

# A Balanced Diet

*For balancing energy*

## Why do we need to eat for balance?

A balanced diet gives your body all of the essential nutrients it needs to stay active, healthy, and strong. These include carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water, and are all found in the foods we eat.



**Carbohydrates, proteins and fats are like gasoline for your car!**

**Carbohydrates, protein and fat**, provide the body with the calories, or energy, that it needs to grow, play, heal, and learn. This means that the amount we eat of these nutrients is important to our health. When we don't eat enough carbohydrates, protein, and fat, our bodies cannot perform at their best. On the other hand, if we eat more than our bodies need, then we are at risk to gain extra weight. So, it is essential to listen to our bodies' natural cues and eat when we are hungry but stop when we are satisfied.

**Carbohydrates, protein, and fat also have other important roles to play in our body. Take a look at the chart below and see how these nutrients help keep you healthy and strong.**

	<b>Carbohydrate</b>	<b>Protein</b>	<b>Fat</b>
<b>What does it do?</b>	Carbohydrates are our body's main source of energy that we use as fuel to run and play as well as to learn, grow, to heal from injury. Carbohydrates are also a source of dietary fiber. Fiber helps clean out your intestines and also helps makes you feel full after meals.	Protein is used to build, repair, and maintain muscles and tissues throughout the body like your skin, hair, nails, muscle, bone, and organs Protein is needed for proper growth and development, especially during childhood, adolescence, and pregnancy.	Fats are the most concentrated source of energy we eat. As well as being a part of every cell in our body, fats deliver certain vitamins to our body, play a role in our nervous system, and can be found in critical body hormones
<b>Which MyPlate group is it?</b>	Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, and Dairy	Meat and Vegetable-based protein, and Dairy	Oils, Protein and Dairy
<b>What are some healthy choices?</b>	Whole grains, such as 100% whole wheat bread, pasta, cereal, rice, and corn or wheat tortillas. Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables. fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) dairy products	Lean meats and poultry, seafood, soy products, unsalted nuts and seeds, beans and peas, eggs, fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) dairy products	Olives, nuts, nut butters, seeds, and avocados.  Protein: Fish such as salmon or tuna, lean beef and pork, skinless chicken breast, and eggs.  Dairy: Cheese, whole milk and whole milk products

**Vitamins and minerals** help our bodies work properly. Some foods have more vitamins and minerals than others, so these are the foods you want to choose more often.

**Vitamins and minerals are like oil for your car!**

# vitamins & minerals

## VITAMINS

All body processes depend on vitamins. Some vitamins help us grow and heal, while others protect us from infections or help us see better at night. Vitamins A, D, E, and K are stored in body fat. The body does not store *water-soluble vitamins*, so eating a diet that restores these vitamins is important.

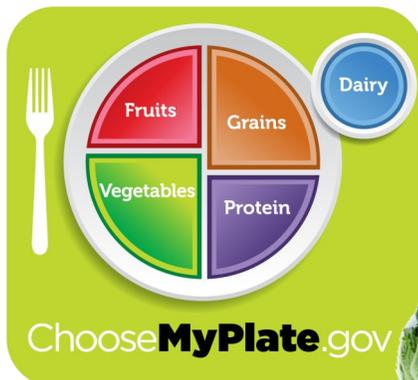
- Examples of water-soluble vitamins are vitamin C and the B vitamins.
- There are 13 vitamins: vitamins A, C, D, E, K, and the B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, and folate).
- You can get all your vitamins from the foods you eat, but your body also makes vitamins D and K.

## MINERALS

We get minerals from both the plant and animal products they eat. Each mineral has a unique job that helps with our metabolism and other bodily functions.

- There are 16 essential minerals: calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, sodium, chloride, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, manganese, iodine, and selenium, molybdenum, chromium, and fluoride.

Most children who eat a well-balanced diet receive adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals for healthy growth and development. Children who follow special diets that restrict food groups may be at an increased risk for nutrient deficiency. Poor appetite, picky eating, or chronic medical conditions may also factor in nutrient deficiencies.



By choosing to balance and offer a variety of foods from each of the MyPlate Food groups, you will be more likely to give your bodies the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that they need to be healthy, active, and strong.

## REFERENCES

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