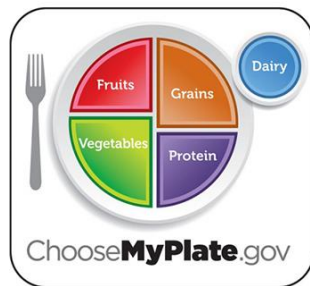


Personalize Your Plate!

Every March, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates National Nutrition Month®, which invites everyone to learn more about making better food choices and developing healthier lifestyle habits. This year's theme is "Personalize Your Plate" and aims to help people recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to healthy eating. There are many factors that can influence personal food choices and preferences, including family and cultural backgrounds, as well as where you live. The good news is that a healthy diet can be tailored to your preferences by choosing foods you enjoy from each food group!



Tips for a Balanced Plate:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Fill ½ of your plate with your favorites. Try to include a variety of colors and textures.
- **Grains:** Fill ¼ of your plate with your favorite grains. Try to include more whole grains than refined grains.
- **Protein:** Fill ¼ of your plate with your favorite proteins, which include both animal (meat, poultry, eggs, dairy) and vegetarian (nuts, beans, lentils, tofu) sources. Choose leaner cuts of meat and prepare them in a healthier way like baking, broiling, or grilling.
- **Dairy:** Finish your meal by adding a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese for some additional protein and calcium. If you are lactose-intolerant, a good alternative is calcium-fortified soy milk or soy yogurt.

Personalize at Home

One way to personalize your plate is by making your own home-cooked creations. Not only can cooking at home save money and allow you to choose what goes into your meals, but it can also be a way to express some creativity, get the whole family involved, and hopefully have some fun.

Cooking at home does not have to be intimidating. By stocking up with a few essential pantry/freezer goods, you will be ready to make a quick and easy, healthy dish in no time.

Pantry Items

- Canned vegetables with no added salt (such as green beans, diced tomatoes, and corn)
- Dried or canned beans (such as black, kidney, garbanzo, or white beans)
- Dried peas or lentils
- Whole grains, including rice, quinoa, oats, pasta, and tortillas
- Root vegetables (stored properly can last for weeks!) like potatoes, yams, onions, and garlic
- Pouches or canned fish and chicken
- Canned or jarred tomato sauce
- Beef, chicken, or vegetable broth/stock
- Nuts and nut butters
- Dried herbs and spices
- Olive oil and other vegetable oils



Frozen Foods

- Fruits (such as berries and bananas)
- Vegetables (such as cauliflower, carrots, broccoli, or spinach, etc.)
- Meat, poultry, or seafood

Meal Planning + Batch Cooking

You may also find it helpful to plan your meals, grocery shop, and prepare certain items in bulk (or “batch cooking”) at the beginning of each week. This may help keep your healthy eating on track and take some stress out of having to figure out what to make at the last minute.

Ideas for items to prepare in bulk and refrigerate:

- Cooked ground beef, chicken, or baked tofu
- Hard boiled eggs
- Chopped vegetables, can be raw or roasted
- Cooked grains: quinoa, pasta, or brown/wild rice



For those unpredictable days when you need to come up with healthy meals on a whim, here are a few ideas:

- Smoothie using frozen berries, banana, yogurt, and milk or juice
- Breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, cheese, and salsa wrapped in a tortilla
- Homemade soup using broth with chopped chicken, veggies, and rice
- Baked chicken or fish with roasted veggies and quinoa
- Black bean burgers with baked fries and a mixed green salad
- Egg or tuna salad with whole-grain crackers and fruit
- Pasta with sauteed tomatoes, garlic, and spinach

Need a Dietitian?

Registered Dietitians are here to help you with your nutrition questions. To make an appointment call 412.692.4497 (Oakland location) or 412.623.2421 (Shadyside location).

References:

- <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month>
- <https://www.allrecipes.com/article/how-meal-prep-sunday-week-ready-eat-dinners/>
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Sheet Pan Meals

Another idea for quick, healthy dinners with easy clean-up is making a sheet pan meal. Cooking an entire meal on just one baking sheet saves time and requires minimal equipment. These meals are easy to personalize by choosing your favorite protein, vegetables, and flavorings, and then roasting until everything is cooked and golden brown.

Sheet Pan Salmon with Asparagus and Potatoes

~serves 4



Ingredients:

- 4 salmon fillets
- 1 pound asparagus, ends trimmed
- 2 pounds baby red or gold potatoes, quartered
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 ½ teaspoons Italian herb blend
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 lemon, thinly sliced

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F. Toss potatoes with 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper to taste, garlic powder, and 2 teaspoons Italian herb blend. Arrange on a large sheet pan and bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.
2. Arrange salmon fillets and asparagus on the sheet pan. Whisk together melted butter, honey, Dijon mustard, and 1/2 teaspoon remaining Italian herb blend. Brush onto salmon fillets.
3. Drizzle asparagus with remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, season with salt and pepper to taste, and place lemon slices between the asparagus spears.
4. Bake for 15 minutes until asparagus and potatoes are fork-tender and salmon is cooked through. Serve immediately.