
MYPLATE DAIRY

Everything you need to know about this fantastic food group

Skip Saturated Fat!

According to MyPlate, “Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese.”

Why?

The kind of fat found in dairy products is usually saturated fat, which can be very bad for your health. Saturated fat increases your risk of chronic disease and is a source of empty calories.

Empty calories are calories that make you feel full but which don't offer any nutrients to improve your health. They can also displace other, more nutritious foods, which can then lead to a less healthful diet.

Follow MyPlate's advice and choose dairy foods that are either low-fat or fat-free. Skip added sugars whenever you can as well — these are also sources of empty calories.

What's in the Dairy Group?

The dairy food group includes fluid milks and milk products, cheese, yogurt, and calcium-fortified milk alternatives. What brings them together? Calcium. If a dairy food or dairy alternative has a lot of it, then that food is part of the dairy group. That's also why certain dairy products like butter aren't part of this food group — they don't have enough calcium.

Most adults generally need 3 cups of dairy foods per day. Your needs may vary due to age, gender, and physical activity levels. One cup of milk or a calcium-fortified milk alternative counts as a cup serving of a dairy food, as does a cup of yogurt, 1 and 1/2 ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

