

MyPyramid

What is MyPyramid?

MyPyramid replaces the old Food Guide Pyramid. It is a consumer-friendly guide to help all people older than 2 years make healthy food choices. *MyPyramid* still uses the same basic food groups, but it is based on your age, gender, and activity level.

What does the MyPyramid symbol represent?

Each of the colors in the pyramid represents one of the five food groups needed for good health:

- **Orange** for grains
- **Green** for vegetables
- **Red** for fruits
- **Blue** for milk
- **Purple** for meat and beans.

The yellow band is a reminder that some oils are important for good health.

Moderation is represented by the narrowing of each food group from the bottom to top. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. The narrower top area stands for foods having more added sugars and solid fats. The more active you are, the more you can fit these foods into your diet.

Proportion is shown by the different widths of the food group bands. The widths suggest how much food you should choose from each group.

The steps on *MyPyramid* represent activity. The person climbing them is a reminder of the importance of daily physical activity.

Gradual improvement is encouraged by the slogan, “Steps to a healthier you.” It suggests individuals can benefit from taking small steps to improve their diets and lifestyles each day.

What is new about MyPyramid?

In addition to the new symbol, there is new information for you:

- Whole grains now have a specific recommendation – select half of your grains from whole grains.
- Vegetable recommendations are more specific. It recommends more dark green and orange vegetables. Legumes, such as beans, peas and lentils, and other vegetables have specific recommendations for each week.
- Fruit is good for you, but go easy on fruit juice. Juice contains more sugar and calories and less fiber than whole fruit.
- Information about discretionary calories or “extras” such as solid fat, added sugar, and alcohol, is provided.

Make half your grains whole.

Eat about 6 ounces of grain products every day. Make half of those servings whole grains such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal, or whole grain cereal. An ounce of a grain product is –

1 slice of bread (1 oz.).

1 small muffin (1 oz.).

1 oz. dry pasta or rice.

½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cooked cereal.

Vary your veggies.

Eat more dark green and orange vegetables and legumes (dried beans, peas, and lentils). Examples of the five categories of vegetables:

1. **Dark vegetables** – broccoli, spinach, romaine, and mustard greens
2. **Orange vegetables** – pumpkins, sweet potatoes, carrots, and winter squash
3. **Legumes** - lentils, dried beans, and dried peas
4. **Starchy** - white potatoes, corn, and green peas
5. **Other** - tomatoes, onions, green beans, and lettuce

Eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables every day.

What counts as a cup of vegetables?

- 1 cup cooked or chopped raw vegetables or vegetable juice
- 2 cups raw leafy vegetables

Focus on fruits.

Eat a variety of fruits – fresh, frozen, canned, or dried rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices.

Eat about 2 cups of fruits every day.

What counts as a cup of fruit?

- 1 small piece of fruit
- 1 cup of chopped, cooked, frozen, or canned fruit
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup dried fruit

Get your calcium-rich foods.

- Dairy products are your best source of calcium.

Milk products are your best source of calcium for bone development and maintenance. Teens and adults should have 3 cups, and children (ages 2 to 8) 2 cups of fat-free milk, low-fat milk, or equivalent milk products (yogurt and cheese) every day.

What counts as 1 cup in the milk group?

- 1 cup milk
- 1½ to 2 ounces of cheese
- 1 cup yogurt

Dairy calcium sources:

- Milk

- Hard cheese
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese
- Ice cream, low-fat ice cream
- Pudding, custard

Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter are not part of the milk group.

Non-dairy calcium sources:

- Calcium-enriched orange juice
- Tofu (with calcium sulfate)
- Sardines and canned salmon (with bones)
- Broccoli
- Greens (turnip and beet), okra
- Cooked dried beans

Go lean with protein!

Choose from lean meats and beans to limit your intake of saturated fats and cholesterol. Vary your protein choices by eating more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds. Female adults (18 to 51+) should have 5 ounces of protein foods every day. Male adults require 5½ to 6½ ounces per day. (See handout for amounts for children.)

What counts as an ounce in the meat and bean group?

- 1 ounce of cooked lean meat or poultry
- ½ cup of cooked dried beans
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- ½ oz. of nuts

Discretionary Calories

- You need a certain number of calories to keep your body functioning and provide energy for physical activities.
- Discretionary calories are the “extras” you can use on luxuries such as solid fats, added sugars, and alcohol, or on more food from any food group.
- Everyone has an allowance for some discretionary calories. Most discretionary calorie allowances are very small, between 100 and 300 calories, especially for people who are not physically active. For many people, the discretionary calorie allowance is totally used by the foods they choose in each food group, such as higher fat meats, cheeses, whole milk, or

sweetened bakery products.

- Know your limits on fats, salt, and sugars.
- Twenty to thirty-five percent of your daily calories should come from fats.
- Eat as little trans fat as possible. Read food labels to find trans fats.
- Choose and prepare foods with less sodium/salt.
- Limit food with added sugars that supply extra calories but few or no nutrients.

Healthy Weight and Physical Activity

Getting and keeping a healthy body weight and being physically active on most days of the week decrease your risk for chronic diseases such as these:

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Osteoporosis
- Certain kinds of cancers

MyPyramid helps promote good health, mental well-being, and a healthy body weight.

- To lose body weight, your body must burn more calories than it takes in from foods and beverages you eat.
- To maintain body weight, your body must burn the calories you eat and drink and not have any left over that can be stored as fat.
- To stay healthy and fit, you need to engage in regular physical activity.

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