

Summary of *MyPyramid - The New Food Guidance System*
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November 16, 2005

MyPyramid was introduced by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) as the new food guidance system that emphasizes the need for a more individualized approach to improving diet and lifestyle. This system incorporates recommendations from the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which was released by the USDA and U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in January. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide scientific based advice for people 2 years of age and older about how proper dietary habits can promote health and reduce the risk of major chronic diseases.

The new MyPyramid replaces the Food Guide Pyramid introduced in 1992. Revisions were made in order to reflect the latest nutrition science including new nutrition standards (DRI's), Dietary Guidelines, and food consumption data. New tools were introduced to improve the Pyramid's effectiveness with consumers. Motivational tools include the new graphic and slogan. Educational tools provide consumers with an educational framework, consumer messages, website, and interactive tools. Below is information that can help you navigate through the new MyPyramid system.

MyPyramid symbol

The symbol represents the recommended portion of foods from each group and focuses on the importance of making smart food choices in every food group, every day. Physical activity is a new element in the symbol.

- *Activity* is represented by the person climbing the steps, a reminder of the importance of daily physical activity.
- *Moderation* is shown by the narrowing of each food group. The wider base stands for foods with little added sugar and less fat. The narrower top represents foods that should be limited. The more active you are, the more of these foods you can fit into your diet.
- *Personalization* can be found in the slogan “MyPyramid” and the URL. The URL allows access to individual evaluation of healthy food choices and physical activity.
- *Proportionality* is shown by the varying widths of the food group bands. The wider the food group band, the more of that product you should eat.
- *Variety* is established by the 6 color bands that represent the 5 food groups. Groups include grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, milk, and meat & beans. Every color is needed daily for good health.
- *Gradual improvement* is encouraged by “Steps to a healthier you” slogan. This slogan suggests that you can benefit from taking small steps to improve your diet and lifestyle each day.

Unlike the old pyramid, which presented recommendations as servings, the new guide uses daily amounts in cups or ounces. The new pyramid also uses width of each food group band as a general guide to portion size, not an exact recommendation.

Food groups are arranged vertically, instead of horizontally like the older model, and are represented by six different colors:

Orange – grains

Green – vegetables

Red - fruit

Yellow- oils

Blue – milk products

Purple – meats and beans

www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MyPyramid_Anatomy.pdf

MyPyramid's Basic Messages

Recommendations based off of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines (2,000 calorie diet).

Grains (make half your grains whole)

Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, rice, or pasta ever day.

Eat 6 oz. everyday.

Vegetables (vary your veggies)

Eat more dark-green veggies like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens.

Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweetpotatoes.

Eat more dry bean and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils.

Eat 2 ½ cups everyday.

Fruits (focus on fruits)

Eat a variety of fruit.

Choose fresh, frozen or dried fruit.

Go easy on fruit juices.

Eat 2 cups everyday.

Milk (get your calcium-rich foods)

Go low- fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and other milk products.

If you don't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources.

Get 3 cups everyday.

Meat and Beans (go lean with protein)

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.

Eat 5 ½ oz. everyday.

Find your balance between food and physical activity.

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

www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MiniPoster.pdf

MyPyramid Plan

This plan helps you find the kinds and amounts of food you should eat each day.

As a consumer, you are able to enter your age, gender, and activity level. This information enables you to get your own plan at an appropriate calorie level. The plan includes specific daily amounts from each food group and a limit for discretionary calories (fats, added sugars, alcohol).

The food plan is one of the 12 calorie levels of the food intake patterns from the Dietary Guidelines. The food plan is available as a personalized miniposter printout, and a worksheet to help keep track of progress and choose goals for the future.

www.mypyramid.gov/professionals/food_tracking_wksht.html

Inside the Pyramid

This provides in-depth information about each food group, discretionary calories, and physical activity on the website at “Inside the Pyramid.”

Here you can find tips and resources to help implement the food plan. Resources include:

- *What foods are in the food group?*
- *How much is needed?*
- *What counts as a serving size (ounces or cups)?*
- *Health benefits and nutrients*
- *Tips to help you make the best choices*
- *Food photo gallery to help identify portion sizes*

Additional information can be found at “Tips and Resources” and “For Professionals” such as tips for eating out and a 7-day menu plan as 2000 calories.

www.mypyramid.gov/tips_resources/index.html

www.mypyramid.gov/professionals/index.html

MyPyramid Tracker

The tracker provides you with an in-depth assessment and analysis of your current eating and physical activity habits, related nutrition messages, and links to nutrient and physical activity information. The tracker asks for entry of all foods eaten each day and all physical activities performed. From this, information is generated to show your current status in comparison to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommendations, nutrition intake, and energy balance. A history function is also available which provides you to track your progress over time, up to one year.

www.mypyramidtracker.gov/

References

The United States Department of Agriculture. *MyPyrimid*. Available at: www.mypyrimid.gov. Accessed November 14, 2005.

The United States Department of Agriculture. *About USDA*. Available at: www.usda.gov. Accessed November 12, 2005