

Transcript Season 2 Episode 1 : Basic Nutrition Using MyPlate

Are you buying groceries on your own for the first time? Or maybe you are trying to plan meals for yourself or maybe your new baby?

Even if you are still living at home, chances are you are making a lot of food choices for yourself when you are out and about your day.

Good nutrition is vital to being healthy and feeling good and with MyPlate, deciding what to eat is easier than ever!

Podcast Opener:

Everyone needs some advice now, I mean, if you are getting ready to leave home or have been on your own for a while. Grown Up U: Facts for Success can give you trusted advice that can take the stress out of adulthood. Listen and find some answers to the questions being constantly bombarded at you.

Podcast Script:

Alison Crane: Thank you for tuning in and listening to our grown up you Facts for Success podcast. This is our first episode for our new season, and our podcast team is excited about our topics for season two.

I'm Alison Crane, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for the Garland County Extension Service, and today we are going to talk about how you can use MyPlate a free and simple way to make every bite count.

MyPlate is available online and provides a number of tools to help you make good food choices. MyPlate is a topic I personally enjoy talking about, and I'm excited to introduce my guest, Amanda Crane.

Amanda, we're glad to have you join us today.

Amanda Crane: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so glad to be here.

Alison Crane: Well, Amanda, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Amanda Crane: Well, I'm a family consumer science education major, and I'm attending Henderson State University. I'm a senior and I plan to graduate this coming fall after I do my internship.

I'm also newly married. In May, I will be celebrating one year with my husband. I was a missionary kid to Romania for most of my life. Up until I turned about 18 years old, I came back to start high school and the rest is history.

Alison Crane: So, you've had some really interesting experiences with food, I'm sure.

Amanda Crane: Oh yes, I have.

Alison Crane: Well, while we're talking about that, what's something from Romania that you like to eat that we don't eat normally here?

Amanda Crane: Well, the thing I miss the most is called Sarmale and they are actually cabbage rolls that are filled with rice and different types of meat and spices, and the cabbage is actually soaked in vinegar.

So, it's sour, but it's one of my favorites. I miss it every day.

Alison Crane: Sounds good. I remember when I got to visit you guys when you were over there and one of our favorite things that we ate there was the shawarmas. Shawarmas are their version of a Greek gyro, but with a Romanian twist to it.

Well, Amanda, when I asked you to come on today's podcast, I also asked if you were familiar with MyPlate. You said you had heard of it but did not know much about it.

Let me give you and our listeners a little bit of background information on MyPlate. Before we talk about all the tools that are available.

Amanda Crane: So how long have diet recommendations been around?

Alison Crane: The United States government started making recommendations for diet almost one hundred and twenty eight years ago. The first recommendations were actually for farmers and were shared in government newsletters in 1894.

At first, the recommendations were focused on making sure people were eating enough to be healthy. Then, as our country developed and agriculture flourished, the recommendations shifted to helping people avoid eating the foods that were linked to chronic diseases like heart disease. Since then, a lot of research has gone into fine tuning those recommendations.

Amanda Crane: So, when did MyPlate happen?

Alison Crane: Well, MyPlate was first introduced in 2011 and follows the dietary guidelines for Americans recommended by the USDA. It is based on five food groups and is an easy way to start a healthy eating routine.

Amanda Crane: Oh yes, I've studied the five food groups in my nutrition classes. That means MyPlate focuses on eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, foods and dairy.

Alison Crane: Yes, and one of the things I really like about MyPlate is how it's designed to represent how your food should be portioned on your dinner plate.

Okay, so before we actually get into all the tools that are available through MyPlate, let's get everybody on the same page and take you to the website. Amanda and I are already there.

So, you go, it's just www.myplate.gov

And so, it's really easy to get to the website. And once you get there, there are several options available that you can look through.

And the very first thing you'll see is, are you making every bite count? And it's a quiz.

Amanda Crane: What's this quiz about? Is it just to test your knowledge?

Alison Crane: Well, it does test your knowledge, but also it asks questions about you that will allow it to personalize your MyPlate experience. You know, there's not just a one size fits all for your nutrition needs.

Now there's some basic guidelines that go for everyone. But when it comes to making individual decisions, MyPlate has made it really easy to find out what you will benefit best for.

And I like it because they say Start simple and they really do try to keep it simple. So, as I'm scrolling down, I notice it starts going into the food groups. It gets a little more in-depth with the different food groups and what to eat, what not to eat.

So, when you look at the different food groups, each food group has some information about this, you know, the types of things that fit under that food group. Also, they focus on a kind of a catch phrase that is the main guideline for each food group. So, let's talk about the different food groups real quick.

Amanda Crane: So, for fruits, if they focus on whole fruits, right?

Alison Crane: In other words, not the processed fruits, not fruit drinks.

Amanda Crane: I've learned that also either fresh or frozen is also a good option.

Alison Crane: Oh yes, I usually keep a lot of frozen fruits available at home because we're busy, and if I buy too much of the fresh fruits, then they go bad before we use them.

Then when you get to vegetables, it talks about varying your vegetables.
And so, Amanda, what does that mean to you?

Amanda Crane: Varying your vegetables? I've always learned to eat the rainbow. So, if, like you have vegetables that are just plain white or you know, that are very bland to look at, then they're probably not very beneficial for you. Whereas like very vibrant colored fruits and vegetables are packed with nutrients.

Alison Crane: Well, there literally are fruits and vegetables of every color from the rainbow. And so, if you do think, like you said, eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and eat your rainbow, then you're going to be covering all of the nutritional needs that vegetables can provide.

Amanda Crane: Which is all the minerals and vitamins that your body needs, right?

Alison Crane: Well, then going to grains, what does it say on grains?

Amanda Crane: Make half your grains whole grains.

Alison Crane: Have you studied about whole grains yet?

Amanda Crane: I have, and I've always heard that whole grains will be better for you than, say, white bread or white flour because you don't want that much starch, you want something of substance. So, you want like breads that have nuts in them or like just different whole grains.

Alison Crane: You're really getting the idea of that with grains. The more processed the grain is, the less nutrition is available. And so, while yes, you'll get some calories, you will still get some nutrition, but you want to make every bite count. And so, by making sure that you're getting the whole grains in, you're getting lots of good nutrition and you're getting fiber.

Amanda Crane: When we get to the protein foods, it says vary your protein routine.

Alison Crane: With that, it means don't eat the same meat over and over again, day in, day out. So, for the meat, you would want your seafood, you can get your red meat, poultry, eggs, there's beans, peas and lentils and also nuts, seeds and soy products. Those are all part of the protein food group.

And so, you can get a wide variety of dishes and meals and things. Meat is usually one of the most expensive parts of a meal, but beans and peas and lentils can bring that cost down. But you get a lot of health benefits.

Also, they suggest that you with seafood, you want to make sure that you get in seafood or fish type protein at least a couple times a week.

So, the next thing is dairy. What does it say for dairy?

Amanda Crane: Well, it says to move to low fat or fat free dairy, milk or yogurt, or even lactose free dairy or fortified soy versions, right?

Alison Crane: Nowadays, there's a lot of variety that you can get for dairy, especially if you have some kind of lactose sensitivity. The dairy group includes milk, yogurt and cheese. And again, you can get the lactose free milk or even fortified soy milk or yogurt. And these foods are the foods that will give you calcium.

But you want to also be watching because a lot of these foods, like cream cheese or sour cream and butter, those can be very high in fat. That's why they're recommending that you move to the low fat or fat free.

Amanda Crane: So, we've talked about the main food groups, but we haven't talked about how we're supposed to portion them out on the plate.

Alison Crane: Well, MyPlate is set up to look like a table setting, and so I like it because it's very visual to me. Instead of having to remember, I'm supposed to get two to three foods of this food group or five to six of this food group or something like that. You just imagine how you should have your food on your plate.

The first thing you do is divide your plate down the center, so you just kind of have a dividing line and you got half and half. The left half of your plate, you do the division for your fruits and vegetables, and you want about two thirds of that half of the plate to be filled with your vegetable and then the other portion there. The other third would be your fruits.

On the other side of the plate, you put your grains and your protein, and your protein is a little less than half. It's about a third of the plate and then you do two thirds for your grain food. Then you have your dairy. And so, if you look at that as being for each meal, you want to try to portion your meal to look like MyPlate.

Then you know that you are getting a variety of foods and that you would have enough of each food group to represent your nutritional needs for each day.

Amanda Crane: You mentioned before how MyPlate can be personalized. How can we do that?

Alison Crane: Well, the MyPlate Plan is a tool that you can use, and it will go in and show what your food targets are.

If, say, you're trying to lose weight and what it will do is it will be how much food you need or how many calories you need per day gone your age, your sex, height, weight and your physical activity level.

The nice thing is it's free. You can go in and click on the MyPlate plan and it'll ask you a few basic questions to get started and what your goals are. And then it will be something that you can actually print out, or you can keep it on your phone because they have the MyPlate App.

Amanda Crane: So, you mentioned an app. Is this an app that I could get on my phone that gives me easier access? And so, what's the difference between just using the app or any other of the diet apps that are out there?

Alison Crane: Well, I really prefer that MyPlate app, it's called Start Simple with MyPlate, and for one, it's research based, and it's been tested and tried. You know, they've looked at the nutritional needs for thousands and thousands of people and compiled all of this together to make it where it's very useful.

So, one of the things that you can do with the MyPlate app is you can pick simple food goals for each day and then you can see your actual progress that you're making toward your goal. You can also earn badges along the way. So again, like I said, it rewards you for putting in the effort. And you know, if you're like me, it's nice to have a little bit of encouragement along the way when I'm trying to make healthy choices.

The app can help you make healthy food choices, and then by making healthy food choices, you start yourself on a path to a healthier life overall.

Amanda Crane: What are some of the other tools that you use that you really like from MyPlate?

Alison Crane: They do have the Shop Simple tool, and what it does is it will help you discover budget friendly and healthy foods. And then also it can help you find some of the values in your area, the local farmer's markets, or where you can get the Snap savings. So, there's some benefits with that.

One of my favorite things off of my plate is the MyPlate Kitchen, and in it, it's got budget friendly, healthy recipes that are based on MyPlate. The My Plate Kitchen is really my go to place where I start looking for recipes.

Amanda, we just talked about MyPlate having an app for your phone, the Start Simple app. But did you know that MyPlate is also available as an Alexa skill?

Amanda Crane: What? No, I did not know that. What does that do?

Alison Crane: You can go, "Alexa, enable the MyPlate skill," and it would be added to your account.

Amanda Crane: Well, who's it for?

Alison Crane: Well, the MyPlate on Alexa is intended for basically everyone. You can do it for parents and caregivers of babies starting at age four months old, and then it goes all the way through older adults. And it can give you your nutritional needs or keep up with answering questions like, "Hey Alexa, should my baby, who is only one year old, have honey?" Or "How much do I need to eat while I am pregnant?"

Amanda Crane: Well, that's cool!

Alison Crane: There's so many ways that you can use MyPlate. And, again, I like MyPlate because it's visual. It creates an image of how your plate should look for each meal.

But then also they've created a lot of tools that can be used, and it's really user friendly. And it's great. It's all free.

Well, Amanda, that's kind of a very brief overview of my plate and what's available. Again, you can find out so much more just by visiting at www.myplate.gov

But what, Amanda, what do you think about my plate now?

Amanda Crane: Well, I did learn a little bit about it during my schooling, but now that I know so much more, I'll be able to use it.

Now that I'm married and we have our own home, I'll be able to use my plate kitchen probably the most just to find different recipes. Use that, you know the things that are helpful and beneficial for us.

Alison Crane: Well, now you know, some of the tricks that I use for when I'm meal planning for our family suppers.

Amanda, I can't thank you enough for coming and joining us today. And I hope it will be beneficial to you and my son.

Amanda Crane: It already has, and I'm so glad that you invited me to join you on this podcast.

Alison Crane: Oh, believe me, as long as you're willing to come on, I will be asking!

So, this concludes this podcast, be sure, and join us next week. We're going to have a great guest speaker cheering about fad diets.

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