MyPlate on the Dinner Table

The ChooseMyPlate.gov healthy eating website has the perfect tool for starting a healthy makeover of your family’s evening meals. Eating healthy can be delicious and easy on any food budget. The website has helpful tips and ways to plan menus that work for you.

Plan

- Want to save money on your food bills and make sure your family is getting the nutrition it needs? The key to dinnertime success is planning, planning and planning.
  - **Write down a week of menus.** Set aside some time on the weekend to plan for the week ahead. Think about each day’s schedule and how much time you will have to fix dinner. Get ideas from your family. Let everyone have a night or two of their favorite foods.
  - **Keep the kitchen stocked with staple foods.** This makes it easier to follow your planned menus. Staples include canned beans and dry pasta in the pantry, milk and cheese in the fridge, and frozen fruits and vegetables in the freezer.

Eat

- **Put fruits and vegetables on half your plate.** MyPlate’s key message is that we all need to eat more fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce is great when it is in season. Frozen vegetables often cost less and are just as nutrient-rich! Rinse canned fruits and vegetables under cold water to reduce sodium and/or syrup.
- **Divide half your plate into whole grains and lean proteins.** MyPlate suggests filling the other half of your plate with lean proteins and grains (whole grains when possible). Make a tasty combo with black beans in a whole-wheat tortilla. Try grilled fish and brown rice. Fix baked chicken and pasta. Serve beef chili with homemade cornbread.
- **Serve ice-cold milk with meals.** Most of us are not getting enough calcium, vitamin D and potassium. An 8-ounce glass of skim or 1% milk with every meal will help you fill those nutrient gaps. Enjoying low-fat dairy can help you build and keep strong bones for life.

Enjoy

- The best part of a healthy dinner is enjoying it with family or friends. MyPlate also suggests we learn to slow down and enjoy each bite.