



## 6TH GRADE | INFORMATIONAL TEXT ARTICLE

# Healthy Eating with *MyPlate*




























## How Food Affects You

Do you know how the foods you eat affect your body? The foods and drinks you choose, even in 6th grade, can have an impact on your current and future health. Understanding food and nutrition can help you make healthy, delicious choices from each of the five food groups.

Vocabulary Words are in **bold** and underlined.

## Eating foods from different food groups helps us get all the nutrients our bodies need to move, grow, and stay healthy.

Our bodies need key nutrients from all of the food groups in order to function well.

<b>FRUITS EXAMPLES</b>	<b>KEY NUTRIENTS</b>
 orange  apple  pear  peach  melon  berries	<p><b>potassium;</b> <b>dietary fiber;</b> <b>vitamin C; folate</b></p>
<b>VEGETABLES EXAMPLES</b>	<b>KEY NUTRIENTS</b>
 beans  broccoli  bell pepper  spinach  tomato  sweet potato	<p><b>potassium;</b> <b>dietary fiber; folate;</b> <b>vitamin A; vitamin C</b></p>
<b>GRAINS EXAMPLES</b>	<b>KEY NUTRIENTS</b>
 brown rice  whole-wheat bread  whole-grain cereal  oatmeal  popcorn	<p><b>dietary fiber, magnesium and selenium</b> (found in whole grains); <b>B vitamins</b> (riboflavin, niacin, thiamin, folic acid); <b>iron</b></p>
<b>PROTEIN FOOD EXAMPLES</b>	<b>KEY NUTRIENTS</b>
 beef & pork  chicken  seafood  beans & peas  eggs  nuts & seeds	<p><b>protein; B vitamins</b> (riboflavin, niacin, thiamin); <b>vitamin E; iron; zinc; magnesium</b></p>
<b>DAIRY EXAMPLES</b>	<b>KEY NUTRIENTS</b>
 low-fat milk  low-fat yogurt  low-fat cheese  calcium-fortified soy milk	<p><b>calcium; potassium; vitamin D; protein</b></p>

## Eating the MyPlate Way

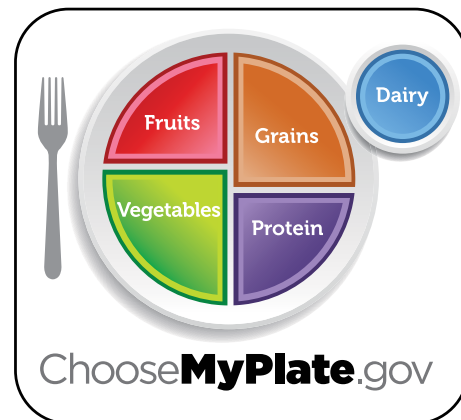
Foods that have the same key **nutrients** in common make up a food group. For example, fruits are sources of nutrients like potassium, dietary fiber, **vitamin C**, and folate. Our bodies need key nutrients from all of the food groups in order to function well. This is why it is important to eat nutritious foods from the five food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy.

While most people have access to different kinds of food, many are not eating enough vegetables, fruits, **whole grains**, and low-fat dairy foods. Eating patterns that are low in nutrients like calcium, potassium, dietary fiber, and vitamin D are associated with health problems like high blood pressure, osteoporosis (brittle bones), and digestive problems.

By choosing to eat more nutritious foods — with lots of nutrients (like vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber) and less **sodium**, **saturated fats**,

**refined grains**, and **added sugars** — people can help keep their bodies healthy.

A visual tool called *MyPlate* illustrates the five food groups using a familiar image — a place setting for a meal. *MyPlate* reminds you that you can maintain your overall health by eating foods that are tasty and good for you.

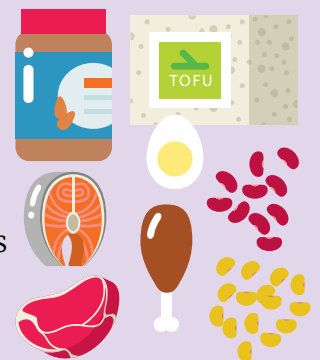


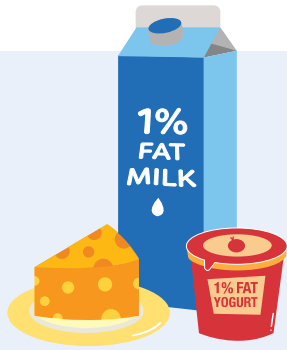
**You can make four small changes** with the help of MyPlate, for a healthier eating style that can help you grow and stay healthy.



**1 Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables provide nutrients that kids often do not eat enough of, including vitamin C, dietary fiber, potassium and vitamin A. Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of all body tissues, helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Fiber is important because it helps move food through the digestive system. Potassium keeps nerves and muscles working and helps the heart pump blood easily through the body. Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.

**2 Vary your protein routine.** Proteins function as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, and blood. Many protein foods also contain B vitamins and zinc. B vitamins help the body tap into the energy from food, play an important role in the function of the nervous system, help form red blood cells, and help build tissues. Zinc is important for normal growth, strong immunity, wound healing, and the senses of smell and taste. To vary your protein routine, you can eat many nutritious protein foods such as beans, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, seafood, and lean meat.





**3** Move to **low-fat or fat-free dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and calcium-fortified soymilk.** Foods from the dairy group contain important nutrients including calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. Calcium and vitamin D are used for building bones and teeth.

**4** Make **half your grains whole grains.** Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice. Refined grains have had their bran and germ removed, which removes many important nutrients. Some examples of refined grain products are white flour, white bread, and white rice.

Whole grains are important sources of nutrients like dietary fiber, and **minerals** like magnesium, which is used in building bones and releasing energy from muscles. Look at the graphic below showing the differences between whole and refined grains.

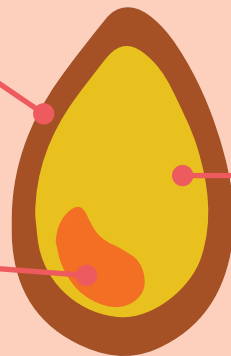


Identify whole grains by looking for “whole” or “whole grain” as one of the first ingredients on the ingredient list on the Nutrition Facts label.

**What is the difference between whole and refined grains? Whole grains have more healthy vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.**

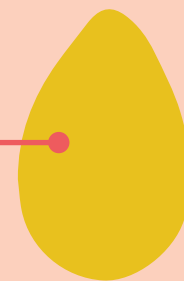
**Bran:** fiber-rich outer layer containing B vitamins and trace minerals like iron and magnesium

**Germ:** nutrient-rich core containing, **antioxidants** like vitamin E, B vitamins and healthy fats



**WHOLE GRAIN**

**Endosperm:** starchy middle layer containing carbohydrate and protein



**REFINED GRAIN**

With each *MyPlate* change, you can take healthy steps by getting more of the nutrients you need. Everyone has their own way of creating a healthy eating pattern. In the past, humans were only able to eat what they could grow on the land around them. Now, technology and transportation methods allow us to construct a healthy eating pattern with foods from all across the country.

## Where Our Food Comes From

Everyone can find their own way of eating the *MyPlate* way. In the United States, healthy food options from each of the five food groups are produced across the country. Different **regions** are better at growing different foods because each has its own unique **climate**. For example, oranges need warm weather, so they grow well in Florida where it is often warm. Take a look at this example of a balanced meal. This meal contains foods produced all over the country.

### *A Balanced Meal from Coast to Coast!*

**Bean Burrito with: whole wheat tortilla, avocado, low-fat cheese, and orange slices on the side**



**Avocado (Vegetable)**

- California produces about 90% of avocados grown in the U.S. Its warm climate is well-suited to growing avocados year-round.<sup>1</sup>
- Avocados are a source of vitamin E which is an antioxidant that helps protect the body's cells from damage.

**Whole-Wheat Tortilla (Grain)**

- Kansas produces 20% of the wheat grown in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>
- A whole wheat tortilla is a whole grain.
- Kansas is often called the "Wheat State" and the "Breadbasket of the World."<sup>3</sup>

**Low-Fat Cheese (Dairy)**

- Wisconsin produces more cheese than any other U.S. state.<sup>4</sup>
- The top two kinds of cheese produced are mozzarella and cheddar.
- Cheese contains calcium which helps build strong teeth and bones.

**Black Beans (Protein Food)**

- Michigan produces more than half of the black beans grown in the U.S.<sup>5</sup>
- Black beans grow well in Michigan's rich soil and moderate temperatures.
- Black beans contain folate, which helps the body make red blood cells.

**Orange (Fruit)**

- Florida produces more oranges than any other U.S. state.<sup>6</sup>
- Florida's warm subtropical climate is ideal for orange growth.
- Oranges are a great source of potassium which helps nerves and muscles communicate.

1. Borris, Hayley, Henrich Brunke, Marcia Kreith, and Cristina Romero. "Avocados." Agricultural Marketing Resource Center. Iowa State University, May 2016.

2. Kansapedia. Kansas Historical Society, Aug. 2015.

3. "Kansas Wheat History." United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Northern Plains Regional Field Office. October 2015.

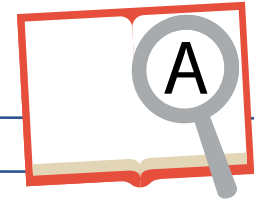
4. Bussler, Greg, Audra Hubbell, Adrien Joyner, Mike Laird, and Heidi Woodstock. "2014 Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics." United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Sept. 2014.

5. Wells, Hodan Farah. "Vegetables & Pulses: Dry Beans." United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service, 27 Jan. 2016.

6. "Florida Agriculture Overview and Statistics." Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. 2016.

## Conclusion

While different regions are known for producing different food products, a variety of foods are grown in each state and depending on the season, we can often create balanced meals using local foods. When local foods are not available, we can eat foods produced all over the country and have lots of options for choosing a healthy eating style that includes the five food groups. What foods are grown near you? How can you make them part of your healthy eating pattern?



## VOCABULARY

**Added sugars:** Sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared.

**Antioxidant:** A substance that prevents harmful chemical reactions in the body.

**Climate:** The average weather in a place over a long period of time.

**Minerals:** A substance found in certain foods that is important for good health.

**Nutrients:** A naturally occurring substance found in certain foods that are important for good health.

**Refined Grains:** Grains that have been milled, which removes the bran, germ, and important nutrients. Examples include white flour, white bread, and white rice.

**Region:** A part of a country that is different or separate from other parts in terms of climate, geography, or some other definable way.

**Sodium:** A mineral generally present in the form of salt (sodium) that your body needs in small amounts to work properly. However, when consumed in excessive amounts sodium can raise the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension).

**Saturated Fats:** Fats that are usually solid at room temperature. They are most often found in animal products such as beef, pork, and chicken, and are associated with health problems when consumed in excessive amounts.

**Vitamin:** A substance that is usually found in foods and that helps your body to be healthy.

**Whole Grains:** Grains that contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm — and therefore typically contain more nutrients than refined grains.



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# Breakfast around the World

Everyone has a different routine in the morning. Some jump up out of bed quickly, others press snooze a few times. Some walk their dogs, others watch T.V. or scan social media to find out what is happening in the world. Some sit down to eat breakfast by themselves or with their family, others may wait to eat until they get to school or work. What's the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? What is your morning routine like?

Most countries around the world have some kind of breakfast **custom**. In the United States, people eat a wide variety of breakfast foods — from oatmeal to eggs to fruits — in many different settings. No matter where people eat,

**a good healthy meal is the smart way to start the day.**

## School Breakfast Program

In the United States, the **School Breakfast Program** offers breakfast to millions of children every day. School breakfasts are a great way to get a balanced meal.

Breakfast is an important meal. A balanced, nutritious breakfast can help you:

- \* Have energy (which allows you to move and be active)
- \* Concentrate in class (it's hard to pay attention when you're hungry!)

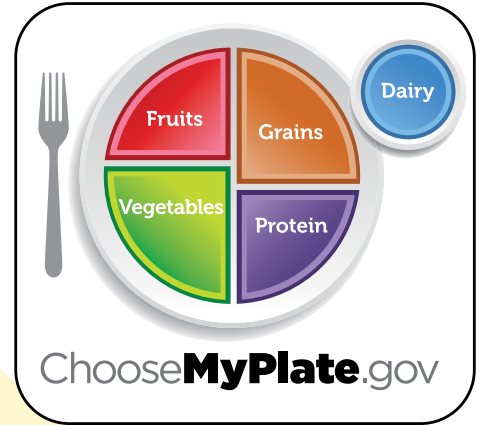
Vocabulary Words are in bold and underlined.

Eating breakfast at school is a great way to start your day!

NOT FINAL

## Eating A Balanced Breakfast

*MyPlate* shows the food groups that are building blocks to a healthy eating style. Choose foods from the food groups to build a balanced breakfast.



### Make half of the grains you eat whole grains.

Aim to start your day with **whole grains**, which will be a great step toward making sure that half your grains for the day are whole grains.



### Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy.

If you choose dairy, make sure it's fat-free or low-fat.



### Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

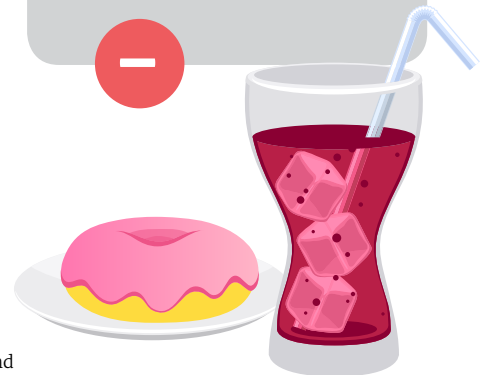
Fruits and vegetables can be important components of a balanced breakfast. Many children in the U.S. do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. Breakfast provides a way to include more of these foods in your diet.<sup>1</sup>



A balanced breakfast contains at least three of the five food groups.

### A balanced breakfast is low in sodium, saturated fat, refined grains, and added sugar.

Making small changes like these helps create a healthier overall eating style. Think of each change as a personal "win" on your path to eating healthier.

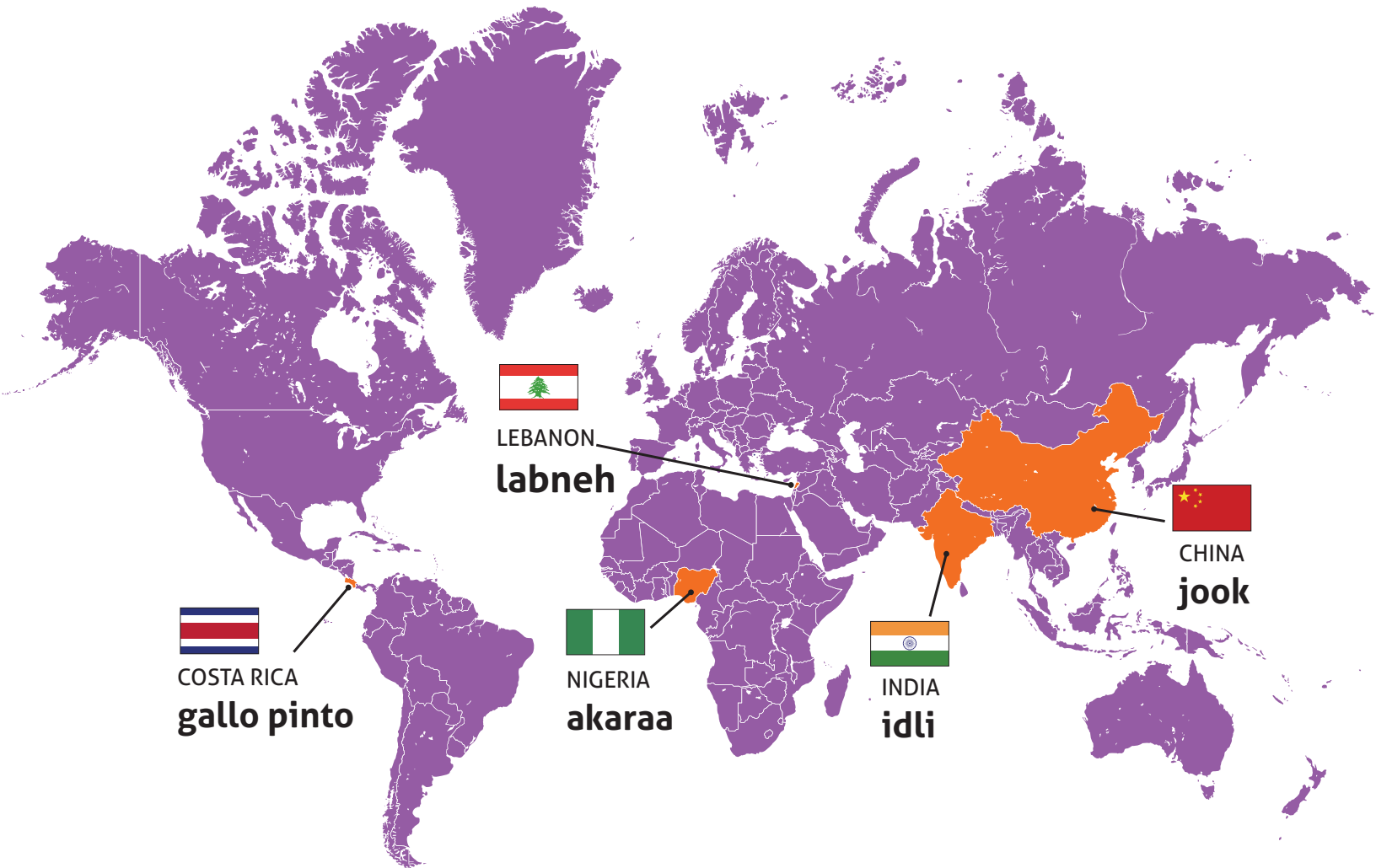


There are many ways to create a balanced breakfast that is nutritious and includes foods you love. Have you ever wondered what young people in other places eat to start their days? Read on to learn about some of the breakfasts eaten around the world.

1. "Progress on children eating more fruit, not vegetables." CDC Vital Signs. National Center for Chronic Disease and Prevention and Health Promotion. August 2014. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2014-08-vitalsigns.pdf>.

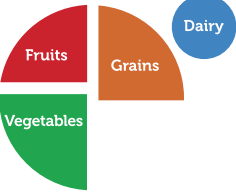

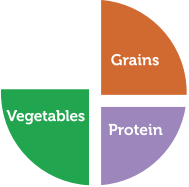

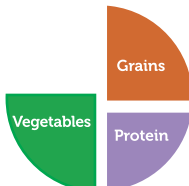

## Breakfasts From Around the World

People from **cultures** around the world serve a variety of foods for breakfast. People all over the world incorporate their cultural traditions and can still build a meal that includes choices from multiple food groups. Take a look at some breakfasts kids might eat in other countries. Notice what food groups are included in these popular meals.



Food Groups	Breakfast in Different Countries
	<p><b>China:</b> A favorite breakfast in China is jook, a rice dish (Grain) topped with greens and mushrooms (Vegetables), and tofu and strips of fried meat or egg (Protein Foods).</p>
	<p><b>Costa Rica:</b> A typical breakfast in Costa Rica includes Gallo Pinto — a mix of black beans (Vegetable) with rice (Grain), spiced with cumin, pepper, and garlic. It is usually served with eggs but sometimes with chopped beef (Protein Food) or plantains (Fruit) as well. Gallo Pinto is often accompanied by an assortment of fruits like, pineapple, watermelon, and papaya (Fruit).</p>

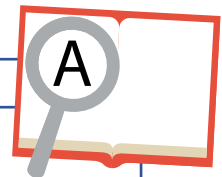


Food Groups	Breakfast in Different Countries
	 <p><b>Greece:</b> If you woke up in Greece tomorrow morning, your balanced breakfast might consist of spanakopita, a tangy spinach pie made with feta cheese (Vegetable, Dairy), and fresh orange juice (Fruit), as well as pancakes (Grain) with tahini (sesame paste) and honey.</p>
	 <p><b>India:</b> In addition to geography, cultural values influence what people eat for breakfast. The breakfast options in India are as diverse as its 1.2 billion people. In southern India, breakfast can include idli, a warm cake made from fermented lentils (Protein Food) and rice (Grain), and different vegetable dishes like tomato chutney (Vegetable).</p>
	 <p><b>Nigeria:</b> Vegetables might seem like an uncommon choice for breakfast, but they are often a part of the first meal of the day in Nigeria. Nigeria is known for its root vegetables, like yam and cassava. Breakfast might include yam porridge (Vegetable), rice (Grain), and akaraa, a bean cake (Protein Food).</p>

## Conclusion

Breakfast plays an important role in giving people the energy they need to play and learn throughout the day. There are many ways to eat a balanced breakfast. Don't be afraid to explore other cultures and try new foods in all of the five food groups as part of your personal breakfast routine.

### VOCABULARY



**Culture:** The beliefs, customs, arts, and ways of life of a particular group.

**Custom:** A way of behaving that is usual among the people in a particular group.

**Refined Grains:** Grains that have been milled, which removes the bran, germ, and important nutrients. Examples include white flour, white bread, and white rice.

**Saturated Fats:** Fats that are usually solid at room temperature. They are most often found in animal products such as beef, pork, and chicken.

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**Whole Grains:** Grains that contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm — and therefore typically contain more nutrients than refined grains.

