



Creating Top-Notch Menus

If you want to plan a top-notch menu, keep **balance**, **variety**, and **moderation** in mind!

Balance – Make sure you include foods from all of the food groups using MyPyramid as a guide. Each group contributes different nutrients, so it's important to include each group every day.

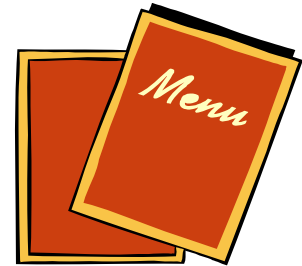
Milk: Calcium, vitamin D, riboflavin (B2), vitamin B12

Meat: Protein, iron, B vitamins, zinc

Fruit: Vitamin C, fiber

Vegetables: Vitamin A (betacarotene), vitamin C, potassium, fiber

Grains: Carbohydrate, iron, folate, fiber (whole grains)



Variety – Choose a variety of foods within each group.

You'll be more likely to get all the nutrients you need for good health everyday!

Moderation - Keep portion sizes of high fat, high sugar items small, and use them sparingly.

Check your knowledge:

Is this a top-notch menu?

Georgia Baked Chicken
Creamy Mashed Potatoes
Steamed Cauliflower
Cloverleaf Roll
Pear Halves
Chilled 1% Milk

It sounds good, doesn't it? Let's go farther!
Check for **balance**, **variety** and **moderation**:

- Balance:** All food groups are included.
- Variety:** Two different vegetables were chosen.
- Moderation:** Low fat foods and preparation methods were used.

Color It Healthy!

The meal on the left would be much more appealing if it had a little more color! Scientists have now learned that the pigments which give fruits and vegetables their bright colors are also important to our good health!

Red/Orange: tomatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, strawberries, peaches, apricots, cantaloupe

Yellow/Green: corn, spinach, broccoli, celery, pineapple, kiwi, honeydew melon

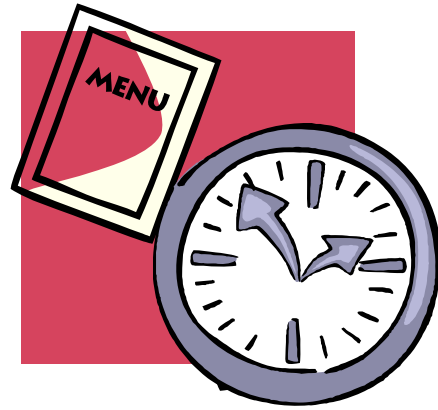
Blue/Purple: purple cabbage, eggplant, beets, blueberries, raisins, grapes, blackberries

White: potatoes, onions, mushrooms, cauliflower, pears, bananas, jicama



It's About the Whole Day!

Consider your food choices based on the whole day rather than for one meal or snack. This allows you to be flexible and balance out some of your favorite foods at one meal that may be higher in fat, added sugars, calories and sodium (salt) with foods that are lower in these at other meals.



Example: You want to plan your menu to include French Fries (high in fat and sodium) for lunch. Balance your menu by making sure breakfast and dinner meals and snacks are low in fat and sodium. Adding colorful fruits and vegetables throughout the day will help you keep your menu low in fat and sodium.



Make Your Beverages Count!



When planning your menu don't forget the beverages. The type of beverage you select is important. Here are a few things to consider:

Nutrients: Juice and milk as beverages count toward your food group requirements. **Juice:** Choose 100% fruit juice as a Fruit Group serving, but limit to no more than 1 cup per day. **Milk:** A great way to get your 3 Milk Group servings. Choose low-fat or fat-free more often.

Calories: Water: The best choice as a thirst quencher – no calories and your body needs it. **Soft Drinks, Sweetened Tea, or Fruit Drinks:** Tend to be high in added sugars and calories. Limit portion sizes and include these beverages occasionally, but not as regular beverages.

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