

# Intro: Healthy Eating & Bone Health Basics

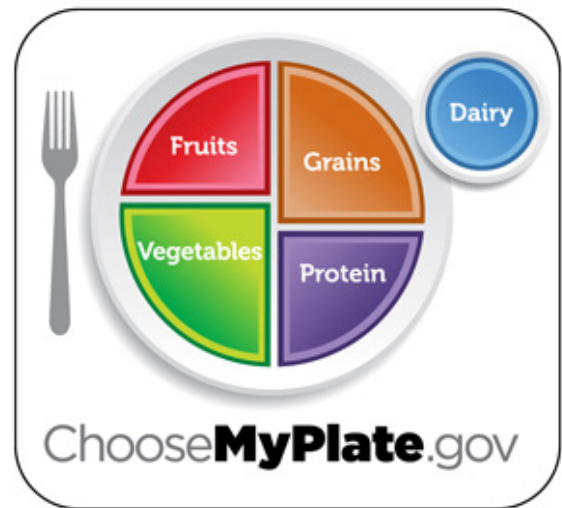
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This module is designed to introduce the fundamentals of basic nutrition, important nutrients, vitamins and minerals, MyPlate, and bone health. We will begin with an overview of healthy eating and bone health basics (*PowerPoint Presentation*) and discuss the dietary recommendations of MyPlate. We will talk about the importance of calcium-rich foods and how the body stores calcium during the teen years to prevent osteoporosis later in life. The activities, games, and handouts included in this module will reinforce the lessons being taught.

# MyPlate

In June 2011, the USDA replaced the familiar MyPyramid with a new and simplified version, MyPlate. Instead of using a pyramid, which can often be confusing, the image of a simple plate was chosen. The new MyPlate promotes the idea of choosing foods that are healthy for us. These healthy choices are based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (healthy recommendations that are edited every five years).

Many changes have also taken place since updating from the food pyramid (MyPyramid). The new MyPlate image contains the five food groups including fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy. Instead of narrowing food items to “milk” or “protein and beans” like the food pyramid once did, the new MyPlate broadens its food choices to dairy and protein. This allows for a wider variety of healthy foods to be eaten. The simple figure of a plate also helps people to identify portion sizes of their healthy foods. An example would be half your plate consisting of fruits and vegetables.



To find out more about MyPlate visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). The food groups are represented with colorful portions to guide you in making healthy choices. Each section represents one of the five food groups and how much of your plate should contain food from that group.

# Calcium & Bone Health

You have probably seen the “milk mustache” on some of your favorite stars, but are you and your friends sporting your own? Unfortunately, most teen girls do not get enough calcium in their diets.

Calcium is a mineral that gives strength to your bones. It is also necessary for many of your body’s functions, such as blood clotting, and nerve and muscle function. During the teenage years (*particularly ages 11-15*), your bones are developing quickly and storing calcium so that your skeleton will be strong later in life. Nearly half of all bone is formed during these years. It is important that you get plenty of calcium in your diet, because if your body doesn’t get the calcium it needs, it takes calcium from the only source that it has: your bones. This can lead to brittle bones later in life and increases your risk for broken bones or stress fractures at any time.

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that causes bones to become more fragile and more likely to break. It develops slowly and is usually caused by a combination of genetics and too little calcium in the diet.

Osteoporosis can also lead to “shrinking” (*shortened height-caused by collapsing spinal bones*) or could cause a person to have a hunched back.

**Factors that put a young person at risk for osteoporosis include:**

- Being white
- Being female
- Being underweight
- Having a family history of osteoporosis
- Having irregular periods
- Doing little or no exercise
- Not getting enough calcium in your diet
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol

It is important to remember that osteoporosis can be prevented. There are some risk factors that you cannot change (*such as your race and your family history*), but there are some you can. Eating a healthy diet, exercising on a regular basis, and not smoking significantly lowers a young woman’s risk for osteoporosis.