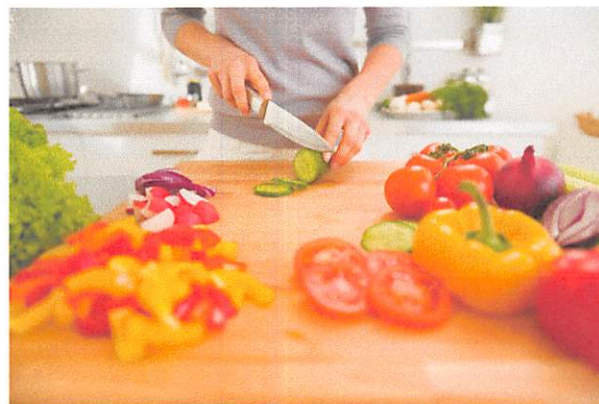


## FARM: Tips to stay on track in 2017

By Mary Welch-Bezemek, Special to this Newspaper | Posted: Thursday, January 19, 2017 12:10 am

Two weeks ago, I wrote about consuming a healthy, balanced diet and increasing physical activity. Hopefully, this week we are all exercising and moving a little bit more than last year and paying a little more attention to what we eat!

The United States Department of Agriculture's MyPlate is an easy to understand illustration designed to help us adopt healthy eating habits and keep us on track. The MyPlate logo divides a dinner plate into four sections for vegetables, fruits, grains, and proteins with a fifth smaller area to the side for dairy.



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The vegetable and fruit portions should make up half of the plate to emphasize the recommendation to include vegetables and fruit as half of every meal. When making half of your plate vegetables and fruits, try adding slightly more vegetables than fruit. The USDA recommends eating more red, orange and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes and broccoli. You may add these vegetables to your main dish or to a colorful salad.

Use fruits as snacks, salads and desserts. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or other fresh fruit and add fruit to your pancakes or waffles. With vegetables and fruits, go for a colorful mix. You will get plenty of nutrients that way.

The USDA recommends 2 1/2 cups of vegetables per day. One cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice and two cups of leafy salad greens count as a one cup serving. The recommendation for fruit is two cups per day. One cup of raw or cooked fruit or 100 percent fruit juice and 1/2 cup of dried fruit count as a one-cup serving. Remember when purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables, buy seasonal and buy local as these items may cost less than those from other areas of the world.

Here are a few more key suggestions that go along with the MyPlate guide: 1. Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, which includes foods such as low-fat or fat-free yogurt, cottage cheese and cheese. 2. Make at least half of your grains whole grains. Whole grains contain more fiber and help your digestive system. Whole grains include: whole wheat bread, brown rice, whole wheat

pasta, quinoa, barley, oats and wheat germ. 3. Go lean with protein such as chicken, fish, lean ground meats, beans, split peas and nuts. 4. Compare sodium (salt) in foods like soup, bread and frozen meals, and choose foods with lower sodium content. 5. Drink water instead of sugary drinks. The recommendation is to drink six 8-ounce glasses of water per day and more when exercising vigorously or when working outdoors in high temperatures. 6. The USDA recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day or 2 1/2 hours per week minimum. 7. Enjoy your food but eat less and avoid oversized portions.

To avoid eating oversized portions, the recommended serving sizes are as follows: One serving of fruits and vegetables is 1/2 cup (need 2 1/2 cups of vegetables and 2 cups fruit per day). One serving of grain is one slice of bread, 1/2 cup cooked rice, quinoa, barley, cereal or pasta (need 6 ounces of grains per day). A portion of protein is 1 oz. of lean meat, poultry or fish, one egg, one tablespoon peanut butter, 1/2 ounce nuts or seeds and 1/4 cup beans or peas (need 5 1/2 ounces per day). One serving of dairy is 1 cup of milk, yogurt or fortified soymilk, 1/2 cup of cottage cheese, 1 1/2 ounces natural or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

As you do your grocery shopping for the next few weeks, look for local fresh produce and remember to make 1/2 of your plate fruits and vegetables. Continue to follow these guidelines and portion recommendations for a healthy diet, keep moving and you are on your way for a happy healthy lifestyle in 2017.