



Live Healthy Georgia

Seniors Taking Charge

Getting to Know MyPlate

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Do you remember The Food Guide Pyramid? Six food groups, six different colors, and a stick figure climbing up the side? For many people, it was confusing to figure out what you were supposed to eat each day. Three servings of vegetables . . . two servings of fruits . . . three glasses of milk What does this really look like on my plate? In 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture introduced a new tool to help individuals figure what to eat to maintain a healthy weight – MyPlate. Although this plan is simpler than MyPyramid, the picture still begs for some interpretation. This newsletter will help you decipher what MyPlate means, as well as introduce you to the customizable plans on the [SuperTracker](#).

First things first – size matters



MyPlate is actually a 9-inch plate, which is smaller than what most Americans use for dinner. Think of it as the salad plate

in a set of dishes. This size helps keep portions from becoming “oversized.”

Not all groups are equal size

When you look at MyPlate, you will notice that the Fruits and Vegetables take up about half of the plate. However, the section devoted to vegetables is slightly larger than the fruits. In addition, the protein section is slightly smaller than the grains section. The dairy is shown in a glass, but it can be a cup of low-fat or fat-free milk, pudding, or yogurt, or a serving of low-fat cheese.

Some people may feel that they can't eat all of the food represented at every meal. The recommended amount of food can be divided into several small meals and snacks throughout the day. Below is a sample meal plan based on 2000 calories.

Breakfast
1 ounce grains
½ cup fruit
½ cup dairy
Morning Snack
1 ounce grains
1 cup fruit
Lunch
2 ounces grains
1 cup vegetables
½ cup fruit
1 cup dairy
2 ½ ounces protein foods
Afternoon Snack
½ cup vegetables
½ cup dairy
Dinner
2 ounces grains
1 cup vegetables
1 cup dairy
3 ounces protein foods

Variety is key

In order to get all of the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that you need, it's important to have variety within each food group. Throughout the week, try to eat the following:

Vegetables

- 1 ½ cups of dark leafy greens
- 5 ½ cups of red and orange
- 1 ½ cups of beans and peas
- 5 cups of starchy vegetables
- 4 cups of other vegetables

Fruits

- 2 cups per day
- Try berries, bananas, apples, pears, citrus fruit, or whatever is in season

Dairy

- 3 cups per day
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, or pudding
- 1 ½ ounces of low-fat cheese count as a cup of milk

Grains

- 6 ounces per day
- Make half your grains whole grains
- 1 slice of bread, ½ cup cooked pasta or rice, or 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal flakes is a 1-ounce serving

Protein foods

- 5 ½ ounces per day
- 3 ounces is the size of a deck of cards
- Include 8 ounces per week of seafood, such as salmon or other fatty fish.

Oils

- 6 teaspoons per day
- Use heart-healthy oils, such as canola or olive oil

Don't forget to exercise!

Exercise is just as important as what you eat. Most adults should participate in moderate-intensity activities, such as walking, at least 30 minutes most days of the week. If you haven't exercised in awhile, check with your doctor to be sure that it is safe for you to begin an exercise routine.



Explore more with SuperTracker

If you would like a customized eating plan, with lots of tips for foods to include, sample meal plans, and a way to track how you're doing, USDA recently released the [SuperTracker](#). To get started, click on the "Create My Profile" button on the right-hand side of the screen to enter your age, height, and weight to receive a customized plan. Save your profile settings to be able to use the tracker feature to see if you meet your goals.

Resources:

1. USDA. ChooseMyPlate. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
2. USDA. SuperTracker. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/SuperTracker/default.aspx>

Images

1. http://www.diseaseproof.com/uploads/image/myplate_green.jpg
2. http://images.meredith.com/dlv/images/2010/10/ss_PlateSlide1.jpg
3. http://kpbs.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/img/croppedphotos/2009/05/21/exercise_t614.jpg?a3ca5463f16dc11451266bb717d38a6025dcea0e