

The Food Groups of MyPlate¹

Glenda L. Warren and Jennifer Walsh²

Plan your food group choices wisely. Choose nutrient-rich foods that are fat-free or low-fat and low in added sugars.

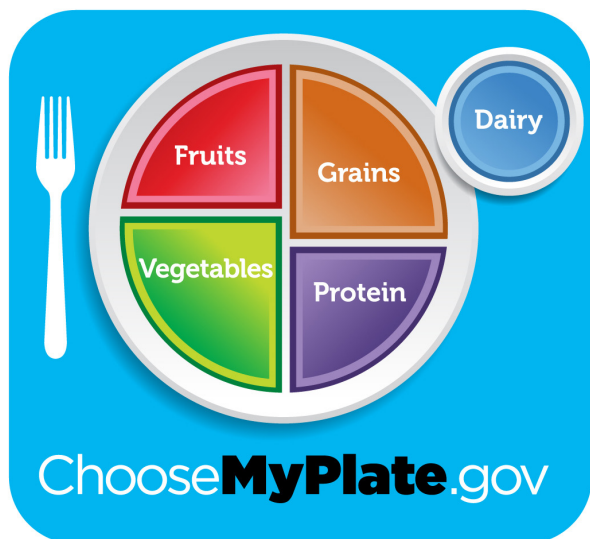


Figure 1. Visit <http://ChooseMyPlate.gov> for more information on the food groups and healthy eating tips.

Grains Group

The Grains Group includes all foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain. Examples are bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits. Daily amounts are recommended as “ounce-equivalents.”

These amounts each count as one ounce-equivalent:

- 1 regular slice of bread
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, flakes or rounds
- 1/2 cup of cooked rice, pasta, or oatmeal

Grains are important sources of nutrients that include dietary fiber, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).

Key message: Make at least half of your grains whole grains.



Figure 2. Bread is a part of the Grains Group, which also includes pasta, rice, cereal, or other foods made from grains. Credits: <http://www.thinkstock.com>

1. This document is FCS8873, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date December 2008. Revised November 2012. Please visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Glenda L. Warren, emeritus associate professor, Extension nutritionist, Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences; and Jennifer Walsh, PhD, RD, assistant instructor, Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

Vegetable Group

The Vegetable Group includes all fresh, frozen, canned or dried vegetables eaten raw or cooked, as well as 100% vegetable juice. Daily amounts are recommended as “cups.”

These amounts each count as one cup:

- 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup of 100% vegetable juice
- 2 cups of raw leafy greens

Vegetables are important sources of nutrients that include potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, and vitamin C.

Key message: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.



Figure 3. All types of vegetables are part of the Vegetable Group. You should try to make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Credits: Jupiterimages, © Getty Images

Fruit Group

The Fruit Group contains all fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits, and 100% fruit juice. Daily amounts are recommended as “cups.”

These amounts each count as one cup:

- 1 cup of fruit
- 1 cup of 100% fruit juice
- 1/2 cup of dried fruit

Fruits are important sources of nutrients that include potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate (folic acid).

Key message: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.



Figure 4. The Fruit Group contains all different kinds of fruit — apples, bananas, and oranges included. Fruits are an important source of potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate.

Credits: <http://www.thinkstock.com>

Dairy Group

This group includes all fluid milk products and foods made from milk that keep their calcium content, such as yogurt and cheese. Some foods made from milk such as cream cheese, cream, and butter are not part of the Dairy Group because they have little or no calcium. Daily amounts are recommended as “cups.” These amounts each count as one cup:

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1 1/2 ounce of natural cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan)
- 2 ounces of processed cheese (American)

Dairy foods are important sources of nutrients that include calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein.

Key message: Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.



Figure 5. Milk is an important part of the Dairy Group. Choose fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk. Credits: Jupiterimages, © Getty Images

Protein Foods Group

The Protein Foods Group includes all meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, seeds, and nuts. Daily amounts are recommended as “ounce-equivalents.”

These amounts each count as one ounce-equivalent:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1/4 cup cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans)
- 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds

Protein foods are important sources of nutrients that include protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and vitamin B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium.

Key message: Go lean with protein and vary your protein food choices.

References

United States Department of Agriculture. “Food Groups.” *ChooseMyPlate.gov*. Accessed November 1, 2012. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>.



Figure 6. Chicken and other types of meat are all in the Protein Foods Group. This group also includes other non-meat foods such as beans, peas, nuts, and seeds. Credits: <http://www.thinkstock.com>