

# MyPlate for Dysphagia<sup>1</sup>

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## What is MyPlate?

MyPlate is the dietary guidance icon from the United States Department of Agriculture based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It is an easy-to-understand image that focuses on building a healthy plate. Resources and tools at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) can be easily adapted for people with swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) that require texture-modified foods. Although lean and low-fat foods are generally recommended, those with swallowing difficulties may need higher-fat foods to ensure acceptability and ease of swallowing and also to help them meet their energy needs.

## How to Use MyPlate

The MyPlate image (Figure 1) consists of a divided plate with one-half of fruit and vegetables in addition to moderate amounts of whole grains, protein foods, and fat-free and low-fat dairy foods.

- Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables. Choose a variety of nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables. Consider red, orange, and dark-green vegetables complemented with fruit as part of the entrée or for dessert.
- Make more than one-quarter of your plate grains. Select grains that are primarily whole grains, such as whole wheat, brown rice, whole cornmeal, oatmeal, and barley. Make less than one-quarter of your plate lean protein foods. These include animal sources such as meat,

poultry, seafood, and eggs. Vegetarian alternatives would include beans, processed soy products such as tofu, tempeh, and texturized vegetable protein (TVP).

- Also, add one dairy serving to each meal.

*Don't forget: Add some color to your plate! Not only does it make it more appetizing, but the nutrients from deep-colored fruit and vegetables also help support good health.*

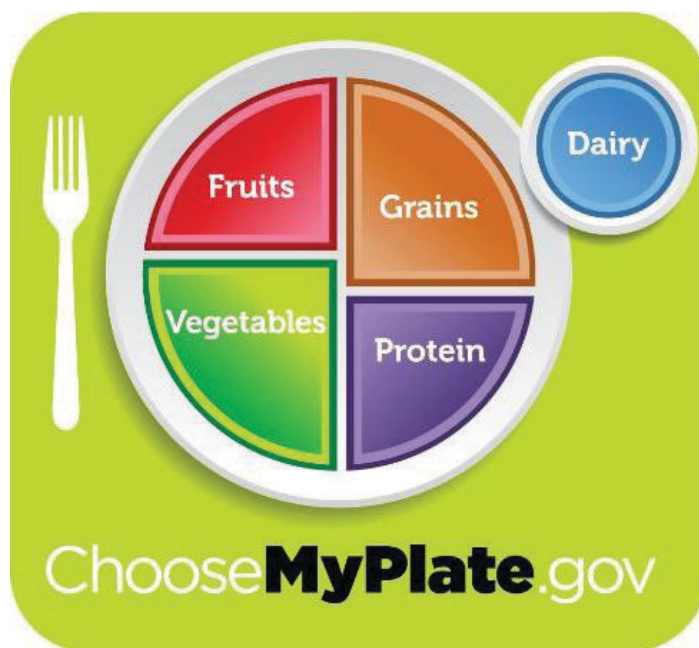


Figure 1.  
Credits: ChooseMyPlate.gov

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## Other Factors to Consider

### CHOOSE FOODS THAT ARE LOW IN SODIUM

- Limit commercial soups and instead prepare homemade with salt-free or low-sodium broth.
- Drain and rinse canned vegetables before puréeing or choose lower-sodium options.

### GET LOTS OF FIBER

- Eat a variety of puréed vegetables and fruits daily.
- Make at least half your grains whole. Puréed whole-grain breads, crackers, and fortified cereals can be used as thickeners for many purées.
- Choose more beans, peas, and lentil purées.
- Consider adding fiber ingredients to grain and meat purées.

### STAY HYDRATED

- Puréed foods are all high in water and thus help with hydration. If thin liquids are safe for swallowing, choose water, low-sugar fruit/vegetable juices, and low-fat and fat-free milk to increase your fluid intake.

## Putting It All Together...

### SAMPLE PURÉED BREAKFAST



Figure 2. Sample puréed breakfast: Cinnamon French toast with maple syrup and puréed pears, vanilla Greek yogurt, and a strawberries-and-cream smoothie.

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### SAMPLE PURÉED LUNCH



Figure 3. Beef burger with bun (both puréed), topped with ketchup and mustard, served with shaped purées of corn and sliced pineapple as side dishes, and coconut-milk custard for dessert.

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### SAMPLE PURÉED DINNER



Figure 4. Roasted turkey with gravy served with sides of stuffing, baby carrots, and blueberries (all purées), and a white-chocolate cream for dessert.

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## MyPlate Featuring Puréed Foods

See Table 1.

Table 1. MyPlate featuring puréed foods.

FRUITS	GRAINS	VEGETABLES	PROTEIN	DAIRY
<p><b>Guideline:</b> Puréed fruits must not have skin or seeds.</p> <p><b>Good choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applesauce</li> <li>• Puréed canned fruit</li> <li>• Puréed thawed frozen fruit</li> <li>• Puréed ripe fruit</li> <li>• Thickened juices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guideline:</b> Puréed grains must be moist, cohesive, without lumps, and not sticky.</p> <p><b>Good choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puréed hot cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat, grits)</li> <li>• Puréed pasta</li> <li>• Puréed rice</li> <li>• Puréed bread mix</li> <li>• Slurried breads, pancakes, waffles, rolls, crackers, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guideline:</b> Puréed vegetables must not have skin, stringy pieces, or seeds.</p> <p><b>Good choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned pumpkin</li> <li>• Puréed well-cooked vegetables</li> <li>• Puréed canned vegetables</li> <li>• Mashed potatoes with gravy or sour cream (to reduce stickiness)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guideline:</b> Puréed protein foods must be moist, cohesive, and without lumps or pieces.</p> <p><b>Good choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puréed meat (beef, pork, lamb, etc.)</li> <li>• Puréed poultry</li> <li>• Puréed legumes (beans, peas, and lentils)</li> <li>• Puréed eggs</li> <li>• Puréed tofu</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guideline:</b> Dairy products should be smooth in consistency.</p> <p><b>Good choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth yogurts, pudding, custard</li> <li>• Puréed cottage/ricotta cheese</li> <li>• Thickened milk</li> </ul>
<p><b>TIPS</b></p> <p>Thickened juices may be available at some pharmacies and grocery stores, or a thickener can be added to regular juice. Thickened juices may be easier to swallow for some individuals with swallowing difficulties. These juices may be thickened to a nectar, honey, or pudding consistency depending on the severity of swallowing difficulty.</p> <p>A slurried food is prepared by food processing a dry food, such as crackers, breadcrumbs, or breakfast cereal, to a powder and then combining with a liquid such as milk to achieve a moist, purée consistency. Crumbled pancakes and waffles can also be slurried.</p> <p>Yogurt that contains fruit pieces should be strained. The fruit pieces can be food processed until smooth and added back.</p>				

## Learn More

*Swallowing Problems and the Older Adult*—<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs164>

*Puréed Foods for Swallowing Problems*—<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs168>