Do you know what constitutes a **healthy diet?**

A healthy diet provides your body with all of the essential nutrients it needs and includes a variety of foods.

While healthy eating has a stigma of being complicated or challenging, it is actually very simple. Here are some nutrition basics to help you get started on your path towards better eating habits.

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Healthy Eating Made Simple

Move over, food pyramid—there's a new guide in town! This "new" guide for healthy eating is called MyPlate. MyPlate divides your "plate" into five categories: grains, fruits and vegetables, protein, and dairy. MyPlate covers all of our macronutrients, which are protein, carbohydrates, and fat. These three nutrients should make up the bulk of our diet.

Grains

These foods are carbohydrates, the main source of energy for your body.

- Aim for a quarter of your plate at each meal to be a grain.
- Make half your grains whole grains for added nutritional benefit.
- Limit refined grain products such as white bread, baked goods or other sweets.

Fruits and Vegetables

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables is key to maintaining a healthy body as they are high in fiber, full of vitamins and a source of carbohydrates.

- Make half your plate fruits and/or vegetables at each meal.
- Aim for 5 to 7 servings per day.
- Try to eat fruits and vegetables of varying color for greater nutritional benefit.

Protein

This macronutrient is essential to the building, maintenance and repair of body tissues including skin, organs and muscles.

- Aim for one quarter of your plate at each meal to be a protein.
- Focus on lean proteins such as eggs, chicken, turkey, fish, beans, soy and nuts.
- Limit certain proteins like fatty cuts of beef, pork and high fat dairy products.

Dairy

This composes the "beverage" section of your meal. Dairy provides an important source of calcium and Vitamin D.

- Limit dairy to 1 to 2 servings per day; choose options that are low in fat.
- Be smart about beverages. Milk, fruit juice, tea, coffee and soda can add unnecessary calories and excess sugar to your diet.
- Drink more water. Water provides hydration with no calories, fat or sugar.

Fats

Although not specifically referenced by MyPlate, fat is an essential component to a healthy diet.

- Eat foods high in healthy monounsaturated, polyunsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids like nuts, fish and oils such as olive and canola oil.
- Limit foods that are high in saturated fats and trans fats such as those found in animal products, butter or hard margarine and baked goods.

For more information, visit ChooseMyPlate.govw

Turn to us—we can help.

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