

Balanced Choices for Healthy Habits

Part 1: Check Your Choices

MyPlate is a guide provided by the USDA and based on the dietary guidelines for following a balanced diet that includes the essential elements needed for good nutrition. This includes choosing food and beverages from all five food groups to get the nutrients you need: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. To build a balanced eating style, MyPlate suggests: Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, make half of your grains whole grains, go for low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt, and vary your proteins. Also, choose options with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. The total amount you need each day depends on your age, gender, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts for kids ages 9 to 18 include the following ranges:

- Fruits — 1½ to 2 cups
- Vegetables — 2 to 3 cups
- Grains — 5- to 8-ounce equivalents
- Protein — 5- to 6½-ounce equivalents
- Dairy — 3 cups

Working with your group, identify examples of typical meals you each had recently. How did the meals measure up to MyPlate standards? Check out choosemyplate.gov for more detail.

Part 2: Protein Power

Protein is present throughout your entire body. It provides the building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, blood, and skin, as well as enzymes, hormones, and vitamins. Protein also provides the body with calories. As part of a balanced diet and regular exercise, protein and vitamins work together to make your body strong. This makes choosing the protein portion of your MyPlate meal extremely important.

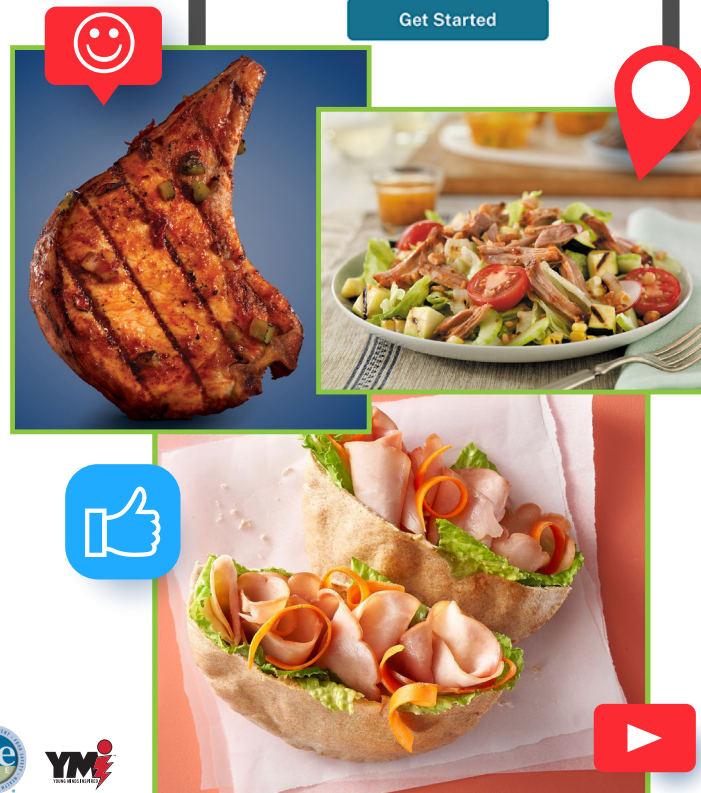
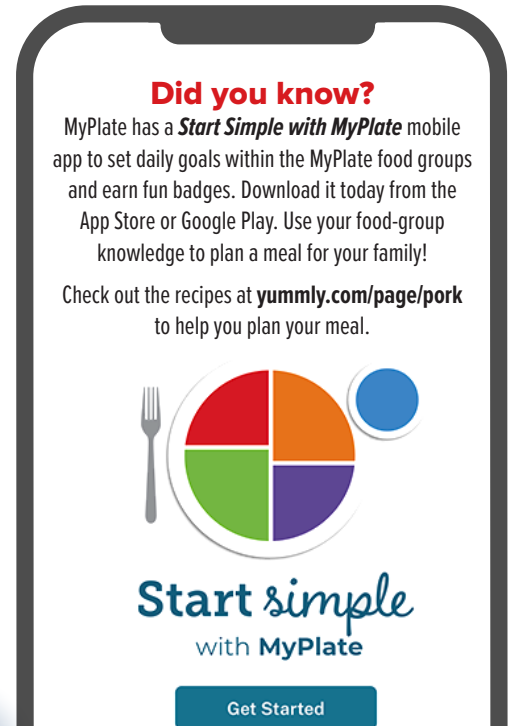
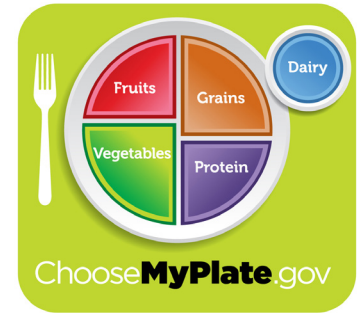
Protein can be found in a wide variety of foods—even foods that belong to other food groups—but the amount of protein can vary. Look at common portions of each food below. Match it to the amount of protein you think it provides.

1. ___ 3 ounces of pork loin (3 oz-equivalent)	a. 7.11 grams
2. ___ 1 cup of chopped broccoli (cooked or raw)	b. 24 grams
3. ___ 1/2 cup of cooked black beans (2 oz-equivalent)	c. 10 grams
4. ___ 8 ounces of lowfat milk	d. 2 grams
5. ___ 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (2 oz-equivalent)	e. 8 grams
6. ___ 1 egg	f. 6.24 grams

Did you know? Pork is a nutrient-rich and versatile protein, providing a perfect foundation for a MyPlate meal because it goes well with other food groups, is affordable, and easy to prepare.

Part 3: Get Social

Now, plan a lean meal around pork protein, following the MyPlate guidelines and choosing from the cuts of pork found at pork.org/cooking/cuts/ or information at pork.org/cooking/pork-nutrition. On the back of this sheet or on a separate piece of paper, draw and style your meal in the manner of a social media post and describe it in a 140-character sentence. Use your most persuasive wording to attract readers to your choice.



*choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/WhatIsMyPlate
 **choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods/protein-foods-nutrients-health