
White potatoes	1 cup, diced, mashed 1 medium boiled or baked potato (2 1/2" to 3" diameter)	
	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF VEGETABLES	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1/2 CUP OF VEGETABLES
Other Vegetables		

CUP OF VEGETABLE TABLE

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 CUP OF VEGETABLE	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1/2 CUP OF VEGETABLES
Bean sprouts	1 cup, cooked	
Cabbage, green	1 cup, chopped or shredded raw or cooked	
Cauliflower	1 cup, pieces or florets raw or cooked	
Celery	1 cup, diced or sliced, raw or cooked 2 large stalks (11" to 12" long)	1 large stalk (11" to 12" long)
Cucumbers	1 cup, raw, sliced or chopped	
Green or wax beans	1 cup, cooked	
Green peppers	1 cup, chopped, raw or cooked 1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3 3/4" long)	1 small pepper
Lettuce, iceberg or head	2 cups, raw, shredded or chopped	1 cup, raw, shredded or chopped
Mushrooms	1 cup, raw or cooked	
Onions	1 cup, chopped, raw or cooked	
Summer squash or zucchini	1 cup, cooked, sliced or diced	

Why is it important to eat vegetables by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

Eating vegetables provides health benefits – people who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall [healthy diet](#) are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.

Nutrients



- Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol. (Sauces or seasonings may add fat, calories, and/or cholesterol.)
- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, and vitamin C.
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Vegetable sources of potassium include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.
- Dietary fiber from vegetables, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as vegetables help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.
- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.
- Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
- Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Vitamin C aids in iron absorption.

Health benefits

- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall [healthy diet](#) may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- Eating a diet rich in some vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers.

- Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as some vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating vegetables and fruits rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- Eating foods such as vegetables that are lower in calories per cup instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie intake.

Tips to help you eat vegetables by My Plate.com



In general:

- [Buy fresh vegetables in season](#). They cost less and are likely to be at their peak flavor.
- Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.
- Buy vegetables that are easy to prepare. Pick up pre-washed bags of salad greens and add baby carrots or grape tomatoes for a salad in minutes. Buy packages of veggies such as baby carrots or celery sticks for quick snacks.
- Use a microwave to quickly “zap” vegetables. White or sweet potatoes can be baked quickly this way.
- Vary your veggie choices to keep meals interesting.
- Try crunchy vegetables, raw or lightly steamed.

For the best nutritional value:

- Select vegetables with more potassium often, such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.
- Sauces or seasonings can add calories, saturated fat, and sodium to vegetables. Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) to compare the calories and % Daily Value for saturated fat and sodium in plain and seasoned vegetables.
- Prepare more foods from fresh ingredients to lower sodium intake. Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged or processed foods.
- Buy canned vegetables labeled “reduced sodium,” “low sodium,” or “no salt added.” If you want to add a little salt it will likely be less than the amount in the regular canned product.

At meals:

- Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish, such as a vegetable stir-fry or soup. Then add other foods to complement it.
- Try a main dish salad for lunch. Go light on the salad dressing.

- Include a green salad with your dinner every night.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, and muffins.
- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers, and onions, and ask for extra veggies.
- Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken stews, soups and gravies. These add flavor, nutrients, and texture.
- Grill vegetable kabobs as part of a barbecue meal. Try tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions.

Make vegetables more appealing:

- Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, red and green peppers, celery sticks or cauliflower.
- Add color to salads by adding baby carrots, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves. Include in-season vegetables for variety through the year.
- Include [beans or peas](#) in flavorful mixed dishes, such as chili or minestrone soup.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with vegetable slices.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional, but consider red or green pepper strips, broccoli florets, or cucumber slices.

Vegetable tips for children:

- Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.
- Let children decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.
- Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- Use cut-up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.
- Children often prefer foods served separately. So, rather than mixed vegetables try serving two vegetables separately.

Keep it safe:

- Rinse vegetables before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub vegetables briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing.
- Keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

What foods are in the Grains Group by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products.

Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, Whole Grains and Refined Grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. *Some examples of refined grain products* are white flour, de-germed cornmeal, white bread, and white rice.

Most refined grains are enriched. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word "enriched" is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains.

How many grain foods are needed daily?

The amount of grains you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are listed in this table below. Most Americans consume enough grains, but few are whole grains. **At least half of all the grains eaten should be whole grains.**

DAILY GRAIN TABLE			
		DAILY RECOMMENDATION*	DAILY MINIMUM AMOUNT OF WHOLE GRAINS
Children	2-3 years old	3 ounce equivalents	1 ½ ounce equivalents
	4-8 years old	5 ounce equivalents	2 ½ ounce equivalents
Girls	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
Boys	9-13 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	8 ounce equivalents	4 ounce equivalents
Women	19-30 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
Men	19-30 years old	8 ounce equivalents	4 ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	7 ounce equivalents	3 ½ ounce equivalents
	51+ years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

What counts as an ounce-equivalent of grains?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Grains Group. The table below lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce-equivalent of grains towards your daily recommended intake. In some cases the number of ounce-equivalents for common portions are also shown.

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE			
		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
Bagels	WG**: whole wheat RG**: plain, egg	1" mini bagel	1 large bagel = 4 ounce-equivalents
Biscuits	(baking powder/ buttermilk - RG*)	1 small (2" diameter)	1 large (3" diameter) = 2 ounce-equivalents
Breads	WG**: 100% Whole Wheat RG**: white, wheat, French, sourdough	1 regular slice 1 small slice, French 4 snack-size slices rye bread	2 regular slices = 2 ounce-equivalents
Bulgur	cracked wheat (WG**)	½ cup, cooked	
Cornbread	(RG**)	1 small piece (2 ½" x 1 ¼" x 1 ¼")	1 medium piece (2 ½" x 2 ½" x 1 ¼") = 2ounce-

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE

		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
			equivalents
Crackers	WG**: 100% whole wheat, rye RG**: saltines, snack crackers	5 whole wheat crackers 2 rye crispbreads 7 square or round crackers	
English muffins	WG**: whole wheat RG**: plain, raisin	½ muffin	1 muffin = 2 ounce-equivalents
Muffins	WG**: whole wheat RG**: bran, corn, plain	1 small (2 ½" diameter)	1 large (3 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce-equivalents
Oatmeal	(WG**)	½ cup, cooked 1 packet instant 1 ounce (1/3 cup), dry (regular or quick)	
Pancakes	WG**: Whole wheat, buckwheat RG**: buttermilk, plain	1 pancake (4 ½" diameter) 2 small pancakes (3" diameter)	3 pancakes (4 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce-equivalents
Popcorn	(WG**)	3 cups, popped	1 mini microwave bag or 100-calorie bag, popped

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS TABLE

		AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
			= 2 ounce-equivalents
Ready-to eat breakfast cereal	WG**: toasted oat, whole wheat flakes RG**: corn flakes, puffed rice	1 cup, flakes or rounds 1 ¼ cup, puffed	
Rice	WG*: brown, wild RG*: enriched, white, polished	½ cup cooked 1 ounce, dry	1 cup, cooked = 2 ounce-equivalents
Pasta-- spaghetti, macaroni, noodles	WG**: whole wheat RG**: enriched, durum	½ cup, cooked 1 ounce, dry	1 cup, cooked = 2 ounce-equivalents
Tortillas	WG**: whole wheat, whole grain corn RG**: Flour, corn	1 small flour tortilla (6" diameter) 1 corn tortilla (6" diameter)	1 large tortilla (12" diameter) = 4 ounce-equivalents

*WG = whole grains, RG = refined grains. This is shown when products are available both in whole grain and refined grain forms.

Why is it important to eat grains, especially whole grains by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

Eating grains, especially whole grains, provides health benefits. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Grains provide many nutrients that are vital for the health and maintenance of our bodies.



Nutrients

- Grains are important sources of many nutrients, including [dietary fiber](#), several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals ([iron](#), [magnesium](#), and [selenium](#)).
- Dietary fiber from whole grains or other foods, may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as whole grains help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.
- The B vitamins thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin play a key role in metabolism – they help the body release energy from protein, fat, and carbohydrates. B vitamins are also essential for a healthy nervous system. Many refined grains are enriched with these B vitamins.
- Folate (folic acid), another B vitamin, helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.
- Iron is used to carry oxygen in the blood. Many teenage girls and women in their childbearing years have iron-deficiency anemia. They should eat foods high in heme-iron (meats) or eat other iron containing foods along with foods rich in vitamin C, which can improve absorption of non-heme iron. Whole and enriched refined grain products are major sources of non-heme iron in American diets.
- Whole grains are sources of magnesium and selenium. Magnesium is a mineral used in building bones and releasing energy from muscles. Selenium protects cells from oxidation. It is also important for a healthy immune system.

Health benefits

- Consuming whole grains as part of a healthy diet may reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Consuming foods containing fiber, such as whole grains, as part of a healthy diet, may reduce constipation.
- Eating whole grains may help with weight management.
- Eating grain products fortified with folate before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects during fetal development.

Tips to help you eat whole grains

At meals:

- To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product – such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to *substitute* the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than *adding* the whole-grain product.
- For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in a casserole or stir-fry.
- Create a whole grain pilaf with a mixture of barley, wild rice, brown rice, broth and spices. For a special touch, stir in toasted nuts or chopped dried fruit.
- Experiment by substituting whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.
- Use whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs in meatloaf.
- Try rolled oats or a crushed, unsweetened whole grain cereal as breading for baked chicken, fish, veal cutlets, or eggplant parmesan.
- Try an unsweetened, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal as croutons in salad or in place of crackers with soup.
- Freeze leftover cooked brown rice, bulgur, or barley. Heat and serve it later as a quick side dish.



As snacks:

- Snack on ready-to-eat, whole grain cereals such as toasted oat cereal.
- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked treats.
- Try 100% whole-grain snack crackers.
- Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack if made with little or no added salt and butter.

What to look for on the food label:

- Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the label's ingredient list:

Whole grain ingredients	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• brown rice• buckwheat• bulgur• millet• oatmeal• popcorn• quinoa• rolled oats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whole-grain barley• whole-grain corn• whole-grain sorghum• whole-grain triticale• whole oats• whole rye• whole wheat• wild rice

- Foods labeled with the words "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually not whole-grain products.

- Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.
- Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) and choose whole grain products with a higher % Daily Value (% DV) for fiber. Many, but not all, whole grain products are good or excellent sources of fiber.
- Read the food label's ingredient list. Look for terms that indicate added sugars (such as sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, malt syrup, maple syrup, molasses, or raw sugar) that add extra calories. Choose foods with fewer added sugars.
- Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged foods. Similar packaged foods can vary widely in sodium content, including breads. Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods with a lower % DV for sodium. Foods with less than 140 mg sodium per serving can be labeled as low sodium foods. Claims such as "low in sodium" or "very low in sodium" on the front of the food label can help you identify foods that contain less salt (or sodium).

Whole grain tips for children

- Set a good example for children by eating whole grains with meals or as snacks.
- Let children select and help prepare a whole grain side dish.
- Teach older children to read the ingredient list on cereals or snack food packages and choose those with whole grains at the top of the list.

Last Updated: Jun 16, 2015

What foods are in the Protein Foods Group by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Beans and peas are also part of the Vegetable Group. For more information on beans and peas, see [Beans and Peas Are Unique Foods](#).

Select a variety of protein foods to improve nutrient intake and health benefits, including at least 8 ounces of cooked seafood per week. Young children need less, depending on their age and calorie needs. The advice to consume seafood does not apply to vegetarians. Vegetarian options in the Protein Foods Group include beans and peas, processed soy products, and nuts and seeds. Meat and poultry choices should be lean or low-fat.

How much food from the Protein Foods Group is needed daily?

The amount of food from the Protein Foods Group you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. Most Americans eat enough food from this group, but need to make leaner and more varied selections of these foods. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the table below.

DAILY PROTEIN FOODS TABLE		
DAILY RECOMMENDATION*		
Children	2-3 years old	2 ounce equivalents
	4-8 years old	4 ounce equivalents
Girls	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	5 ounce equivalents
Boys	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	6 ½ ounce equivalents
Women	19-30 years old	5 ½ ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	5 ounce equivalents
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents
Men	19-30 years old	6 ½ ounce equivalents
	31-50 years old	6 ounce equivalents

DAILY PROTEIN FOODS TABLE

DAILY RECOMMENDATION*

	51+ years old	5 ½ ounce equivalents
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*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

What counts as an ounce-equivalent in the Protein Foods Group?

In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Protein Foods Group.

This table below lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce-equivalent in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake.

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF PROTEIN FOODS TABLE

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT IN THE PROTEIN FOODS GROUP	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
Meats	1 ounce cooked lean beef 1 ounce cooked lean pork or ham	1 small steak (eye of round, filet) = 3 ½ to 4 ounce-equivalents 1 small lean hamburger = 2 to 3 ounce-equivalents
Poultry	1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey, without skin 1 sandwich slice of turkey (4 ½" x 2 ½" x 1/8")	1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounce-equivalents ½ Cornish game hen = 4 ounce-equivalents
Seafood	1 ounce cooked fish or shell fish	1 can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4

OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF PROTEIN FOODS TABLE

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT IN THE PROTEIN FOODS GROUP	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE-EQUIVALENTS
		ounce-equivalents 1 salmon steak = 4 to 6 ounce-equivalents 1 small trout = 3 ounce-equivalents
Eggs	1 egg	3 egg whites = 2 ounce-equivalents 3 egg yolks = 1 ounce-equivalent
Nuts and seeds	½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) ½ ounce of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, or squash seeds, hulled, roasted) 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter	1 ounce of nuts or seeds = 2 ounce-equivalents
Beans and peas	¼ cup of cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans) ¼ cup of cooked peas (such as chickpeas, cowpeas, lentils, or split peas) ¼ cup of baked beans, refried beans ¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 ox. tempeh, cooked ¼ cup roasted soybeans 1 falafel patty (2 ¼", 4 oz) 2 Tablespoons hummus	1 cup split pea soup = 2 ounce-equivalents 1 cup lentil soup = 2 ounce-equivalents 1 cup bean soup = 2 ounce-equivalents 1 soy or bean burger patty = 2 ounce-equivalents

Selection Tips

- Choose lean or low-fat meat and poultry. If higher fat choices are made, such as regular ground beef (75-80% lean) or chicken with skin, the fat counts against your limit for calories from saturated fats.
- If solid fat is added in cooking, such as frying chicken in shortening or frying eggs in butter or stick margarine, this also counts against your limit for calories from saturated fats.

- Select some seafood that is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, sardines, anchovies, herring, Pacific oysters, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel.
- Processed meats such as ham, sausage, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the Nutrition Facts label to help limit sodium intake. Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as “self-basting” or “contains up to ___% of ___”, which mean that a sodium-containing solution has been added to the product.
- Choose unsalted nuts and seeds to keep sodium intake low.

Last Updated: Jul 29, 2016

Why is it important to make lean or low-fat choices from the Protein Foods Group by ChooseMyPlate.gov?

Foods in the meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and seed group provide nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your body. However, choosing foods from this group that are high in saturated fat and cholesterol may have health implications.

The chart below lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake:

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE EQUIVALENT IN THE PROTEIN FOODS GROUP	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE EQUIVALENTS
Meats	1 ounce cooked lean beef 1 ounce cooked lean pork or ham	1 small steak (eye of round, filet) = 3/12 to 4 ounce equivalents 1 small lean hamburger = 2 to 3 ounce equivalents
Poultry	1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey, without skin 1 sandwich slice of turkey (4 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 1/8")	1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounce equivalents 1/2 Cornish game hen = 4 ounce equivalents
Seafood	1 ounce cooked fish or shell fish	1 can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4 ounce equivalents 1 salmon steak = 4 to 6 ounce equivalents

	AMOUNT THAT COUNTS AS 1 OUNCE EQUIVALENT IN THE PROTEIN FOODS GROUP	COMMON PORTIONS AND OUNCE EQUIVALENTS
		1 small trout = 3 ounce equivalents
Eggs	1 egg	3 egg whites = 2 ounce equivalents 3 egg yolks = 1 ounce equivalent
Nuts and seeds	1/2 ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) 1/2 ounce of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, or squash seeds, hulled, roasted) 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter	1 ounce of nuts or seeds = 2 ounce equivalents
Beans and peas	1/4 cup of cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans) 1/4 cup of cooked peas (such as chickpeas, cowpeas, lentils, or split peas) 1/4 cup of baked beans, refried beans 1/4 cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 oz. tempeh, cooked 1/4 cup roasted soybeans 1 falafel patty (2 1/4", 4 oz) 2 Tablespoons hummus	1 cup split pea soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup lentil soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup bean soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 soy or bean burger patty = 2 ounce equivalents



Nutrients

- Diets that are high in saturated fats raise “bad” cholesterol levels in the blood. The “bad” cholesterol is called LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. High LDL cholesterol, in turn, increases the risk for coronary heart disease. Some food choices in this group are high in saturated fat. These include fatty cuts of beef, pork, and lamb; regular (75% to 85% lean) ground beef; regular sausages, hot dogs, and bacon; some luncheon

meats such as regular bologna and salami; and some poultry such as duck. To help keep blood cholesterol levels healthy, limit the amount of these foods you eat.

- Diets that are high in cholesterol can raise LDL cholesterol levels in the blood. Cholesterol is only found in foods from animal sources. Some foods from this group are high in cholesterol. These include egg yolks (egg whites are cholesterol-free) and organ meats such as liver and giblets. To help keep blood cholesterol levels healthy, limit the amount of these foods you eat.
- A high intake of fats makes it difficult to avoid consuming more calories than are needed.

Why is it important to eat 8 ounces of seafood per week?

- Seafood contains a range of nutrients, notably the omega-3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA. Eating about 8 ounces per week of a variety of seafood contributes to the prevention of heart disease. Smaller amounts of seafood are recommended for young children.
- Seafood varieties that are commonly consumed in the United States that are higher in EPA and DHA and lower in mercury include salmon, anchovies, herring, sardines, Pacific oysters, trout, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel (not king mackerel, which is high in mercury). The health benefits from consuming seafood outweigh the health risk associated with mercury, a heavy metal found in seafood in varying levels.

Health benefits

- Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds supply many nutrients. These include protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium.
- Proteins function as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, and blood. They are also building blocks for enzymes, hormones, and vitamins. Proteins are one of three nutrients that provide calories (the others are fat and carbohydrates).
- B vitamins found in this food group serve a variety of functions in the body. They help the body release energy, play a vital role in the function of the nervous system, aid in the formation of red blood cells, and help build tissues.
- Iron is used to carry oxygen in the blood. Many teenage girls and women in their child-bearing years have iron-deficiency anemia. They should eat foods high in heme-iron (meats) or eat other non-heme iron containing foods along with a food rich in vitamin C, which can improve absorption of non-heme iron.
- Magnesium is used in building bones and in releasing energy from muscles.
- Zinc is necessary for biochemical reactions and helps the immune system function properly.
- EPA and DHA are omega-3 fatty acids found in varying amounts in seafood. Eating 8 ounces per week of seafood may help reduce the risk for heart disease.

What are the benefits of eating nuts and seeds?

- Eating peanuts and certain tree nuts (i.e., walnuts, almonds, and pistachios) may reduce the risk of heart disease when consumed as part of a diet that is nutritionally adequate and within calorie needs. Because nuts and seeds are high in calories, eat them in small portions and use them to replace other protein foods, like some meat or poultry, rather than adding them to what you already eat. In addition, choose unsalted nuts and seeds to help reduce sodium intakes.

Tips to help you make wise choices from the Protein Foods Group

Go lean with protein:

- The leanest beef cuts include round steaks and roasts (eye of round, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
- The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, and ham.
- Choose lean ground beef. To be considered "lean," the product has to be at least 92% lean/8% fat.
- Buy skinless chicken parts, or take off the skin before cooking.
- Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
- Choose lean turkey, roast beef, ham, or low-fat luncheon meats for sandwiches instead of luncheon/deli meats with more fat, such as regular bologna or salami.

Vary your protein choices:

- Choose seafood at least twice a week as the main protein food. Look for seafood rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring. Some ideas are:
 - Salmon steak or filet
 - Salmon loaf
 - Grilled or baked trout
- Choose beans, peas, or soy products as a main dish or part of a meal often. Some choices are:
 - Chili with kidney or pinto beans
 - Stir-fried tofu
 - Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups
 - Baked beans
 - Black bean enchiladas
 - Garbanzo or kidney beans on a chef's salad
 - Rice and beans
 - Veggie burgers
 - Hummus (chickpeas spread) on pita bread
- Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Use nuts to *replace* meat or poultry, not *in addition* to these items:
 - Use pine nuts in pesto sauce for pasta.
 - Add slivered almonds to steamed vegetables.
 - Add toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir fry instead of meat.
 - Sprinkle a few nuts on top of low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt.
 - Add walnuts or pecans to a green salad instead of cheese or meat.

What to look for on the food label:

- Check the [Nutrition Facts Label](#) for the saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of packaged foods.
 - Processed meats such as hams, sausages, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the ingredient and Nutrition Facts label to help limit sodium intake.
 - Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as "self-basting" or "contains up to ___% of ___."
 - Lower fat versions of many processed meats are available. Look on the Nutrition Facts label to choose products with less fat and saturated fat.

Keep it safe to eat:

- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not wash or rinse meat or poultry.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next one.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms. Use a meat thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry, to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through.

- Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours.
- Plan ahead to defrost foods. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter at room temperature. Thaw food by placing it in the refrigerator, submerging air-tight packaged food in cold tap water (change water every 30 minutes), or defrosting on a plate in the microwave.
- Avoid raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs and raw or undercooked meat and poultry.
- Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children should avoid some types of fish and eat types lower in mercury. Call 1-888-SAFEFOOD for more information.



MyPlate is a reminder to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime. Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. This means:

- Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.
- Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- Support healthy eating for everyone.

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including our stage of life, situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time. All your food and beverage choices count. MyPlate offers ideas and tips to help you create a healthier eating style that meets your individual needs and improves your health.

Build a Healthy Eating Style

All food and beverage choices matter – focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.

- Focus on making healthy food and beverage choices from all five food groups including [fruits](#), [vegetables](#), [grains](#), [protein foods](#), and [dairy](#) to get the nutrients you need.
- [Eat the right amount of calories for you](#) based on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level.
- Building a [healthier eating style](#) can help you avoid overweight and obesity and reduce your risk of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Choose an eating style low in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.

- Use [Nutrition Facts labels](#) and ingredient lists to find amounts of saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars in the foods and beverages you choose.
- Look for food and drink choices that are lower in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar.
 - Eating fewer calories from foods high in saturated fat and added sugars can help you manage your calories and prevent overweight and obesity. Most of us eat too many foods that are high in saturated fat and added sugar.
 - Eating foods with less sodium can reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

Make small changes to create a healthier eating style.

- Think of each change as a personal “win” on your path to living healthier. Each [MyWin](#) is a change you make to build your healthy eating style. Find little victories that fit into your lifestyle and celebrate as a MyWin!
- Start with a few of these small changes.
 - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
 - Focus on whole fruits.
 - Vary your veggies.
 - Make half your grains whole grains.
 - Move to low-fat and fat-free dairy.
 - Vary your protein routine.
 - Eat and drink the right amount for you.

Support healthy eating for everyone.

- Create settings where healthy choices are available and affordable to you and others in your community.
- Professionals, policymakers, partners, industry, families, and individuals can help others in their journey to make healthy eating a part of their lives.