

## Ask the Expert:

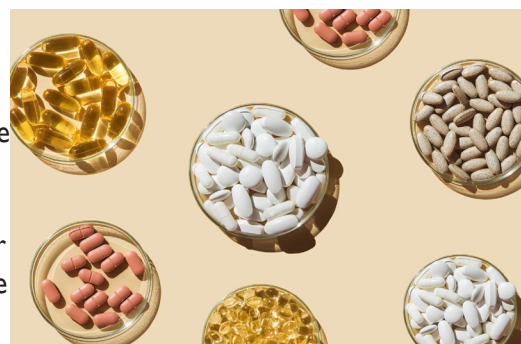
### What Are Dietary Supplements and Should I Take Them?

Written by Elaine Wang, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness and Health '27

Dietary supplements are products that can add nutrients or other things to your diet. These products could be helpful if you are not getting enough nutrients from food but they could also be harmful. Whether they are helpful or harmful depends on what the supplement is, how much someone takes, and the other health concerns or drugs the person is taking. Some common types include vitamins (like vitamin D for strong bones), minerals (such as iron for helping to make red blood cells to that deliver oxygen and nutrients to your body, herbs (like ginger or echinacea), and probiotics (the tiny bacteria that live in the gut). While certain supplements can be helpful for certain people, they shouldn't replace the nutrients that you can get from eating a healthful diet. They don't cure diseases and shouldn't replace a nutritious diet full of fruits, vegetables, and a variety of protein foods, low-fat dairy, and whole grains.

Many people believe that supplements are always safe and beneficial, but that might not be true. Most supplements aren't approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and many haven't been tested by third parties for quality or to make sure that they will really give you the health benefits that they state. This means there's no guarantee they're safe or effective. Additionally, supplements can be expensive, and you may not even need them if your diet is already well-balanced. It's very important to consult a healthcare professional before taking supplements, as some could even interact with medications or cause harm.

It's best to avoid taking supplements unless your doctor or dietitian recommends them, especially for a specific health condition. A well-balanced diet with a variety of foods is the best way to get all the nutrients your body needs. Supplements might help in some cases, but they can't replace a healthy diet. Always consult with a healthcare professional before using them.



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## Food Safety: Is Your Kitchen Food Safe?

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

Having a clean and food safe kitchen is a big factor in keeping your health in check. Many illness-causing bacteria can live in your kitchen. They can hide in cookware, kitchen tools, food storage containers, and any other kitchen supplies. Old cookware and utensils can also be scratched causing their chemical coating to flake off into food which could also be harmful to health. Use the following tips to keep your kitchen food safe:

### Replace your sponges frequently:

- Sponges are a great place for bacteria to grow, especially if they are used for a long period of time. Make sure to replace them as soon as they look dirty or start to smell bad.

### Wash dishtowels and dishcloths often:

- Make sure to wash your dishtowels and dishcloths frequently. Instead of using them to clean large spills of raw food (especially meat), use napkins or paper towels to avoid the spread of bacteria.

### Don't use scratched nonstick pans:

- Avoid using any nonstick pans that are scratched, especially those made with materials like Teflon. The chemicals that make the pans nonstick are harmful if eaten and have been related to many health concerns.

### Avoid using scratched cooking utensils, especially plastic:

- Once plastic cooking utensils are scratched or damaged, the chemical coating may continue to flake off into foods that are prepared in them. Any damaged plasticware should be discarded to avoid accidentally eating these chemicals or plastic.



Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/food/home-food-safety/cleaning-tips/are-your-kitchen-surfaces-and-sponges-really-clean>  
<https://www.consumerreports.org/health/healthy-eating/how-to-choose-healthier-cookware-and-kitchen-tools-a6071339544/>

## Spicy Ground Beef Succotash

### Directions

1. Brown ground beef in a medium pan. Make sure to drain excess liquid after it's cooked.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients except nutmeg. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated.
3. Sprinkle with nutmeg before serving.

### Ingredients (6 servings)

- 8 ounces lean ground beef\*
- 1 cup frozen lima beans, cooked and drained\*
- 1 3/4 cups low-sodium corn (15 1/2 ounce can, drained)\*
- 1 can low-sodium tomatoes\*
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper



### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 152

Protein: 11g

Carbs: 18g

Fat: 5g

**\*foods included in the  
TEFAP (The Emergency Food  
Assistance Program)**

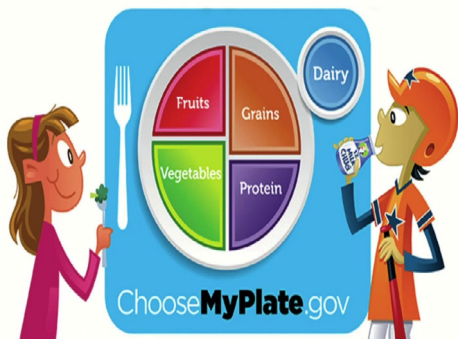
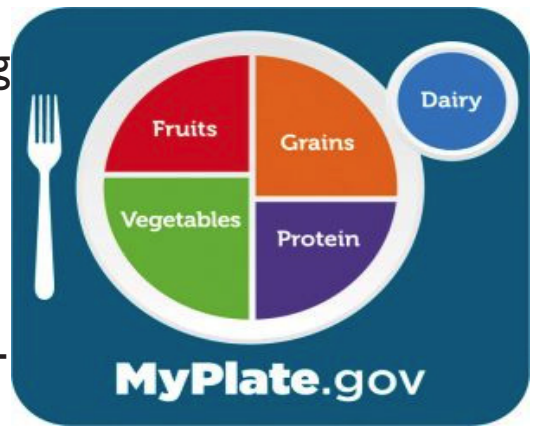
Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/savory-spicy-ground-beef-succo->

## Eating Right: What is MyPlate?

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

MyPlate, which may also be referred to as MyPyramid or the Food Pyramid, is a guide for choosing a diet for long-term health that is based on scientific research. Using the image of a plate setting, it serves as a way to show people the food groups to include in their diet that will help promote overall health. The plate also shows the amounts to eat of each food group. As technology has improved, new resources for MyPlate have also been made such as a recipe directory and an app to help with more education on eating in a healthful way.

MyPlate is created by the United States Department of Agriculture and MyPlate is based on the recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines are updated every 5 years. They help guide what needs to be shown on nutrition labels, recommendations to improve health and prevent disease, and the correct amounts of each food group to include in a healthy diet. Through MyPlate, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans can visually show the information in the guidelines and make it easier for people to understand.



MyPlate has information for all life stages and it also has different resources for different people. For example, there is a guide for kids that includes games, apps, and other fun activities for kids to learn more about healthy eating. Learn more at <https://www.myplate.gov/>.



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**Email: [earaya@purdue.edu](mailto:earaya@purdue.edu)**  
Website: [www.purdue.edu/indianasefrnetwork/](http://www.purdue.edu/indianasefrnetwork/)

This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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## In The News: Food Connects Us

IN THE NEWS

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

March marks National Nutrition Month! This year's theme is "Food Connects Us". This theme highlights the importance of unity, connection, and community through our culture, family, and friends.

National nutrition month is led by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which is the national organization for nutrition and dietetics professionals. Throughout the month, the Academy hopes to help the public understand more about nutrition. This year's theme is aimed to help people understand the way that food gives us something to share together and to share with people from other places around the world.

By visiting the link below, find ways to get involved in National Nutrition Month:

<https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/awareness-campaigns/50-ideas-to-get-involved-in-national-nutrition-month>

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month>

