**Healthy Eating Plate**

Use the Healthy Eating Plate as a guide for creating healthy, balanced meals—whether served at the table or packed in a lunch box. *Click on each section of the interactive image below to learn more.*

[HEALTHY OILS](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/fats-and-cholesterol/)[WATER](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/)[VEGETABLESFRUITS](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/)[HEALTHY PROTEIN](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/protein/)[WHOLE GRAINS](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/whole-grains/)

Looking for a printable copy? [Download one here](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/HEPJan2015.jpg), and hang it on your refrigerator to serve as a daily reminder when planning and preparing your meals! [Translations of the Healthy Eating Plate](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-eating-plate/translations/) are also available in over 25 languages.

**Building a Healthy and Balanced Diet**

**Make most of your meal**[**vegetables and fruits**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/)**– ½ of your plate.**Aim for color and variety, and remember that [potatoes](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/potatoes/) don’t count as vegetables on the Healthy Eating Plate because of their negative impact on blood sugar.

**Go for**[**whole grains**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/whole-grains/)**– ¼ of your plate.**Whole and intact grains—whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, [quinoa](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/food-features/quinoa/), [oats](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/food-features/oats/), [brown rice](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/food-features/rice/), and foods made with them, such as whole wheat pasta—have a milder effect on blood sugar and insulin than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains.

[**Protein power**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/protein/)**– ¼ of your plate.**Fish, poultry, [beans](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/legumes-pulses/), and [nuts](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/nuts-for-the-heart/) are all healthy, versatile protein sources—they can be mixed into salads, and pair well with vegetables on a plate. Limit red meat, and avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.

[**Healthy plant oils**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/fats-and-cholesterol/)**– in moderation.**Choose healthy vegetable oils like olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and others, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unhealthy trans fats. Remember that [low-fat does not mean “healthy.”](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/2012/06/21/ask-the-expert-healthy-fats/)

[**Drink water, coffee, or tea**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/)**.**Skip [sugary drinks](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/sugary-drinks/), limit [milk](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/milk/) and [dairy products](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/dairy/) to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day.

[**Stay active**](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/staying-active/)**.**The red figure running across the Healthy Eating Plate’s placemat is a reminder that staying active is also important in [weight control](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-weight/).

**The main message of the Healthy Eating Plate is to focus on diet quality:**

* The [*type of carbohydrate*](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/carbohydrates/) in the diet is more important than the*amount of carbohydrate* in the diet, because some sources of carbohydrate—like vegetables (other than potatoes), fruits, whole grains, and beans—are healthier than others.
* The Healthy Eating Plate also advises consumers to avoid [sugary beverages](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/healthy-drinks/sugary-drinks/), a major source of calories—usually with little nutritional value—in the American diet.
* The Healthy Eating Plate encourages consumers to use [healthy oils](https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/fats-and-cholesterol/), and it does not set a maximum on the percentage of calories people should get each day from healthy sources of fat. In this way, the Healthy Eating Plate recommends the opposite of the low-fat message promoted for decades by the USDA.