

Good-Bye, Food Guide Pyramid ... Hello, MyPyramid!



MyPyramid is designed to provide comprehensive and up-to-date advice on the proper path to a healthy diet. The exact amount of each food category represented in the pyramid varies in accordance with age, sex, and physical activity level. To find a specific diet recommendation, consumers enter their age, sex, and daily physical activity on <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.

What other information does the new food guidance system offer? Use this simple reference guide to quickly review the topline recommendations for each food category.

Grains — Make Half Your Grains Whole

The grain category is one of the largest categories in the pyramid and recommends the consumption of at least five ounces of grain products every day for adults. The exact amount depends on sex, age, and amount of physical activity. The more activity, the more calories are needed. At least **three** of those servings should be from whole grain products.

In general, one slice of bread, ½ bagel, English muffin, pita, or sandwich roll, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as a 1-ounce equivalent from the grains group.

People who eat grains as part of a healthy diet have reduced risk of chronic diseases.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains.html>

Vegetables — Vary Your Vegetables

Eating more dark green and orange vegetables and more dried beans and peas are the key recommendations here. Daily intake of approximately 2 cups per person is strongly advised. Vegetables are organized into five subgroups based on their nutrient content: dark green vegetables (spinach, broccoli); orange vegetables (squash, carrots); dry beans and peas (black beans, split peas); starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn); and other vegetables (celery, onions).

In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 100% vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw, leafy greens, can be considered as 1 cup from the vegetable group.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables.html>

Fruits — Focus on Fruits

The fruit category provides many healthy foods that are sweet and delicious as well. MyPyramid suggests eating a variety of fruits, whether canned, dried, fresh, or frozen, and going easy on fruit juice. Daily recommendations for this category are about 1 to 2 cups. Some common fruits include apples, oranges, bananas, or any number of berries.

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the fruit group.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits.html>

Oils — Know Your Fats

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, such as vegetable oils. They may come from many different plants and from fish. Most fat intake should come from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Solid fats, like butter and margarine, should be limited as they contain more saturated and/or trans fats than oils. Saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol tend to raise “bad” (LDL) cholesterol levels in the blood, which in turn increases the risk for heart disease. Oils, on the other hand, contain more monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated (PUFA) fats and little to no saturated fat, trans fat, or cholesterol.

Most people consume more than their daily allowance of oils, which is 5 to 6 teaspoons per person, so the advice remains — go easy on the fat.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/oils.html>

Milk — Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods

Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are included here, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Milk products should be low-fat or fat-free, and those who cannot consume milk products need to choose lactose-free products or other calcium-rich sources.

Daily recommendations for this category are at least 3 cups per person. In general, 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese can be considered as 1 cup from the milk group.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/milk.html>

Meat and Beans — Go Lean on Protein

All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of this group. MyPyramid recommends choosing lean or low-fat meats and poultry and baking, broiling, or grilling these choices. Protein sources also should be varied and include fish, nuts, beans, and seeds. Dry beans and peas are part of this group as well. Some common food items within this category are beef, pork, lamb, chicken, eggs, and any type of fish.

Daily recommendations for meat and beans are at least 5 ounces for adults. In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish, ¼ cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as a 1-ounce equivalent from the meat and beans group.

Get more information at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/meat.html>

Discretionary Calories

Each person has a total calorie budget. Depending on the choices made in the other six categories, individuals may be able to spend more or less on “extras.” This is what MyPyramid calls “discretionary calories.” These calories are to give the extra energy needed to stay healthy and active throughout the day. Daily allowances range from about 125 to 325 calories, depending on age, sex, and physical activity. Discretionary calories can be taken by eating more of a certain group, adding fat and sugars, or simply eating foods or drinking beverages that may not be included in any of the other categories.

Get more information at: http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/discretionary_calories.html

Physical Activity

As with any lifestyle choice, it is highly recommended to incorporate physical activity. There are many different levels of physical activity, and individuals should find those that work best for them. Some of the many options are a brisk walk or bike ride, dancing, gardening, or an intense workout in the gym. It is recommended individuals get at least 30 minutes of either moderate or vigorous activity each day. Another benefit of physical activity is the ability to eat more calories as you add minutes of activity.

Get more information at: http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity.html