

## COOKING WITH NUTRITIOUS INGREDIENTS



As a person who creates recipes, you can play an important role in health promotion by recommending ingredients and cooking methods that support a nutritious diet. Here are a few tips for integrating each of the five food groups into your recipes and some ideas for alternatives to common ingredients.

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fruits and vegetables contain important nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

**MyPlate** ([www.ChooseMyPlate.com](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.com)) reminds us to make half our plate fruits and vegetables.



#### When writing recipes:

- Use fruit as the main ingredient in dessert recipes. Fruits like strawberries, apples, and bananas can add sweetness without added sugars.
- Add vegetables like spinach, carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and corn to soup, stew, and pasta recipes to add nutrients and lower calories per serving.
- Recommend preparing vegetables steamed, baked, sautéed in vegetable oil, broiled, grilled, roasted, or raw.

### WHOLE GRAINS

Many whole grains—such as brown rice, wild rice, barley, and bulgar—provide fiber and important nutrients. According to MyPlate, whole grain intake may reduce the risk for heart disease and may also help with weight management.



#### Include whole grains in your recipes by:

- Replacing ½ of white flour with whole wheat flour in recipes for baked goods.
- Creating new variations of salad and soup recipes by adding whole grain ingredients.
- Including 100% whole grain breads and pastas as ingredients.



## PROTEIN FOODS

Eating a variety of protein foods like meats, poultry, seafood, beans, nuts, and seeds can help people meet their protein and nutrient needs.



Use these tips to integrate a variety of protein foods into your recipes:

- For recipes with meats or poultry, choose lean ingredients like skinless chicken or turkey breast, pork loin, or lean ground beef (at least 92% lean).
- Use other protein sources, including seafood and non-animal-based sources such as beans, lentils, peas, nuts, tofu, and seeds.

Is your recipe food safe? Find **Tips for Writing Food Safe Recipes** at [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food).



## DAIRY

Dairy products are the number one source of calcium in the American diet, and contain vitamin D and potassium. Fat-free and low-fat dairy products provide the same vitamins and minerals but less fat (and fewer calories) than higher-fat options.



When writing recipes that contain dairy products:

- Include low- or non-fat dairy, like 1% or skim milk, low-fat plain yogurt, or lower-fat cheese to reduce saturated fats and sodium.
- Make sure your recipes use only pasteurized dairy ingredients – consumption of unpasteurized dairy products can cause listeriosis and other foodborne illnesses.



## MORE NUTRITIOUS RECIPE TIPS

Suggest cooking with oils that are high in mono- and polyunsaturated fats such as olive, canola, or sunflower oil.

Instead of frying foods, recommend baking, broiling, grilling, or steaming.

List salt as an optional ingredient, or use herbs and spices like cumin, garlic powder, paprika, black pepper, or oregano to add flavor without adding sodium.



## NUTRITION CHECK

Ask yourself these questions:

- Does my recipe include a variety of fruits or vegetables?
- Did I include any whole grains in my recipe?
- Did I include a variety of protein sources? If my recipe includes meats or poultry, did I include lean ingredients?
- Are all dairy ingredients pasteurized? Did I include lower-fat dairy options?
- Does my recipe contain alternatives to sugar, and the option to reduce sodium?

Find out how to understand and use the Nutrition Facts label at [www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food).