

Montana Disability & Health Update

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The USDA Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate Food Guidance Systems are Good Nutrition for People with Disabilities

Healthy eating and good nutrition can help prevent and manage diet-related secondary conditions that are common in people with disabilities. Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, and obesity occur more frequently in people with disabilities than in people without disabilities (see Issue 4).

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provide guiding nutrition principles for healthy Americans over two years old. This includes healthy people with disabilities over the age of two. One strategy to address health disparities experienced by people with disabilities is to increase their awareness of the Guidelines.

While everyone is slightly different, and some people have special nutritional needs, the Dietary Guidelines are broad enough to cover most of our basic dietary needs. There is no evidence that the Dietary Guidelines do not apply to people with disabilities. However, there is evidence to suggest that the consequences of poor nutrition may be experienced more immediately and/or with greater severity by persons with disabilities who may have fewer and/or poorer treatment options available; therefore, conforming to the Guidelines would be more important for a person with a disability.

The USDA MyPlate food guidance icon was unveiled in 2011, replacing the Food Pyramid, to visually represent the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and to put them into "real, food terms" (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>).

The Dietary Guidelines include four basic recommendations:
(<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>)

1. Balance calories to manage weight

- Prevent and/or reduce overweight and obesity through improved eating and physical activity.
- Control total calorie intake to manage body weight.
- Increase physical activity and reduce time spent in sedentary behaviors.
- Maintain appropriate calorie balance during each stage of life — childhood, adolescence, adulthood, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and older age.

2. Foods and food components to reduce

Many Americans need to reduce the amount of certain foods that they eat. The foods listed below are unhealthy to eat in large quantities.

- Sodium. Eat less than 2,300 mg salt per day for adults 18-50 years old, less than 1,500 mg for adults over 50.
- Solid fats (saturated and trans fats). Keep total fat at 20% to 30% of calories (that is 40-60 grams in a 1,800 calorie diet), with most fats coming from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- Cholesterol. Eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day.
- Added sugars. Choose and prepare foods with little added sugars or sweeteners.
- Refined grains. Limit refined grains (like white flour and rice).

- Alcohol. Drink alcohol in moderation (defined as one drink per day for women and two drinks for men). Some people should not drink alcohol at all, including people with conditions that worsen with alcohol; people who are taking certain medications; or people engaged in activities that require attention, skill or coordination.

3. Foods and nutrients to increase

Many Americans do not eat the foods that will provide all the nutrients they need while staying within their calorie limits. The foods listed below tend to be under-eaten, even though they are health-promoting and satisfy hunger with fewer calories.

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Protein foods of certain types including seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds
- Oils (instead of solid fats)

4. Build healthy eating patterns

Habits and patterns are important as a route to establish and maintain healthy eating. How a person usually eats is more important to his or her health than the occasional splurge or temporary diet.

- Select an eating pattern that meets nutrient needs over time at an appropriate calorie level.
- Plan the foods and drinks that will be available and consumed and decide how they fit within a total healthy eating pattern.
- Follow food safety recommendations when preparing and eating foods to reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses.

MyPlate

The USDA MyPlate icon is a user-friendly tool for individuals to develop healthy eating habits. MyPlate is an intuitive cartoon graphic of what a typical plate of food should look like for an eating plan that follows the Dietary Guidelines. MyPlate, when used as a planning tool, can be adapted to fit the caloric and nutritional needs of individuals with disabilities.



MyPlate has a fully interactive website for computer users. The website will automatically tailor dietary advice to an individual based on his or her age, level of physical activity, and body size. This feature makes the website and the advice provided more specific to individuals' needs. To work with the MyPlate computer program, log on to www.choosemyplate.gov.

MyPlate is a cartoon of a plate that has the sections proportioned in the healthful amounts of each food group. For example, it shows you that fruits and vegetables should take up half the space on your plate, while leaving room for healthy amounts of grains and protein.

The following pages take MyPlate one step further and show illustrations of sample meals. These are not materials from the USDA. These are actual plates of food that conform to MyPlate. The photo series is called "MyPlate in Real Life."

MyPlate in Real Life

Foods are listed starting with Fruits in the upper left quadrant and going clockwise.

MyPlate in Real Life #1



Fruits: Grapes
Grains: Fried rice
Protein: Mixed bean salad with chicken
Vegetables: Mixed salad greens, tomatoes, carrots
Dairy: Cottage cheese

MyPlate in Real Life #2



Fruits: Watermelon, grapes
Grains: Whole wheat bread
Protein: Turkey slices
Vegetables: Lettuce, tomato, sprouts, cucumber
Dairy: Cheddar cheese

MyPlate in Real Life #3



Fruits: Peaches
Grains: Baked potato
Protein: Egg, cashews
Vegetables: Eggplant
Dairy: Chocolate milk

MyPlate in Real Life #4

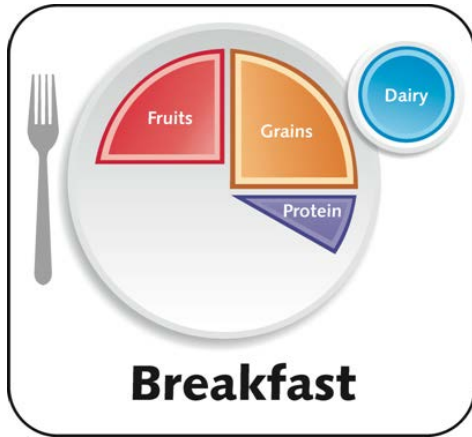


Fruits: Melon
Grains: Noodles
Protein: Meat in sauce
Vegetables: Tomato sauce, edamame
Dairy: Plain yogurt

MyPlate is simple and easy to use; however, MyPlate does not provide much detail. Should all your plates for every meal look like MyPlate? What would MyPlate look like as a smaller meal such as a breakfast or a snack? The graphics below give you guidance. They are not USDA materials.

My Breakfast Plate

A reasonable breakfast might contain:



- 1 fruit
- 2 grains
- 1 protein
- 1 dairy

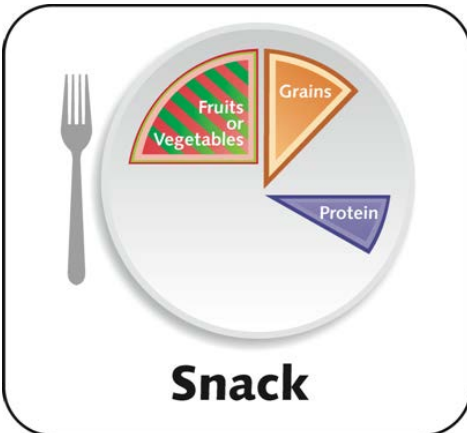
My Breakfast Plate in Real Life



- Fruits:** Banana
- Grains:** Cold cereal, toast
- Protein:** Peanut butter
- Dairy:** Milk

My Snack Plate

A reasonable snack might contain:



- 1 fruit or vegetable
- 1 grain
- 1 protein

My Snack Plate in Real Life



- Fruits/Vegetables:** Grapes, tomato slices, raw spinach
- Grains:** Pita bread
- Protein:** Hummus

Summary: By using the Dietary Guidelines, the MyPlate interactive website, and the guidance of the MyPlate graphics, people can adapt their diet to fit their individual needs and circumstances and create a healthy, personalized diet. For more information on nutrition, health, and wellness for persons with disabilities, check out the MTDH website at <http://MTDH.ruralinstitute.umt.edu>.

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