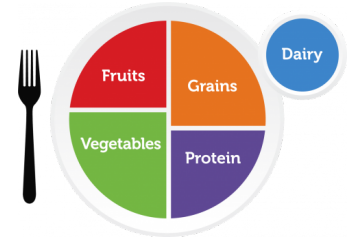


March 2026 Nutrition Article

March is National Nutrition Month, one of my favorite months of the year as a registered dietitian! Along with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, we often look to myplate.gov as a great resource for nutrition education

- My Plate is a free website that offers a number of services, reach out to your site manager or dietitian if you have any question
 - Be sure to get a “full plate” with every meal (information listed on image below)
 - Estimated calorie needs
 - Recipes
 - Healthy habits & Exercise education



Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
<p>Focus on whole fruits like fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.</p> <p>Buy fruits to have them available to add to your meal or eat as a snack. If you buy juice, select 100% fruit juice.</p>	<p>Eat a variety of vegetables and add them to mixed dishes like casseroles, sandwiches, and wraps.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, and canned count, too. Look for “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” on the label.</p>	<p>Choose whole-grain versions of common foods such as bread, pasta, and tortillas.</p> <p>Not sure if it’s whole grain? Check the ingredients list for the words “whole” or “whole grain.”</p>	<p>Eat a variety of protein foods such as beans, soy, seafood, lean meats, poultry, and unsalted nuts and seeds.</p> <p>Select seafood twice a week. Choose lean cuts of meat and ground beef that is at least 93% lean.</p>	<p>Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) dairy. Get the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as whole milk, but with less saturated fat and calories.</p> <p>Lactose intolerant? Try lactose-free milk or a fortified soy beverage.</p>
<p>Daily Food Group Targets — Based on a 2,000 Calorie Plan</p> <p>Visit MyPlate.gov/MyPlatePlan for a personalized plan.</p>				
<p>2 cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 small apple 1 large banana 1 cup grapes 1 cup sliced mango ½ cup raisins 1 cup 100% fruit juice 	<p>2½ cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups raw spinach 1 cup cooked collard, kale, or turnip greens 1 small avocado 1 large sweet potato 1 cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils 1 cup cut cauliflower 	<p>6 ounces</p> <p>1 ounce counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 slice of bread ½ cup cooked oatmeal 1 small tortilla ½ cup cooked brown rice ½ cup cooked couscous ½ cup cooked grits 	<p>5½ ounces</p> <p>1 ounce counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce cooked lean chicken, pork, or beef 1 ounce tuna fish ¼ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils 1 Tbsp peanut butter 2 Tbsp hummus 1 egg 	<p>3 cups</p> <p>1 cup counts as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup dairy milk or yogurt 1 cup lactose-free dairy milk or yogurt 1 cup fortified soy milk or yogurt ½ ounces hard cheese 1 cup kefir

Seasonal foods in February?

- Avocados
- Citrus - lemons, limes, oranges, etc.
- Asparagus
- Pineapples



Tropical Fruit Protein Fluff Salad

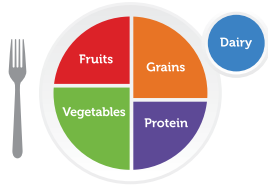
- 1 cup pineapple (fresh or canned) - 1 cup mandarin oranges (fresh or canned) - 1 sliced banana
- 1 cup Cool Whip (low fat) - ½ cup nuts (walnuts, pecans, peanuts, etc) - 2 cups cottage cheese

Drain canned fruit if needed.



Add all ingredients into a bowl, mix, and let cool in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours overnight. Enjoy!

Start *simple*
with MyPlate



Healthy Eating for Older Adults

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Make eating a social event

Enjoy meals with friends or family members as often as possible. Take advantage of technology to enjoy meals virtually with loved ones in different cities or States.



Drink plenty of liquids

You may not always feel thirsty when your body needs fluids, and that's why it's important to drink beverages throughout the day. Enjoy coffee and tea if you like, or some water, milk, or 100% juice.



Add a touch of spice

Limiting salt is important as you get older. Fresh and dried herbs and spices, such as basil, oregano, and parsley, add flavor without the salt.



Make the most of your food choices

Older adults need plenty of nutrients but fewer calories, so it's important to make every bite count. Foods that are full of vitamins and minerals are the best way to get what you need.



Be mindful of your nutrient needs

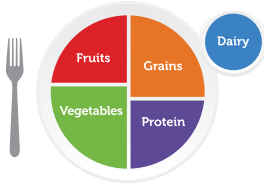
You may not be getting enough nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin B12, and also protein. Read the [Nutrition Facts label](#) on packaged foods and also speak with your healthcare provider about possible supplements.



Keep food safe

Discard food if it has an "off" odor, flavor, or texture. Refer to the "use by" dates for a guide to freshness. Canned or frozen foods store well if shopping trips are difficult.

Start simple
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Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what grains to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Have whole grains at breakfast

Enjoy a whole-grain hot cereal. Oatmeal is a favorite but consider trying a grain that's new to you, like buckwheat or millet. You might find a new breakfast favorite.



Enjoy a multigrain bowl

Create a one-dish meal by layering a mixture of grains like barley or wild rice with some colorful veggies and some low-fat cheese. Add your favorite protein and a dash of hot pepper sauce.



Swap your sandwich bread

Look for sandwich-type breads made with whole grains. Pita, tortillas, naan, sliced breads, and rolls are all available as whole grains.



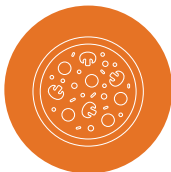
Choose whole-grain takeout

Ask about whole-grain options when dining out or ordering take-out food. For example, make a switch to whole-wheat pasta or brown or wild rice.



Experiment with a new grain

Cook a new grain like quinoa, amaranth, or millet. You can find cooking tips and recipes online. Grains are pretty versatile and also have lots of important nutrients.

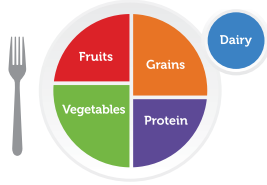


Switch up pizza night

Create individual, homemade pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins or tortillas. Or, make a traditional pizza using a premade whole-wheat flour. Don't forget the veggie toppings.



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Vary Your Protein Routine

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what protein foods to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Include protein in your snack

Try peanut or nut butter as a dip for apple or celery slices, or as a spread on whole-grain crackers. A hard-cooked (hard-boiled) egg with a dash of pepper also makes a good protein snack.



Keep seafood on hand

Canned seafood, such as salmon, tuna, or crab, is quick to prepare and enjoy. Canned items also store well.



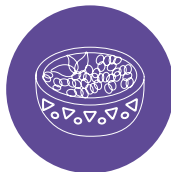
Add protein to your salad

Grilled chicken or shrimp adds tasty protein to a salad of mixed greens. Chickpeas or black beans are delicious, budget-friendly options, too.



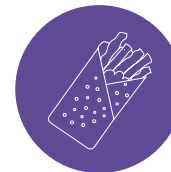
Take protein on the go

Pack a mixture of unsalted nuts and sunflower seeds for a crunchy snack. Add some dried fruit like raisins, cranberries, or chopped dates for a touch of sweetness.



Get creative with beans, peas, and lentils

Make chili or stews with kidney or pinto beans, have a bowl of split pea soup for lunch or dinner, or enjoy lentils as a side dish. Check online for recipe ideas.



Serve up lean beef

Broil lean beef cuts like sirloin, top round, or flank steak. Sliced into strips, they're great over greens, in a sandwich, or as is.

