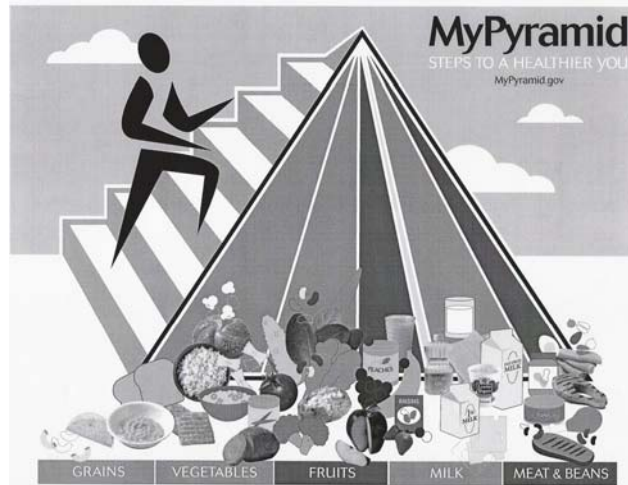


The Basics



My Pyramid – www.mypyramid.gov

Did you know the USDA has released a new food guide pyramid? The new pyramid allows people to customize their diet based on their own energy needs and activity level. It emphasizes variety and balance as well as the importance of daily physical activity. Lets look at each of the food groups separately, and review recommendations made by the pyramid.

Grains

Recommendation: *Make Half Your Grains Whole*

This means half of your servings of grains per day should be from whole-wheat sources. When shopping for these products look for “whole-wheat” or “whole grain” on the label. Whole-wheat foods contain little to no fat or cholesterol, and are high in vitamins, minerals, fiber and complex carbohydrates. Some sources of grains include cereals, breads, pastas, crackers and rice (brown rice is the “whole-wheat” form of rice).

Vegetables

Recommendation: *Vary Your Veggies*

The pyramid encourages eating a variety of vegetables in your diet. Dark leafy greens like spinach and broccoli are especially packed with vitamins and minerals. Orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes are high in vitamin A. Beans are also included in this food group and are high protein, high fiber and low fat choices. Some sources of vegetables include leafy greens, carrots, celery, cucumber, bell peppers, eggplant, green beans, potatoes, peas, kidney beans and black beans.

Fruits

Recommendation: *Focus on Fruits*

Similar to vegetables, the pyramid emphasizes eating a variety of fruits everyday. Select fresh, frozen, canned or dried sources. Go easy on fruit juices. Many juices contain more added sugar than regular sodas, and offer little nutritional benefit. Examples of fruit include watermelon, cantaloupe, apples, bananas, pineapples, strawberries, peaches, cherries and grapes.

Milk

Recommendation: *Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods*

Adequate calcium intake is essential for healthy bone development and muscle contraction. The pyramid recommends selecting low-fat or fat-free milk products. Foods in this group include milk, soy milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, ice cream and frozen yogurt.

Meat & Beans

Recommendation: *Go Lean with Protein*

The pyramid again recommends selecting low-fat sources in this group. Baking, broiling, steaming and grilling are preparation methods that help keep the fat content low. Be aware of fried and breaded methods as these add excess fat and calories. There are many great sources of protein besides just beef, poultry and pork. Consider increasing your intake of fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds to help meet your protein needs.

Know the Limits on Fats, Sugars, and Salt

- Most of your day's fat should come from fish, nuts and vegetable oils.
- Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard as well as foods that are prepared with these ingredients.
- Check the Nutrition Facts label to keep saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium low.
- Choose foods and beverages that are low in sugars. Sugar is one of the most widely used food additives in this country and contributes few, if any, nutrients.

To learn more about the pyramid and customize it to your needs, visit www.MyPyramid.gov.

Visualize your Portions

Knowing common food portion sizes is a building block to better understanding good nutrition. Once you learn to recognize individual portions, you can apply that to your daily eating habits and assure you're getting the right amounts of all the foods in the pyramid. Lets look at each food group and see just how a serving measures up.

Grains = A serving of grain equals 90 calories

Food	Serving Size
Bread	1 slice
Pasta	½ cup
Bagel	1 ounce
Cereal	1 ounce

One cup of pasta is the size of a tennis ball.

One half cup of cooked rice is the size of a cupcake wrapper full.

A medium bagel is the size of a hockey puck.

One pancake is the size of a CD.

Vegetables

Food	Serving Size
Raw vegetables (like carrots, celery and cucumber slices)	1 cup
Raw salad greens (like spinach, romaine and iceberg lettuce)	2 cups
Cooked vegetables (like corn, beans, peas or cooked greens)	1 cup
Baked potato	1 small

One cup of vegetables is the size of a tennis ball.

One half cup of vegetables is the size of a light bulb.

One small baked potato is the size of a computer mouse.

Fruits = A serving of fruit equals 60 calories

Food	Serving Size
Apple, orange, pear, peach	1 medium
Banana	½ medium
Grapes	15 grapes
Canned fruit cocktail	½ cup
Frozen berries	1 cup
Applesauce	½ cup
Raisins	2/3 cup

One medium piece of fruit is the size of a baseball.

One half cup of fruit is the size of a light bulb.

One cup of vegetables is the size of a tennis ball.

Milk

Food	Serving Size
Milk	1 cup or 8 ounces
Yogurt	2/3 cup or 6 ounces
Cheese	1 ounce
Ice Cream	½ cup

One ounce of cheese is the size of four dice or 3 dominos.

One half cup of ice cream is the size of a light bulb.

Meat & Beans

Food	Serving Size
Beef Chicken or fish	3 ounces
Beans	1 cup
Refried Beans	½ cup
Peas	½ cup

Three ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards.

Three ounces of grilled or baked fish is the size of a checkbook.

Three ounces of chicken is a leg and thigh, or a breast.

Two tablespoons of peanut butter is the size of a gold ball.

Fats and Oils

A teaspoon of margarine is the size of the tip of your thumb.
Two tablespoons of salad dressing is the size of a Ping-Pong ball.

Many times portions are measured in weight. For instance a serving of meat is 2-3 ounces. Consider purchasing a small kitchen scale to measure your foods. It can assure that you will get a proper portion, and eventually you will know what a portion looks like without weighing it. You can find these scales at stores like Wal-Mart, K-Mart and Target and will cost between \$5.00-\$20.00.

If you don't already have some, a set of measuring cups and spoons can also be handy to help learn portion sizes. They can be purchased at the above mentioned stores and cost around \$2.00-\$5.00.

Portion sizes obtained from Bowes & Church's *Food Values of Portions Commonly Used*, American Dietetic Association website www.eatright.org, and McKinley Health Center website www.mckinley.uiuc.edu.