Before you eat, think about what and how much food goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. Over the day, include foods from all food groups: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole.
- Switch to skim or 1% milk.
- Vary your protein food choices.
### Vegetables
- Eat more red, orange, and dark-green veggies like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli in main dishes.
- Add beans or peas to salads (kidney or chickpeas), soups (split peas or lentils), and side dishes (pinto or baked beans), or serve as a main dish.
- Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count. Choose “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” canned veggies.

### Fruits
- Use fruits as snacks, salads, and desserts. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes.
- Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice), as well as fresh fruits.
- Select 100% fruit juice when choosing juices.

### Grains
- Substitute whole-grain choices for refined-grain breads, bagels, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers, rice, and pasta.
- Check the ingredients list on product labels for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain ingredient name.
- Choose products that name a whole grain first on the ingredients list.

### Dairy
- Choose skim (fat-free) or 1% (low-fat) milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.
- Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt.
- If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or fortified soymilk (soy beverage).

### Protein Foods
- Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs.
- Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.
- Choose lean meats and ground beef that are at least 90% lean.
- Trim or drain fat from meat and remove skin from poultry to cut fat and calories.

### For a 2,000-calorie daily food plan, you need the amounts below from each food group.

- **Eat 2½ cups every day**
  - What counts as a cup?
    - 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice
    - 2 cups of leafy salad greens

- **Eat 2 cups every day**
  - What counts as a cup?
    - 1 cup of raw or cooked fruit
    - 100% fruit juice
    - ½ cup dried fruit

- **Eat 6 ounces every day**
  - What counts as an ounce?
    - 1 slice of bread
    - ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta
    - 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

- **Get 3 cups every day**
  - What counts as a cup?
    - 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or fortified soymilk
    - 1½ ounces natural or 2 ounces processed cheese

- **Eat 5½ ounces every day**
  - What counts as an ounce?
    - 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish
    - 1 egg
    - 1 Tbsp peanut butter
    - ½ ounce nuts or seeds
    - ¼ cup beans or peas

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**Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars**

- Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy. Compare sodium in foods and choose those with a lower number.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Eat sugary desserts less often.
- Make foods that are high in solid fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not every day foods.
- Limit empty calories to less than 260 per day, based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

**Be physically active your way**

- Pick activities you like and do each for at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

- **Children and adolescents:** get 60 minutes or more a day.
- **Adults:** get 2 hours and 30 minutes or more a week of activity that requires moderate effort, such as brisk walking.