

# Kid's Healthy Eating Plate

Eating a variety of foods keeps our meals interesting and flavorful. It's also the key to a healthy and balanced diet because each food has a different mix of nutrients—both macronutrients (carbohydrate, protein, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Vegetables, fruits, grains, protein, and dairy make up the five basic food groups, but not all options within these groups are equally beneficial or healthy, and some foods—especially those from plants—are needed in greater proportion than others. The Kid's Healthy Eating Plate provides a blueprint to help us build a balanced meal with the *best choices from each group*:

- Along with filling half of our plate with colorful *vegetables* and *fruits*, split the other half between *whole grains* and *healthy protein*. Minimally processed whole grains make better choices than refined grains, especially when we look out for added sugars. Healthy protein includes mostly plant-based options such as nuts, seeds, and beans, but poultry and fish are also excellent choices. Foods from the *dairy* group are needed in lower proportions than foods from the other groups, but milk and other dairy foods are common sources of calcium and vitamin D, so choose unflavored milk, plain yogurt, or other unsweetened dairy foods.

The Kid's Healthy Eating Plate also includes elements that are not part of the five food groups but are additional important reminders for maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle.

- *Healthy oils* (plant-based oils such as olive and canola oil) are a great source of healthy fat and should be used when cooking or as dressing on a salad.
- *Water* should be the drink of choice at every meal and snack, as well as when we are staying active.
- Note that the Kid's Healthy Eating Plate does not contain sugary drinks, sweets, and other junk foods. These are not everyday foods and should be eaten only rarely, if ever.

Finally, just like choosing the right foods, incorporating physical activity into our day by *staying active* is part of the recipe for keeping healthy.

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