



# MyPlate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010



Every five years since 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have released the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Intended for *healthy* Americans ages 2 years and older, the current 2010 guidelines are also meant for those who are *at risk* of chronic diseases. Poor diet and not enough physical activity are the most important factors leading to overweight and obesity and major causes of illness and death—these include heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis (brittle bones), and some types of cancer.

Many Americans weigh too much. And many Americans, including children, don't get enough physical activity and food to eat or don't eat enough nutrient-rich foods (foods that have needed vitamins and minerals for good health). The **Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010** focus on balancing your calories (for a healthy weight), choosing foods to eat more often, and cutting back on foods to eat less often. Putting the Dietary Guidelines to practice, **MyPlate** can help you make food choices for a healthy lifestyle. **Choose steps that work for you and start today.**

## 10 tips to a great plate

### 1. balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

### 2. enjoy your food, but eat less

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere (like watching the TV) may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Eat until you're satisfied, not full.

### 3. avoid oversized portions

Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

### 4. foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

### 5. make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Eat fruit for salad, dessert or snacks.

### 6. switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat. Choose fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese.

### 7. make half your grains whole grains

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

### 8. foods to eat less often

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

### 9. compare sodium in foods

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”

### 10. drink water instead of sugary drinks

Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American diets.