



# USDA MyPlate Plan

## EXTENSION

April 2021

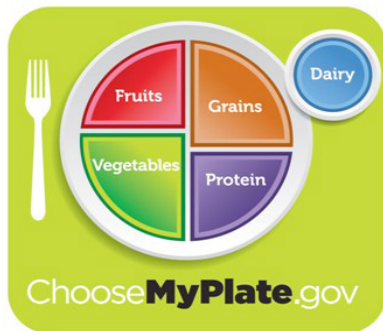
Janice Hermann, Ph.D., RD/LD  
Extension Nutrition Education Specialist

### USDA MyPlate Plan

The USDA MyPlate Plan is a guide to help you plan a healthful diet. The USDA MyPlate Plan is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The USDA MyPlate Plan provides the amount of foods you can eat each day for a healthful diet. The USDA MyPlate Plan also provides limits for sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

### USDA MyPlate Food Groups

MyPlate is USDA's food group symbol. The MyPlate symbol is a reminder to make healthy food choices. Each USDA MyPlate food group is represented by a different color on MyPlate.

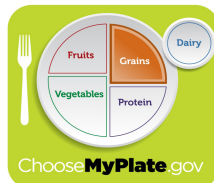


- Grains – orange.
- Vegetables – green.
- Fruits – red.
- Dairy – blue.
- Protein foods – purple.

### Grains: Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is part of this group. Grains are divided into either whole grains or refined grains. In general 1 ounce from the grains group is:

- 1 slice of bread.
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal.
- ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal.



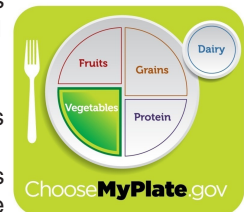
### Vegetables: Vary Your Veggies

Any vegetable or 100 percent vegetable juice is part of this group. Vegetables are divided into five subgroups includ-

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets  
are also available on our website at:  
**facts.okstate.edu**

ing dark green vegetables; red and orange vegetables; beans, peas and lentils; starchy vegetables and other vegetables. In general, 1 cup from the vegetables group is:

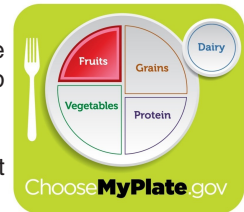
- 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice.
- 2 cups of raw leafy greens is considered as 1 cup from the vegetables group.



### Fruits: Focus on Fruits

Any fruit or 100 percent fruit juice is part of this group. In general 1 cup from the fruits group is:

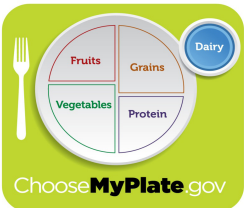
- 1 cup of fruit or 100 percent fruit juice.
- ½ cup of dried fruit.



### Dairy: Move to Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk or Yogurt

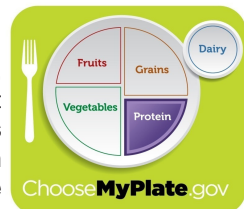
All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are part of this food group. Foods made from milk that keep their calcium content are part of this group. Foods made from milk with little or no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream or butter, are not part of this group. Calcium-fortified soymilk is also part of this food group. In general 1 cup from the dairy group is:

- 1 cup of milk, yogurt or soymilk.
- 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese.
- 2 ounces of processed cheese.



### Protein Foods: Vary Your Protein Routine

Meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds and soy products are part of this group. Beans, peas and lentils can be considered part of the protein foods group as well as the vegetable group, but should be counted in one group only.



In general, 1 cup from the vegetables group is:

- 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish.
- ¼ cup cooked dry beans.
- 1 egg.
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter.
- ½ ounce of nuts or seeds.

### Sodium, Saturated Fat and Added Sugars

Although not food groups, the USDA MyPlate Plan provides limits for fats (oils and saturated fats), sodium, and added sugars. Most of the fat you eat should be oils. Oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats and low in saturated fats. Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. Oils come from many plants and fish. Some salad dressings and soft margarine with no trans fats are counted as oils.

Solid fats tend to be high in saturated fat which can increase risk of certain chronic diseases. Solid fats are fats that tend to be solid at room temperature. Butter, shortening and animal fats are counted as solid fats. A few plant oils, such as coconut oil and palm kernel oil are high in saturated fats. Although these are liquid at room temperature they are counted as solid fats not oils.

## USDA MyPlate Plan

### Recommended Amounts

The USDA MyPlate Plan provides the amount you need to eat each day based on your estimated calorie needs. Your estimated calorie needs are based on your gender, age, and level of physical activity. You can get a personalized MyPlate Plan of the amount of food you should eat from each USDA MyPlate food group at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov).

### Planning Healthful Meals with the USDA MyPlate Plan

Use the USDA MyPlate Plan to find the types and amounts of food recommended each day for your calorie needs. For example, for 2,000 calories the USDA MyPlate Plan recommends:

- Grains 6 ounces
- Vegetables 2½ cups

- Fruits 2 cups
- Dairy 3 cups
- Protein foods 5½ ounces
- Oils 6 teaspoons
- Limit on calories for other uses 240 calories
- Limit sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams a day
- Limit saturated fat to less than 10% of calories a day
- Limit added sugars to less than 10% of calories a day

Spread the foods recommended by the USDA MyPlate Plan across the day into meals and snacks. Below is an example of spreading the amounts recommended for 2,000 calories into three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and a snack. How you spread the types and amounts of food recommended for your calorie needs across the day may look different, this is just an example.

### Build a Healthy Diet

Everything you eat and drink is important. A healthy diet can help you be healthier now and in the future. When building a health diet remember to:

- ✓ Focus on variety, amount and nutrition.
- ✓ Choose foods and beverages with less sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.
- ✓ Start with small changes to build healthier eating.
  - o Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
    - Focus on whole fruits.
    - Vary your veggies.
  - o Make half your grains whole grains.
  - o Move to low-fat and fat-free dairy.
  - o Vary your protein routine.
  - o Eat and drink the right amount for you.

### References

- United States Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020. Accessed at: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
- United States Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate.gov. Accessed at: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### Example of Spreading the Types and Amounts of Food Recommended by the USDA Daily Food Plan across the Day into Meals and Snacks

Food Groups	Amounts for 2,000 calories	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Dinner
Grains (oz)	6	2	2		2
Vegetables (cups)	2 ½		1		1 ½
Fruits (cups)	2	½	½	½	½
Dairy (cups)	3	1	1		1
Protein foods (oz)	5 ½		2		3 ½
Oils (tsp)	6	1	2		3

### Estimated Calorie Needs by Gender, Age and Activity Level

Males				Females			
Activity Level Age (yrs)	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active	Activity Level Age (yrs)	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active
2	1,000	1,000	1,000	2	1,000	1,000	1,000
3	1,000	1,400	1,400	3	1,000	1,200	1,400
4	1,200	1,400	1,600	4	1,200	1,400	1,400
5	1,200	1,400	1,600	5	1,200	1,400	1,600
6	1,400	1,600	1,800	6	1,200	1,400	1,600
7	1,400	1,600	1,800	7	1,200	1,600	1,800
8	1,400	1,600	2,000	8	1,400	1,600	1,800
9	1,600	1,800	2,000	9	1,400	1,600	1,800
10	1,600	1,800	2,200	10	1,400	1,800	2,000
11	1,800	2,000	2,200	11	1,600	1,800	2,000
12	1,800	2,200	2,400	12	1,600	2,000	2,200
13	2,000	2,200	2,600	13	1,600	2,000	2,200
14	2,000	2,400	2,800	14	1,800	2,000	2,400
15	2,200	2,600	3,000	15	1,800	2,000	2,400
16	2,400	2,800	3,200	16	1,800	2,000	2,400
17	2,400	2,800	3,200	17	1,800	2,000	2,400
18	2,400	2,800	3,200	18	1,800	2,000	2,400
19-20	2,600	2,800	3,000	19-20	2,000	2,200	2,400
21-25	2,400	2,800	3,000	21-25	2,000	2,200	2,400
26-30	2,400	2,600	3,000	26-30	1,800	2,000	2,400
31-35	2,400	2,600	3,000	31-35	1,800	2,000	2,200
36-40	2,400	2,600	2,800	36-40	1,800	2,000	2,200
41-45	2,200	2,600	2,800	41-45	1,800	2,000	2,200
46-50	2,200	2,400	2,800	46-50	1,800	2,000	2,200
51-55	2,200	2,400	2,800	51-55	1,600	1,800	2,200
56-60	2,200	2,400	2,600	56-60	1,600	1,800	2,200
61-65	2,000	2,400	2,600	61-65	1,600	1,800	2,000
66-70	2,000	2,200	2,600	66-70	1,600	1,800	2,000
71-75	2,000	2,200	2,600	71-75	1,600	1,800	2,000
76+	2,000	2,200	2,400	76+	1,600	1,800	2,000

**Sedentary** means a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity of independent living.

**Moderately Active** means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1 ½ to 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the physical activity of independent living.

**Active** means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the physical activity of independent living.

### USDA MyPlate Plan for Different Calorie Levels

Calorie Levels	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,600	2,800	3,000
Food Groups									
Grains (oz)	5	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	10
Vegetables (cups)	1 ½	2	2 ½	2 ½	3	3	3 ½	3 ½	4
Fruits (cups)	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	2	2	2	2	2 ½	2 ½
Dairy (cups)	2 ½	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Protein foods (oz)	4	5	5	5 ½	6	6 ½	6 ½	7	7
Oils (tsp)	4	5	5 ½	6	6 ½	7	7 ½	8	10
Limit on calories for other uses	90	100	140	240	250	320	350	370	440

# The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

## WE ARE OKLAHOMA

The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.
- It provides practical, problem-oriented education

for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.

- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

Oklahoma State University, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action. Oklahoma State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all individuals and does not discriminate based on race, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, or veteran status with regard to employment, educational programs and activities, and/or admissions. For more information, visit <https://eeo.okstate.edu>.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President for Agricultural Programs and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 20 cents per copy. Revised 04/2021 GH.