

# MyPlate Planning for Healthy Eating & Savings

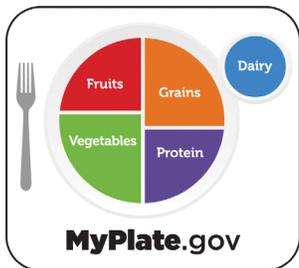
## FROZEN FOOD HACKS EDITION

When it comes to food, “fresh” doesn’t necessarily mean “healthier.” Fresh and frozen versions of the same foods often have the same amount of nutrients. Stocking your freezer with a variety of choices from the food groups can help you build healthy eating patterns, minimize food waste, and save money at the store.

**Fun Fact!** Frozen fruits and vegetables are typically packaged at the peak of freshness - a process that locks nutrients in.



Here are five tips for picking, storing, and preparing healthy frozen foods for you and your family.



**IDENTIFY FAMILY FAVORITES IN ALL THE MYPLATE FOOD GROUPS** and keep them on hand to round out your meals! Preparing a casserole, frittata, or soup? Add in some frozen veggies for extra nutrients. Making a quick pasta? Include fish from the freezer for lean protein. Keep frozen meals on hand - choose ones that provide multiple food groups!

### KNOW THE NUTRITION FACTS PANEL

The food label can help you understand what’s in the food you choose. Review the label and use the 5/20 rule for key nutrients:

5% Daily Value = **low** in a nutrient  
20% Daily Value = **high** in a nutrient

Most people don’t consume enough calcium, dietary fiber, potassium, and vitamin D

→ add foods with *greater* amounts of these nutrients

Many people eat too much sodium, added sugars, and saturated fats

→ include foods with *less* of these nutrients

### BE FOOD SAFE

Food safety is an important consideration in all food preparation, regardless of where it’s found in the store or your home. Make sure to always follow on-pack cooking instructions. For frozen items, most times you can cook right from the freezer, while some frozen foods require thawing first.



## FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE - FIRST IN, FIRST OUT

It's tempting to open the freezer and grab a bag at the front. However, these options might be the most recently purchased frozen foods so the food purchased first ends up being consumed later. Avoid freezer burn by arranging your freezer so that the items that are "first in" are as easy to grab as the "first out." If you do find freezer burn on a forgotten frozen food, don't throw away the whole item. Cut off that portion of the food because it might not taste as good, but it's still safe to eat.



**MIX AND MATCH AND GET CREATIVE!** Mix together frozen dumplings, shrimp, and veggies in the skillet for a one-dish-meal - and remember to cook to the proper internal temperature. Add frozen pre-chopped vegetables to soups. Pair your favorite frozen pizza with a side of steamed vegetables. Top frozen waffles with peanut butter and banana. Here are some more ideas!

FROZEN	...SUCH AS...	...ARE GREAT FOR
<b>Fruits</b>	Strawberries Bananas Mango Pineapple Peaches	Smoothies Toppings on hot or cold cereal or yogurt Fruit sauces Blending as dessert
<b>Vegetables</b>	Spinach Carrots Corn Green beans Edamame	Soups Side dishes Mixed dishes like lasagna, casseroles, tacos, stir-fries
<b>Protein</b>	Fish fillets Shrimp and scallops Chicken breast Vegetarian burgers	A balanced meal when paired with veggie and grain side dishes
<b>Dairy</b>	Lower fat frozen yogurt	A quick snack or tasty treat
<b>Grains</b>	Ready-to-eat quinoa, brown rice, barley, whole grain rolls	Side dishes like warm or cold salads



Find guidelines for safely storing food in the freezer and refrigerator here:

