Why should you MyPlate your cart?

There is research supporting that this type of approach can help you make healthier choices. When you go food shopping, think about how MyPlate principles can be applied to your cart.

Picture an imaginary line dividing your cart into sections for vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.

Choose skin or low-fat dairy products.
Skim and low-fat dairy have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole fat, but less fat and calories. Fill your cart with dairy products including, milk, cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt.

Vary your protein food choices.
Choose a variety of foods from the protein food group, such as seafood, beans and peas, and nuts as well as lean meats, poultry and eggs. When shopping, select meats and ground beef that are at least 90% lean.

Make at least half your grains whole.
When shopping, check the ingredients list on product labels for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain ingredient name. Substitute whole grain choices, like whole-wheat bread and brown rice, for refined-grain breads, bagels, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers, rice, and pasta as much as possible.

Make half your cart fruits and vegetables.
In addition to fresh fruits, look for fruits that are frozen, canned (in water or 100% juice) and dried. At breakfast, top cottage cheese with bananas or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes. Choose fruits as snacks, salads, and desserts.

Fill your cart with a variety of colorful vegetables – red, orange, and dark-green veggies like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli. Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count. Choose “reduced sodium” or “no-salt-added” canned veggies.

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The United States Department of Agriculture introduced MyPlate to illustrate the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image – a place setting for a meal. This approach can also be applied to the equally familiar shopping cart.

REFERENCE: