

MyPyramid: Steps to A Healthier You

MyPyramid replaces the old Food Guide Pyramid. MyPyramid is a guide to help all healthy people over 2 years of age make healthful food choices. The new symbol is based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The three main points of the Dietary Guidelines are:

- Make smart choices from every food group.
 - Find your balance between food and physical activity.
 - Get the most nutrition out of your calories.

The MyPyramid graphic represents healthful eating and physical activity. Each of the color bands in the pyramid highlights one of the five food groups:

- **Orange** – Grain Group
- **Green** - Vegetable Group
- **Red** - Fruit Group
- **Blue** – Milk Group
- **Purple** - Meat and Bean Group

The narrow yellow band between the milk and meat groups represents oils. Oils are not a food group but are a reminder that some oils are important for good health.



The key messages of the new pyramid are listed below:

Be Active

The person climbing the steps represents physical activity. Be moderately active for 30 minutes or more most or all days of the week.

Proportionality

Each food group is a different width. The width is a guide to how much you should eat from each food group. For example, the grain group (orange) has the widest band meaning most choices should be from the grain group than from the other food groups.

Moderation

There are numerous choices within each food group. Foods at the base of each group are the most healthful choices with little or no added fat or sugar. Examples from the base of the groups include whole wheat bread, fresh vegetables and low-fat milk. Choose these foods more often than higher fat and sugary items within the group. For example, skim milk is placed at the bottom of the Milk Group while ice cream is at the tip.

Variety

Choose foods from all five food groups since no one food can give us good health. Also, be sure to eat different foods within each food group to get the most nutrients.

Gradual Improvement

The slogan, “Steps to a Healthier You”, shows that it takes small steps to improve your diet and lifestyle.

Personalization

Use MyPyramid to determine the kinds and amounts of foods to eat each day. Visit www.MyPyramid.gov to personalize your pyramid.

	Grains Make half your grains whole	Vegetables Vary your veggies	Fruits Focus on fruits	Milk Get your calcium-rich foods	Meat & Beans Go lean with protein
	1 oz. is about 1 slice of bread, about 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal or pasta Whole grain choices include whole-wheat bread, crackers or pasta, brown rice, barley, oatmeal, low-fat popcorn, bulgur and millet.	Eat more dark-green veggies like broccoli, spinach and other dark leafy greens. Eat more orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans and lentils	Eat a variety of fruit Choose fresh, frozen canned or dried fruit Go easy on fruit juices	Go low-fat when you choose milk, yogurt and other milk products	1 ounce of meat, fish or poultry, 1 egg, 1T. peanut butter, ¼ cup cooked beans, or ½ ounce nuts or seeds Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry Bake it, broil it, or grill it Vary your protein routine – choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds
Calorie Level*					
1600	5 ounce equivalents	2 cups	1½ cups	3 cups	5 ounce equivalents
2000	6 ounce equivalents	2½ cups	2 cups	3 cups	5½ ounce equivalents
2400	8 ounce equivalents	3 cups	2 cups	3 cups	6½ ounce equivalents
2800	10 ounce equivalents	3½ cups	2½ cups	3 cups	7 ounce equivalents

Know the limits on fats, sugars, and salt (sodium)

- Make most of your fat sources come from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.
- Limit solid fats like butter, margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.
- Check the Nutrition Facts label to keep saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium low.
- Choose food and beverages low in added sugars.

Find your balance between food and physical activity.

- Stay within your daily calories needs.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- To prevent weight gain, about 60 minutes a day of physical activity may be needed
- For sustainable weight loss, at least 60 to 90 minutes a day of physical activity may be required.
- Children and teenagers should be active for 60 minutes every day, or most days.

*Estimated daily calorie needs are based on an individual's age, sex, and physical activity level. To determine which calorie level is right for you, visit USDA's MyPyramid Website at www.mypyramid.gov.

This chart was adapted from *MyPyramid 101* by the University of Missouri Extension.