



The
**Nutrition
Source**



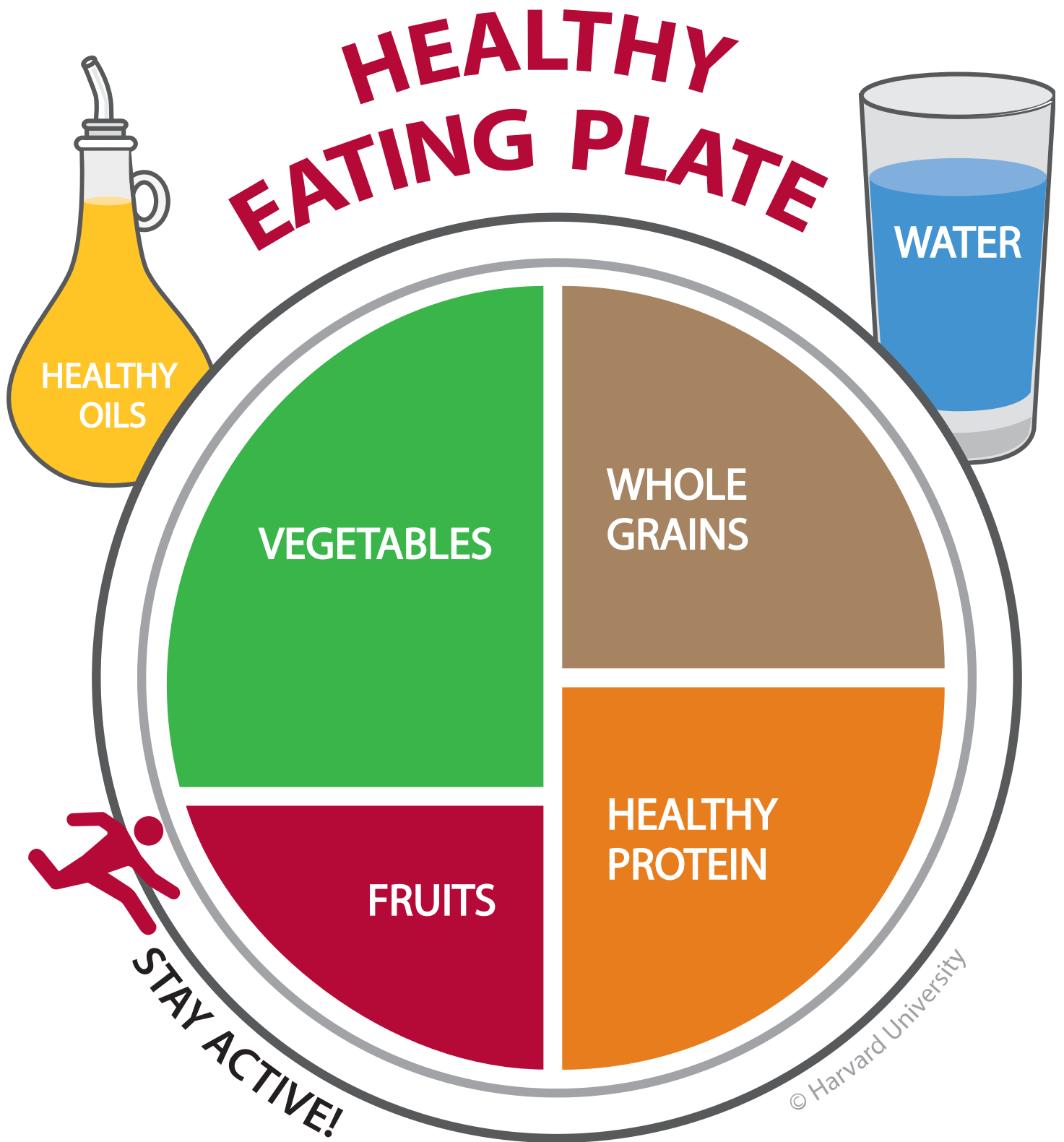
 [The Nutrition Source](#) > Healthy Eating Plate

THE NUTRITION SOURCE



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.*



Looking for a printable copy? [Download one here](#), and hang it on your refrigerator to serve as a daily reminder when planning and preparing your meals! [Translations of the Healthy Eating Plate](#) are also available in over 25 languages.

Building a Healthy and Balanced Diet

Make most of your meal [vegetables and fruits](#) – ½ of your plate.

Aim for color and variety, and remember that [potatoes](#) don't count as vegetables on the Healthy Eating Plate because of their negative impact on blood sugar.

Go for [whole grains](#) – ¼ of your plate.

Whole and intact grains—whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, [quinoa](#), [oats](#), [brown 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](#) – ¼ of your plate.

Fish, poultry, [beans](#), and [nuts](#) 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](#) – 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.”](#)

[Drink water, coffee, or tea.](#)

Skip [sugary drinks](#), limit [milk](#) and [dairy products](#) to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day.

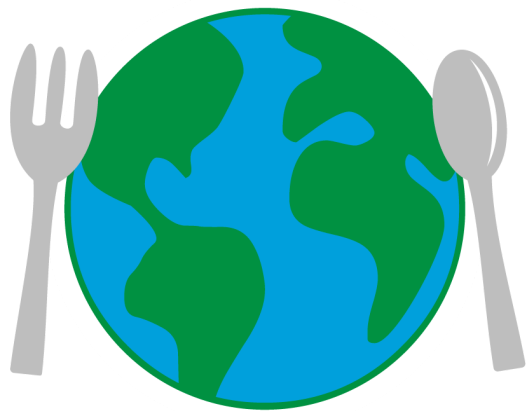
[Stay active.](#)

The red figure running across the Healthy Eating Plate's placemat is a reminder that staying active is also important in [weight control](#).

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

- The [type of carbohydrate](#) 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](#), a major source of calories—usually with little nutritional value—in the American diet.

- The Healthy Eating Plate encourages consumers to use [healthy oils](#), 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.



Your Plate and the Planet

Just as different foods can have differing impacts on human health, they also have differing impacts on the environment. Food production is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and it places an enormous demand upon our earth's natural resources.

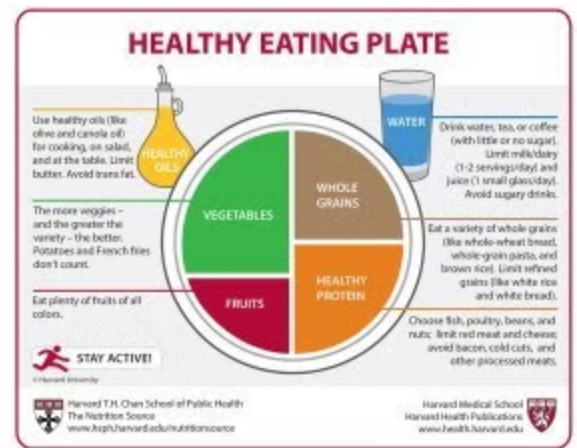
LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF THE FOODS ON
YOUR PLATE

Your Questions Answered

- ▶ Are the relative sizes of the Healthy Eating Plate sections based on calories or volume?
- ▶ How can I apply this guide if I don't eat my meals from a single plate?
- ▶ What about alcohol? Isn't alcohol supposed to be good for you in small amounts?
- ▶ Who created the Healthy Eating Plate?
- ▶ What about the Healthy Eating Pyramid? Will it be going away?
- ▶ Will following the Healthy Eating Pyramid and Healthy Eating Plate guidelines really make me healthier?

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