PLAN YOUR PLATE

ALABAMA PUBLIC HEALTH

9” plate

DAIRY

FRUITS

GRAINS

VEGETABLES

PROTEIN











Choose low-cost recipes and meals. Recipes with fewer ingredients are often cheaper and quick to make. A great place to look for recipes is **www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes**.

For more resources, visit **www.myplate.gov**. Here you can also find tools and recipes to help you plan a healthy plate that is full of nutrients.



TIPS FOR PLANNING A HEALTHY PLATE:

- Fill your plate with colorful foods for a diet rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables – aim for 5-9 servings each day.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, fruit drinks, sport/energy drinks, and sweet tea, which offer no nutritional value. Drink water instead.
- Replace whole milk with 1% low-fat or skim milk.
- Use herbs and spices in place of salt when cooking and eat fewer salty foods like bacon and potato chips. Rinse canned vegetables before cooking.
- Replace refined grains like white rice and white bread with nutritious whole grains such as brown rice and whole wheat bread.
- Reduce calories by baking, grilling, boiling, steaming, or roasting foods instead of frying.
- Incorporate healthy fats by using canola or olive oil when cooking and including avocados and nuts into meals and snacks
- Veggies are great for breakfast, too. Try an egg sandwich with sauteed spinach or kale, a veggie omelet, or veggie hash for breakfast. Experiment with it and see what works for you.
- If you're craving something sweet, fruit may be just what you need to hit the spot! Try fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit in a yogurt parfait or topped with a dollop of whipped cream for dessert.

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE YOUR WAY!

Pick activities that you enjoy and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Work up to at least 30 minutes per day, with strength training exercises twice per week.

COMBINATION FOODS

"Combination" foods combine different components together. When choosing these, identify the different foods in the dish and think about where they would fit on the plate.

For example, in a slice of pizza, the crust would be the grains, the tomato sauce and any vegetable topping would be the vegetables, and the cheese and meat topping would be the protein. Try to prepare portions the same way you normally would if the components were not combined.

Examples of combination foods include:

- Casserole-type entrees (tuna noodle, lasagna, spaghetti with meatballs, macaroni and cheese)
- Chili with beans
- Stews
- Burrito
- Pizza
- Pocket sandwich
- Pot pie
- Coleslaw
- Pasta salad
- Potato salad
- Tuna/chicken salad
- Soups

BEVERAGES

Water is the best choice of drink because it contains no calories.

Other sugar free drink options include:

- Carbonated or mineral water
- Club soda
- Coffee, unsweetened or with sugar substitute
- Diet soft drinks
- Drink mixes (powder or liquid drops), sugar free
- Tea, unsweetened or with sugar substitute
- Tonic water, sugar free
- Flavored water, sugar free

VEGETABLES

Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

- Asparagus
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage (Green, Red, Napa, Bok Choy, Chinese)
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Leafy Greens (Kale, Collards, Mustard Greens, Swiss Chard)
- Green Beans (Pea Pods, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap Peas)
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Onions
- Peppers
- Salad Greens (Lettuce, Spinach, Arugula, Endive, etc.)
- Squash (Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Chayote, Spaghetti Squash)
- Tomatoes

Starchy Vegetables

- Acorn Squash
- Butternut squash
- Green Peas
- Parsnips
- Plantain
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Sweet Potato/Yam

Beans and Legumes

- Black Beans
- Kidney Beans
- Pinto Beans
- Garbanzo Beans

PROTEIN

Lean proteins are lower in fat and saturated fat, making them a heart healthy choice.

- Low-Fat Cheese and Low-Fat Cottage Cheese
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Fish (Salmon, Cod, Tuna, Tilapia, Swordfish, etc.)
- Shellfish (Shrimp, Scallops, Clams, Mussels, Lobster)
- Lean Beef (Chuck, Round, Sirloin, Flank, Tenderloin)
- Lean Pork (Center Loin Chop or Tenderloin)
- Lean Deli Meats
- Turkey

Plant Based Sources of Protein

- Beans
- Lentils
- Field Peas (Black Eye, Crowder, Purple Hull)
- Hummus
- Falafel
- Nuts and Nut Butters
- Edamame
- Tofu and Tempeh
- Plant-Based Meat Substitutes

GRAINS

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, or barley is a grain product. Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta when possible. Make at least half your grains whole grains.

Whole Grains

- Brown Rice
- Bulgur
- Oats/Oatmeal
- Polenta
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Whole Wheat Bread
- Whole Wheat Crackers
- Whole Wheat Pasta

Refined Grains

- Bagel
- Biscuit
- Cakes, Cookies, Pastry Crusts
- Cornbread
- Grits
- Pancake
- Pasta
- Pizza Crust
- Tortilla
- Waffle
- White Bread

FRUITS

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, pureed, or cooked. At least half of the recommended amount of fruit should come from whole fruit, rather than 100% fruit juice.

- Apple
- Apricot
- Banana
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Fruit Cocktail
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Lemon
- Lime
- Nectarines
- Orange
- Strawberries
- Peach
- Pear
- Pineapple
- Plum
- Raspberries
- Satsuma
- Watermelon

DAIRY

Dairy products provide health benefits, especially building and maintaining strong bones. Foods in the dairy group provide calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Choose low-fat or fat-free options when available.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Milk-based desserts (Pudding, Frozen Yogurt, Ice Cream)

Plant Based Dairy Substitutes

- Non-Dairy Milk Alternatives (Soy, Rice, Oat, Almond, Coconut)
- Non-Dairy Yogurt (Soy, Almond, Coconut)
- Non-Dairy Ice Cream