

Food Group Fun Facts

This month, we want to feature one of our favorite food groups:

Fruits and vegetables

These groups pack a powerful punch of vitamins, minerals, and other vital nutrients.

- According to the USDA, fruits and vegetables should make up about 50% of our plate.
- A serving size of fruit ranges from ½ to 1 cup. 1 cup of 100% fruit juice is also considered a serving.
- A serving size of vegetables is 1 cup. Some vegetables, like beans, peas, and lentils also double as a serving of protein.
- The colors by which we recognize our favorite fruits and vegetables represent the nutrients they offer.



Did you know everyone's plate should look a little different?

The USDA's MyPlate Plan can help you plan your perfect plate:
<https://www.myplate.gov/>

Use the placemat on the next page and have kids draw and color their favorite foods in the spaces. Older kids can use the placemat to get a better idea of portion sizes for different foods.

Earth Day Eats

Earth Day is an opportunity to reflect and get creative about the ways we can make the world a better place. What's one way we can all acknowledge Earth Day? By thinking about the way we eat! Did you know human consumption of meat has increased by 20% in the last 10 years? While there are lots of ways to incorporate animal products into our diet in a healthy way, there also environmental benefits to going meat-free once a week—and creative ways to include non-animal proteins into our diet, like soy, beans, and nuts. According to EarthDay.org, if you substituted a plant-based burger for one hamburger per week, it would be the equivalent of taking your car off the road for 320 miles!

Want some fun ideas to get started?

This website has options for both Meatless Mondays and Kids Cook Monday:

<https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/meatless-monday>



How Does Your Garden Grow?

National Gardening Day is on Friday, April 14th!

Gardens are a great family activity; it's an invitation to plan together, plant together, and even try new foods. But, the idea of starting a garden can also feel overwhelming for busy families. So why not start small—with an indoor garden? Indoor gardens can provide tons of variety while also being more convenient to maintain. Let your child help select seeds, get their hands dirty with planting, and build responsibility through watering and harvesting.

Not sure how to start? KidsGardening.org has a resource for classrooms that you can easily adapt for home use:

<https://kidsgardening.org/resources/gardening-basics-indoor-gardening/>

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Start Simple with MyPlate

A healthy eating routine is important at every stage of life. It can have positive effects that add up over time. It's important to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients. Make every bite count.

Use this placemat to get a better idea of portion sizes for different foods. Draw in your favorites!

MyPlate.gov

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