Today on Across the Fence we're in the kitchen with two nutrition experts who are going to share their tips for building a healthy plate for every meal. Good afternoon and thanks for joining us; I am Judy Simpson. March is national nutrition month. And today is national registered dietitian day. Both of those declarations remind us that we need to make more informed decisions about our eating habits. We know that healthy eating isn't always easy so we've called on two experts to help. With UVM Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist Diane Mincher and Jill Goodroe, a registered dietitian from the New England Dairy and Food Council, we will have some tips on how to use the new dietary guideline model called “My Plate.” First of all, happy nutrition month to both of you. Jill tell us a little bit about My Plate.

Jill.: Sure. The USDA came out this past year with a new food guidance icon called My Plate. My Plate is based on the 2010 dietary guidelines for Americans to help people make better food choices. Actually My Plate is a great visual guide because it actually has all the five food groups and it's a really easy simple tool for people to understand. As a registered dietitian I think it's going to be a great tool.

Judy.: I grew up with the food pyramid why the shift from the pyramid to the plate?

Jill.: The shape has shifted from the pyramid to the plate. As people eat on plates so it's such a simple easy tool for people to know what is to go on their plate and how much. Even with the shape shift from my plate the message remains the same. Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all five groups including low fat and fat free dairy whole grains fruits and vegetables and lean protein as part of every meal.

Judy.: So much easier; obviously that's an easy guideline to follow you can see right there what you need you can build a plate. As a matter of fact you are going to be using My Plate to show some easy ways to build a meal, each meal, from breakfast and lunch to dinner and even snacks. Let's get going.

Jill.: Yes let's start with our most important meal of the day, breakfast. A breakfast meal is so important because not only does it provide you energy to start your day but it also sets the stage for how you're going to make healthy food choices for the rest of the day which is really important for balancing your calories and maintaining a healthy weight. Let's take a look in our sample breakfast here and see how it compares to My Plate. We're going to start with lean protein with some scrambled eggs with some vegetables spinach and tomato. Also we have some dairy low fat dairy plain low-fat yogurt and it is topped with fresh blueberries and a little bit of granola for some crunch. Keeping in mind the five food
groups are the building blocks for healthy meal, what food group are we missing here to complete the plate?

Judy.: We're missing the grain.

Jill.: Yes were missing grains and the dietary guidelines actually recommend making half of your grains whole grains. To eat more whole grains you can substitute a whole grain product for a refined grain product. What that means is substituting whole grain bread for white bread or brown rice for white rice but if you really want to know if a product has a whole grain then you can check the nutrition facts label that would be the best way to look. What you are looking for on the ingredient list is 100% whole grain, whole wheat, oats, whole oats, or oatmeal as one of the first ingredients.

Judy.: So multigrain doesn't necessarily mean its whole grain.

Jill.: You don't want to actually look at the color and think its brown it's a whole grain product. Foods that are labeled as you mentioned 100% wheat, multigrain, seven grain, bran, cracked wheat that may not actually contain all of the actual grain, you may not be getting the nutrient benefit of that whole grain. If it's a whole grain product you're going to get the whole grain nutrient benefits of such as fiber.

Judy.: So a good way to include that would be to use a wrap that you're just showing us.

Jill.: Yes so to make this a complete meal we would add a whole grain wrap with the scrambled egg tomato and spinach mixture. Also at breakfast you want to think about portion control. Actually you want to think about portion control for every meal. What I like about my plate is it's a great visual for portion sizes for all of the five food groups. Other tips to avoid oversized portions is look at your plate. Try to use a smaller plate. Don't use a large plate, as you might have a tendency to try to fill the whole thing. Also even with dishes use a smaller dish like I did here. I portioned out the yogurt and I'm saving the rest for later.

Judy.: Excellent. All right those are some great tips. Diane now let's have some lunch.

Diane.: Lunch is a great time to pack a lot of nutrients into your meal. When thinking My Plate and planning your meal, today we're going to start with a salad. A lot of people love salad and lunch time is another great way to get all of those vegetables in. Today we have leafy greens as our base. We want to include dark green leafy red leafy vegetables and we could also include romaine or escarole. Use a nice base of colorful dark green leaves then we want to throw in more green vegetables so we have broccoli here. We want red vegetables. A lot of people put tomatoes on it sometimes tomatoes don't always taste good this time of year.

Judy.: Correct.

Diane.: So red peppers is what we're adding for the red color. Orange is another color we need to keep in mind when we're planning our meals and vegetables so we have some grated carrots. We also have a whole wheat roll. We're talking just now about including 100% whole wheat so that's what our roll is. But I think when we look at my plate we're missing some food groups here.

Judy.: We are missing fruit and also protein.

Diane.: Fruits-OK. Let's start with protein. We have some grilled chicken breast that I will sprinkle on to include some protein. The cheese I didn't mention the cheese. We did have cheese so that's part of the
dairy group. About 1/3 to 1/2 grated reduced fat sharp cheese is equal to 1 cup of milk for calcium. We would like to have at least 1/3 cup of cheese on here. We want about 3 ounces or less of lean meat so we’re talking lean poultry that’s chicken and turkey or beef or ham but lean. Seafood is a great place to put on our salad. We need to eat seafood at least twice a week so at lunch time it would be another great thing. Don't forget those beans as an alternative to meat. So beans we can use those like croutons on our salad even. Nuts and seeds are also other options for that. So our meat we have lean protein. You mentioned fruit we’re missing fruits. We could have a dish of fruit for dessert but many times fruit adds a lot of sweetness to the salad and makes it taste better. I have ½ cup of sliced strawberry with no sugar added. It's nice to use fresh fruit if we're using some other kind of fruit you could use frozen without sugar added to it. Or canned that's packed in juice, 100% juice or water. So that's a big salad and if you're hungry we can always increase the vegetables in it and even have it bigger without hurting the calorie amount. Lunch is a great way to sneak a lot of vegetables into your meal.

Judy.: A lot of people do go to salad bars are there any pitfalls that you have to watch out for at salad bars?

Diane.: Number one is the dressing.

Judy.: Chunky blue cheese?

Diane.: Could be a lot of fat in dressing so we want to limit it and try to use reduced fat dressings sometimes. But this salad uses balsamic vinegar and would be great with it that brings out the sweetness in the strawberries so to be careful about the dressing at salad bars and adding starches if there's macaroni or potato salad, adding that to it could bring up the calorie level too.

Judy.: Something like this is obviously going to hold you over.

Diane.: It will.

Judy.: Dinner is often the most difficult meal to plan just because you're coming home from work you don't know what's in the refrigerator what you have what don't you have it would be easier to open something frozen that you have some tips on how to work around that.

Jill.: No worries about dinner again the My Plate way keeping in mind the five food groups to incorporate to plan your healthy meal. Let’s take a look here at our sample dinner plate. We have our lean protein a 3 ounce portion of salmon that is grilled we also have some whole grain ½ C of whole grain rice and also if you noticed half the plate is fruits and vegetables we have some fresh green beans and also some canned peaches that are packed with some juice. Looking at this plate Judy what food groups are we missing here?

Judy.: Dairy.

Jill.: We are missing dairy and we cannot forget about the dairy. By adding a cup of milk we’re adding important nutrients that both kids and adults need more of. Vitamin D calcium and potassium. Milk actually is the number one food source for all three of those nutrients. I actually added a cup of skim milk because the dietary guidelines have recommended switching to low fat 1% and skim milk but no worries if you’re a whole milk drinker you can make the gradual switch to low fat 1%. Actually as well you'll notice that dairy can also be yogurt it can be cheese I could have added some cheese here or yogurt of course we had yogurt for breakfast so try to remember to have that yogurt in your diet.
Judy.: I have a question. How do you know what size the protein should be? You said 3 ounces I didn't know that?

Jill.: Actually a good tool would be to think 3 ounces is a deck of cards. If you notice it's about the same size as a deck of cards so you can always measure it out that way. But I also find which a lot of people make the mistake of swapping out of nutrient rich beverage such as milk in place of a non-nutrient rich beverage such as soda or energy drinks or sport drinks. They have a lot of calories and a lot of sugar really not a lot of nutrients packaged with those.

Judy.: What are some of the other things we should we reduce from our diets?

Jill.: Actually the dietary guidelines calls out to reduce foods that are high in sodium. Foods high in sodium can lead to chronic diseases such as high blood pressure so be really careful to compare the sodium in your products for example in this meal I'm using fresh green beans but because fresh is actually low in sodium if you don't have fresh or a frozen option use the nutrition facts label on a canned product such as the green beans and compare. You are looking for words such as no salt added or low sodium or reduced sodium because these products are going to have less salt. The same rule applies for other foods such as your soups are prepackaged foods frozen meals those are usually processed and usually higher in sodium so choose the products with the lowest numbers.

Judy.: Check your labels. Let's move on to snacks. Even after eating all this you might still need a snack.

Diane.: I'm so glad you asked about snacks. Snacks can be planned into a daily routine for eating. It's OK to eat snacks especially when you don't get enough of the food groups in breakfast or lunch during the day. We want to include snacks they should be at least from two of the food groups and we're aiming for about 200 calories or less per snack. First I have a smoothie. This one's called a blues-buster smoothie that means it has blueberry yogurt in it, a 6 ounce container of blueberry yogurt it has additional blueberries in it some peaches some juice we used apple juice in this one and blended it up. The frozen fruit adds to the frothiness of it. No added sugar to this and we have a great snack.

Judy.: Delicious.

Diane.: So what other food groups do we have in our smoothie?

Judy.: We've got vegetables and protein.

Diane.: No, we have fruit.

Judy.: You can throw it right in.

Diane.: So it's a great snack. Another great snack would be popcorn people love popcorn.

Judy.: I wouldn't have thought that would be something that is recommended.

Diane.: It depends how you make it. Corn is a whole grain food so if we can pop our popcorn that's the best way no fat was added we can grate some Parmesan cheese on it while it's still warm it will go through the popcorn and you will have a cheesy crunchy food and it's good.

Judy.: And also vegetables.
Diane.: Vegetables who wants vegetables for snack. A lot of times we need to have more vegetables in our diet, we’re not getting enough so what makes vegetables better is a dip. Today we have a dip made of Greek yogurt. Greek yogurt is thick and creamy we add some taco seasoning to it or any kind of seasoning and so we have a cup of yogurt there and with our variety of colors we can include green and red and orange.

Judy.: Quickly Diane if you could recap what are some of the key points to My Plate?

Diane.: We have to refer back to the My Plate image. The plate is divided half with fruits and vegetables one quarter with whole grain preferably and the other quarter with protein.

Judy.: Excellent. For more information on My Plate and the key messages from the 2010 dietary guidelines for Americans, you can visit: choosemyplate.gov that’s the web site that features practical information and tips to help people eat better. And as we said at the beginning of the program today it's registered dietitian day. To locate a registered dietitian in your local area you can look up: eatrightvt.org that's eatrightvt.org. Thank you both for coming in and giving us some great food tips.

That's our program for today. I’m Judy Simpson we will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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