



Steps to a healthier family

Tips for Family Mealtime

1 Make shared meals a priority

- Mark “family meal” dates on the calendar.
- Family meals can be shared at home, at a restaurant, in a park, or near a playing field.

2 Enjoy each other

- Turn off the television, radio, and cell phones.
- Encourage sharing comments about “good things that happened today.”
- Children learn social skills from watching and listening to adults. Practice being positive.

3 Dish up variety

- Use MyPlate and family preferences as a guide when planning meals.
- Save elaborate menus for occasions when you have time to prepare and enjoy them.

4 Share responsibility

- Give each person a task for each meal, such as choosing the menu, setting the table, pouring drinks, or cleaning up.
- Giving children some responsibility for preparing part of the meal increases their feelings of being part of the family.

➔ Bottom line

- Eating together has benefits even when it isn't possible daily. (For more ideas, see *Say “Yes” to Family Meals*, PM 1842)

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures.

Enjoying meals together helps anchor family members and build valuable memories.

Make smart choices from every food group

The daily food choices you and your family make can have a positive impact on your health today, tomorrow, and in the future. Our bodies need a variety of nutritious foods daily to get all the nutrients necessary for good health. One useful resource is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (7th edition), which includes the following five recommendations:

■ Make at least half your grains whole.

Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, and low-fat popcorn, more often.

■ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Include a variety of colors and types of vegetables over several days, including or such as:

- Dark green: spinach and broccoli
- Orange: carrots and sweet potatoes
- Starchy: corn and potatoes
- Dry beans and peas: pinto beans, black beans, and lentils
- Other vegetables: tomatoes and onions.

Eat fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit. Include 100 percent fruit juice as well but in smaller amounts and less frequently.

■ Get your calcium rich foods.

Choose low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese. Aim to get three cups of this food group each day.

■ Consume lean forms of proteins.

Choose lean meat and poultry to decrease intake of solid fats (such as 90 to 95 percent lean ground beef and broiled chicken instead of fried). Consume at least 8 or more ounces of seafood per week including fish, such as salmon, tuna, trout, and tilapia, and shellfish, such as shrimp, crab, and oysters. Experiment with more dry bean- and pea-based foods

Find your balance between food and physical activity

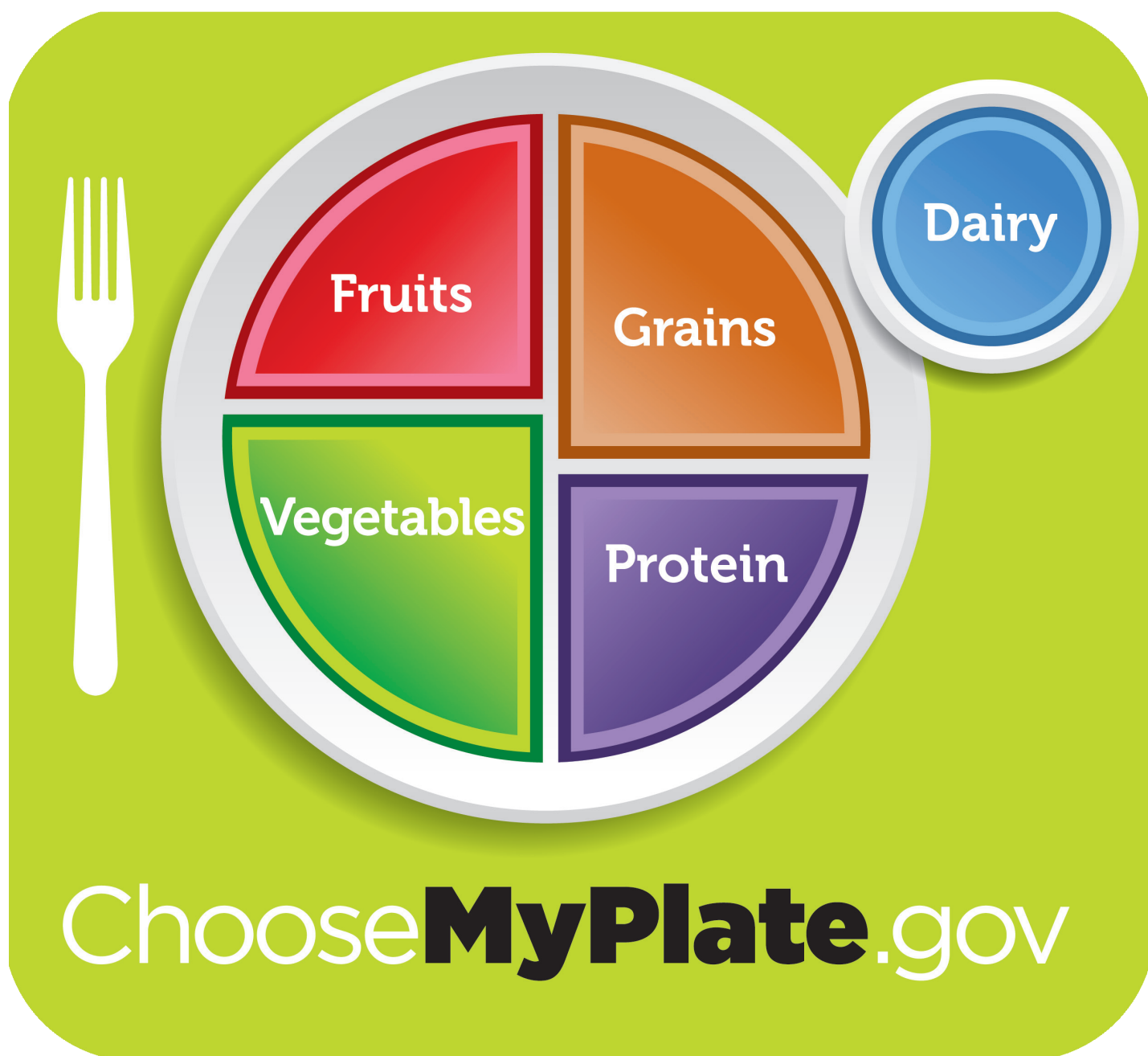
Balancing food choices with adequate physical activity helps control body weight and reduce the risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic conditions. All ages can adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors.

■ Set a good example by being physically active individually and together as a family. Go for a walk, ride your bikes, or play at the park.

■ Establish a routine by setting aside time each day as activity time.

- Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week to reduce their risk of disease. About 60 to 90 minutes of moderate physical activity is recommended to prevent weight gain or maintain weight loss.
- Children and teenagers need 60 minutes of activity every day on most days of the week.

**Adults and children need the same types of foods . . .
the only difference is the amount of food.**



How much is needed for adults?

	Grains	Veggies	Fruits	Oil	Dairy	Protein
1,800 calories	6 oz. equivalent	2½ cups	1½ cups	5 tsp.	3 cups	5 oz. equivalent
2,200 calories	7 oz. equivalent	3 cups	2 cups	6 tsp.	3 cups	6 oz. equivalent
2,600 calories	9 oz. equivalent	3½ cups	2 cups	8 tsp.	3 cups	6½ oz. equivalent

How much is needed for kids?

	Grains	Veggies	Fruits	Oil	Dairy	Protein
1,400 calories (2–6 years)	5 oz. equivalent	1½ cups	1½ cups	4 tsp.	2 cups	4 oz. equivalent
1,800–2,000 calories* (7–13 years)	6 oz. equivalent	2½ cups	1½–2 cups	5–6 tsp.	3 cups	5–5½ oz. equivalent
2,000–2,600 calories* (14–18 years)	6–9 oz. equivalent	2½–3½ cups	2 cups	6–8 tsp.	3 cups	5½–6½ oz. equivalent

Recommended food intake is based on children who get 30 to 60 minutes of moderate activity, such as walking briskly or biking.

*Lower end of range represents the moderately active female while the upper end of the range represents the moderately active male.

Make your calories work for you, not against you

Calories are simply a measure of food energy. They are not good or bad.

1

Determine calorie needs

The number of calories you need to eat daily depends on your age, activity level, and gender. You can estimate your calorie needs by visiting www.choosemyplate.gov/weight-management-calories/calories.html. Or, you can use the general guidelines listed below the MyPlate graphic on page 2.

2

Identify nutrient dense foods

Every food choice uses some of your suggested daily calories. You get the most benefit from those calories when you choose foods that provide more nutrients and vitamins for fewer calories. Examples of nutrient dense foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and fat-free or low-fat milk products.

3

Choose nutrient dense foods more often

The following comparison charts give examples of comparable food choices with higher and lower nutrient density.



Nutrient Density	Low	Low	High
	Glazed Donut (52 g)	Crème filled (86 g)	Whole wheat English muffin with 1T. peanut butter
Calories	200	340	229
Total Fat	12 g	20 g	9 g
Sat. Fat	3 g	5 g	2 g
Cholesterol	5 mg	5 mg	0 mg
Sodium*	95 mg	140 mg	496 mg
Total Carbohydrate	22 g	38 g	31 g
Dietary Fiber	< 1 g	< 1 g	5 g
Sugars	10 g	23 g	4 g
Protein	2 g	3 g	9 g



Nutrient Density	Low	High
	Hamburger (1/4 lb) and fries (large)	Tuna on whole wheat bread with Romaine lettuce, tomato, cucumber, light mayo with carrots/celery and hummus
Calories	976	497
Total Fat	47 g	18 g
Sat. Fat	13 g	3 g
Cholesterol	70 mg	27 mg
Sodium*	1190 mg	1034 mg
Total Carbohydrate	103 g	60 g
Dietary fiber	8 g	13 g
Protein	31 g	29 g



Nutrient Density	Low	High
	Candy bar (regular size Butterfinger) and pop (20 oz Coke)	Fruit yogurt parfait (5.3 oz or 149 g)
Calories	522	160
Total Fat	11 g	2 g
Sat. Fat	6 g	1 g
Cholesterol	0 mg	5 mg
Sodium*	203 mg	85 mg
Total Carbohydrate	108 g	31g
Dietary Fiber	1 g	1 g
Sugars	97 g	21 g
Protein	4 g	4 g



Nutrient Density	Low	High
	Pizza (delivery or take-out)	Homemade veggie pizza made with bought whole wheat crust
<i>Per 1 slice (whole pizza, 8 slices)</i>		
Calories	320	256
Total Fat	16 g	9 g
Sat. Fat	6 g	3 g
Cholesterol	25 mg	20 mg
Sodium*	650 mg	638 mg
Total Carbohydrate	30 g	30 g
Dietary Fiber	2 g	2 g
Sugars	7 g	3 g
Protein	13 g	15 g

*Recommended sodium intake is 1500–2300 mg per day

Avoid mealtime battles

Mealtimes can sometimes become a battleground where parents and children struggle for “control.” To prevent a power struggle at your table, consider using Ellyn Satter’s recommendations for dividing responsibility.



Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility in Feeding

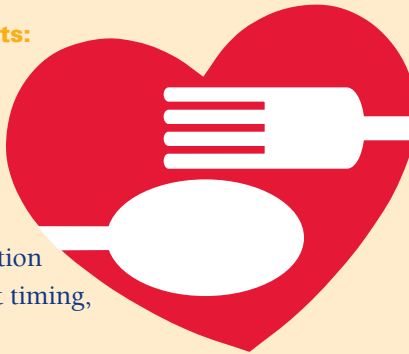
Parents provide **structure, support, and opportunities**.

Children choose **how much** and **whether** to eat from what the parents provide.

The Division of Responsibility for Infants:

- The parent is responsible for **what**
- The child is responsible for **how much** (and everything else)

The parent helps the infant to be calm and organized and feeds smoothly, paying attention to information coming from the baby about timing, tempo, frequency, and amounts.



The Division of Responsibility for Toddlers Through Adolescents

- The parent is responsible for **what, when, where**
- The child is responsible for **how much** and **whether**

The Parents’ Feeding Job:

- Choose and prepare the food.
- Provide regular meals and snacks.
- Make eating times pleasant.
- Show children what they have to learn about food and mealtime behavior.
- Not let children graze for food and beverages between meals and snack times.
- Let children grow up to get bodies that are right for them.

Fundamental to parents’ jobs is trusting children to decide *how much* and *whether* to eat. If parents do their jobs with respect to *feeding*, children do their jobs with respect to *eating*.

Children’s Eating Jobs:

- Children will eat.
- They will eat the amount they need.
- They will eat an increasing variety of food.
- They will grow predictably.
- They will learn to behave well at the table.

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• Review dollar-saving tips, test your shopping skills, watch easy recipe videos, and signup for e-mail updates.

**Iowa State University Extension
Publications**
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• Browse the topic area “Food, Nutrition and Health” to view free and cost publications.

www.MyPlate.gov

• Find information on how many calories you need to eat daily, serving sizes, recommended number of servings, and other tips for healthy eating.

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