

Food Groups





Are you interested in healthy eating and having a balanced diet? If so, you'll want to learn more about food groups.

This section helps explain the food groups based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 and provides information about food plans. There are five groups consisting of vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy and a protein group which includes meat, poultry, fish and nuts. MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image – a place setting for a meal – and display how much of each food group you need to eat for a healthy diet.



What are the Basic Food Groups?

Food Groups	Examples	
Vegetables	The vegetables you eat may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried and may be eaten whole, cut-up, or mashed. You should eat a variety of dark green, red and orange vegetables, as well as beans and peas (which are also considered part of the protein group). Examples include broccoli, carrots, collard greens, split peas, green beans, black-eyed peas, kale, lima beans, potatoes, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and kidney beans. Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts in this group.	
Fruits	The fruits you eat may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried and may be eaten whole, cut-up, or pureed. Examples include apples, apricots, bananas, dates, grapes, oranges, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, peaches, pineapples, raisins, strawberries, tangerines, and 100% fruit juice.	

Grains

There are two types of grains – whole grains and refined grains. At least half of the grains you eat should be whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, whole-grain cereals and crackers, oatmeal, bulgur, and brown rice. Refined grains include white bread, white rice, enriched pasta, flour tortillas, and most noodles.



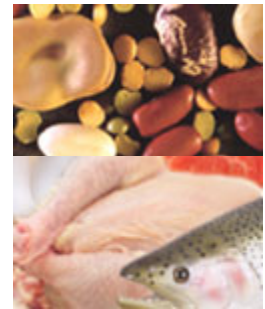
Dairy

Most of your choices should be fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, but all milks and calcium-containing milk products count in this category. Examples include milk, cheeses, and yogurt as well as lactose-free and lactose-reduced products and soy beverages. Foods that are made from milk but have little or no calcium are not included, such as butter, cream, sour cream, and cream cheese.



Protein Foods

Choose a variety of lean meats and poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, unsalted nuts, and seeds. Make sure to eat at least 8 ounces of seafood each week.



*Oils are NOT a food group, but they provide essential nutrients such as vitamin E.

How Much of Each Food Group Should I Eat?

The amount of food you need to eat from each group depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. For information about the food groups and the recommended daily amounts visit ChooseMyPlate.gov [Daily Food Plans](#). For easy advice on creating a healthy balanced plate visit – [10 Tips to a great plate](#).

Food Plans

A healthy eating plan will show you how much you need from each food group to stay within your calorie needs and promote good health. A healthy eating plan can also help you learn:

- How many calories you need each day and how to balance your calorie needs.
- How much of each food group you should consume.
- How to make healthy choices in each food group.

For more information about food plans visit: [Food Plans at MyPlate.gov](#)

Vegetarian Plans can meet all the recommendations for nutrients. The key is to consume a variety of foods and the right amount of foods to meet your calorie needs. Visit [MyPlate.gov](#) [for Vegetarian Tips](#).

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