

# MyPlate snack tips for parents

**Snacks can help children get the nutrients needed to grow.** Prepare snacks that include two or more food groups. For younger children, help them get just enough to satisfy their hunger. Let older kids make their own snacks by keeping healthy foods in the kitchen. Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to help you and your kids select a satisfying snack.

## 1 Save time by slicing veggies

Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator and serve with hummus. Top half of a whole-wheat English muffin with spaghetti sauce, chopped vegetables, and low-fat shredded mozzarella and melt in the microwave.

## 2 Mix it up

For older school-age kids, mix dried fruit, unsalted nuts, and popcorn in a snack-size bag for a quick trail mix. Put fat-free yogurt, 100% fruit juice, and frozen peaches in a blender to make a tasty smoothie.



## 6 Keep an eye on the size

Snacks shouldn't replace a meal, so look for ways to help your kids understand how much is enough. Store snack-size bags in the cupboard and use them to control serving sizes.

## 7 Fruits are quick and easy

Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits, such as applesauce, frozen grapes, or raisins, can be easy "grab-and-go" options that need little preparation. Offer whole fruit and limit the amount of 100% juice served. Choose canned fruits that are lowest in added sugars.



## 3 Grab a glass of milk

A cup of low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage is an easy way to drink a healthy snack.

## 4 Go for great whole grains

Offer whole-wheat breads, popcorn, and whole-oat cereals that are high in fiber and low in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Limit refined-grain products such as snack bars, cakes, and sweetened cereals.



## 8 Consider convenience

A single-serving container of low-fat yogurt or individually wrapped string cheese can be just enough for an afterschool snack.



## 9 Swap out the sugar

Keep healthier foods handy so kids avoid cookies, pastries, or candies between meals. Add seltzer water to a ½ cup of 100% fruit juice instead of offering soda.

## 5 Snack on protein foods

Choose protein foods such as unsalted nuts and seeds, hummus or other bean dips, and hard-cooked (boiled) eggs for a healthy, easy snack. Store hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator for up to 1 week for kids to enjoy any time.

## 10 Prepare homemade goodies

For homemade sweets, add dried fruits like apricots or raisins and reduce the amount of sugar in the recipe. Adjust recipes that include fats like butter or shortening by using unsweetened applesauce or prune puree for half the amount of fat.

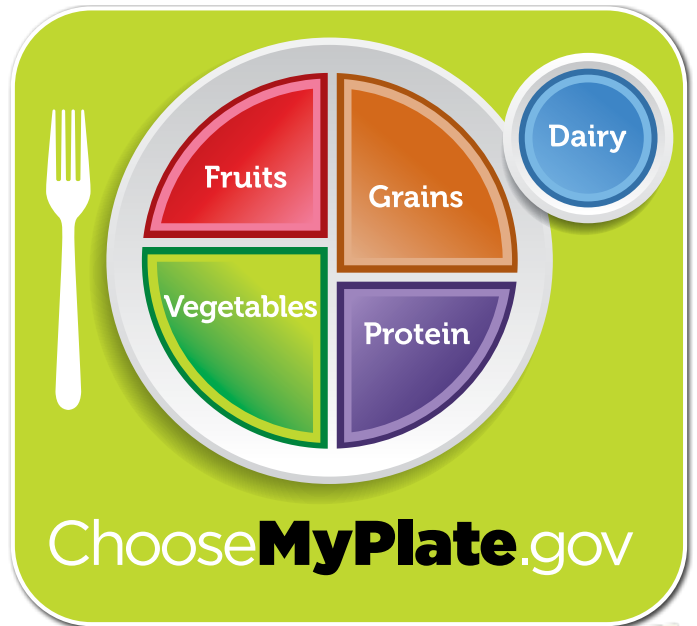
# MyPlate at Home

## 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>.

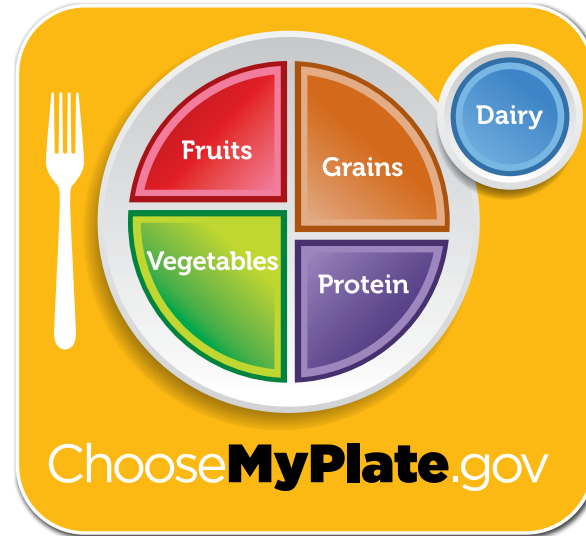


# What's for Dinner? Healthier Choices Made Easier

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



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

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.

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.



MyPlate at Home

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