

# MyPyramid

MyPyramid.gov



**GRAINS**  
Make half your grains whole  
Eat at least 5 oz. of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day  
1 oz. is about 1 slice of bread, about 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta

**VEGETABLES**  
Vary your veggies  
Eat more dark green veggies like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens  
Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes  
Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils

**FRUITS**  
Focus on fruits  
Eat a variety of fruit  
Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit  
Go easy on fruit juices

**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 or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as fortified foods and beverages

**MEAT & 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

For a 2,000-calorie diet, you need the amounts below from each food group. To find the amounts that are...

at 2 1/2 cups every day

Eat 2 cups every day

and physical activity

days of the week.  
needed to prevent weight gain.  
minutes a day of physical activity may be required.  
active for 60 minutes every day, or more days.



# MyPyramid

## Steps to a Healthier You

### About the Activity

- Use *A Closer Look at MyPyramid* newsletter (No. 1) and ask parents questions as you review the basics of MyPyramid.
- Engage parents in talking about pictures and packages of food that you have collected and where the different foods belong in MyPyramid. Ask them what other foods they might choose from each of the MyPyramid Food Groups.
- At the beginning of the session, have the parents form three groups. They will be participating as part of their group in the session.
- Sum up the session by restating that MyPyramid can be used for making a variety of food choices for the entire family.

### Getting Ready

- Read:** The Sharing Session to get comfortable with the messages, questions, and activities.
- Get:** Pictures of foods from magazines or newspapers and/or have packages of foods (including some that are higher in sugar and fat). Make sure that you have six to eight examples from each of the five MyPyramid Food Groups as well as some oils. For the grains group, be sure to include whole-grain products that include the word “whole” listed as the first ingredient.  
Separate the pictures and packages into three containers, ensuring that foods from each food group plus oils are in each of the three containers.
- Use** *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* mini-poster (USDA 167). (To order more copies of the mini-poster (1 pkg = 25) go to [www.ntis.gov/USDA/MyPyramid.aspx](http://www.ntis.gov/USDA/MyPyramid.aspx).) Order 3-4 weeks ahead.
- Copy:** Reproducible newsletter *A Closer Look at MyPyramid* (No. 1). Make enough copies for all participants.
- Display:** *MyPyramid* poster.

### Key Messages

- Use MyPyramid to choose a variety of healthier foods from all food groups to get the nutrients you and your child need. This helps your child grow and helps your whole family stay healthy.
- *MyPyramid* poster shows the amounts of foods for 2,000 calories a day. The recommended amounts vary by age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level. The 2,000 calories recommendation is not for preschool aged children.
- Use MyPyramid.gov to get nutrition ideas for every family member.
- Be physically active every day.

# Do You Know?

Your food and physical activity choices each day affect your health—how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future. The following ideas can help you get started toward a healthy diet. Start with a small change today and move toward a healthier lifestyle for you and your family.

## ASK

Does anyone recognize MyPyramid? Point out the *MyPyramid* poster and give out the handout: *A Closer Look at MyPyramid* (newsletter No.1).

## POINT OUT

### MyPyramid Tips and Ideas

The MyPyramid image is simple and gives very basic information for choosing a day's worth of foods and getting physical activity:

- **Every color every day.** Choose foods from every food group, plus some oils, every day as shown by the different colored stripes. Remember to eat food from all food groups every day.
- **Eat more from some food groups than others.** Did you notice that some of the color stripes are wider than others? The different sizes remind you to choose more foods from the food groups with the widest stripes.
- **Choose healthier foods from each group.** Why are the colored stripes wider at the bottom of the pyramid? Every food group has foods that you should eat more often than others; these foods are at the bottom of the pyramid.
  - ✓ The stripes' wide bases stand for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. Eat these foods more often. Solid fats are solid at room temperature and include stick margarine, butter, and fat in meat.
  - ✓ The narrow top stands for foods with a lot of added sugars or solid fats. Eat them less often.
- **Be physically active every day.** The person climbing the stairs reminds you to do something active every day. Try to be physically active every day, or most days. (Adults – at least 30 minutes; children – at least 60 minutes.)
- **Take one step at a time.** Make small changes in what you eat and how you exercise. Start with one new good change and add a new one every day or as often as possible.
- **Make choices that are right for you.** MyPyramid.gov is a Web site that will give everyone in the family ideas on how to eat better and exercise more.

(Hand out *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* mini-poster.)

## POINT OUT

The *MyPyramid* poster shows 2,000 calories a day. Also refer to the back of *MyPyramid: Steps to a Healthier You* mini-poster.

- The *MyPyramid* poster and mini-poster use 2,000 calories a day as an example because many people need about that amount in a day. Other people may need more or less than 2,000 calories a day. The 2,000 calories recommendation is not for preschool aged children.

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**ASK**

How much food is recommended for each food group on the poster? Ask someone from each parent group to call out answers for different food groups. (The answers are in the *MyPyramid: Steps for a Healthier You* mini-poster.)

The recommended amounts of food from each food group for 2,000 calories are listed below. Remember, the 2,000 calorie level is not for preschool aged children.

Food Group	Amount
Grains Group	6 ounces
Vegetables Group	2½ cups
Fruits Group	2 cups
Milk Group	3 cups
Meat and Beans Group	5½ ounces

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**POINT OUT**

The amount of food and calories you need depends on your age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level. Go to [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov) to find the amounts that are right for you and everyone in your family.

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**ASK**

- How many parents think 2,000 calories is right for them?
- Is it right for their children?
- Then ask them why they agree or disagree with the 2,000 calorie level.

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**POINT OUT**

**Another important message from MyPyramid is to find your balance between food and physical activity.**

- Be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs.\*
- Adults should be physically active at a moderate-intensity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- About 60 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity may be needed for adults to prevent weight gain.
- For adults sustaining weight loss, at least 60-90 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity may be required.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, or most days.

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**ASK**

- What is your activity level each day?
- Do you set a time aside from your day-to-day activities specifically for physical activity?
- When you are physically active, does your heart work harder?
- Are you physically active as a family?

\* Make choices that are right for you. Go to [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov). This Web site can give you and others in your family ideas on how to eat better, determine your caloric needs, and be physically active.

# Try This for a Sharing Session!

Food and physical activity choices affect your family's health—how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future.

Assign parents into three groups and make sure each group has a container with the variety of food pictures and packages that you have collected. Direct them to the *MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You* mini-poster for information on each food group.

## POINT OUT

The back side of *MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You* has information about each food group.

### 1. Grains—Make half your grains whole

Eat AT LEAST half your grain foods as whole grains. Grain foods such as breads, cereals, rice, and pasta are valuable sources of energy. A whole grain is one that has the whole grain kernel. The first ingredient of a whole-grain food will say whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, or brown rice.

**Ask:** Which of the grain foods from your container do you think are whole grains? Why? Where do they fit on MyPyramid?

### 2. Vegetables—Vary your veggies

Many people need MORE dark green or orange vegetables, and cooked dry beans and peas, than they usually get.

**Ask:** Who has dark green or orange vegetables in their container? Where do they fit on MyPyramid? Do you usually eat these foods? What other vegetables would you be willing to try?

### Fruits—Focus on fruits

Many people need MORE fruits than they usually eat. Choose whole or pieces of fruits that are fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Go easy on juices.

**Ask:** What kinds of fruits do you have in your container? Do any of your samples have added sugars? Where does fruit with added sugar fit on MyPyramid? How can you get your family to focus on fruit — fresh, canned, frozen, and dried?

### 3. Milk—Get calcium-rich foods

Get ENOUGH lowfat or fat-free milk or foods made from milk such as yogurt and cheese, for calcium. Both adults and children need the nutrients in milk for strong bones.

**Ask:** Which pictures show how to get your calcium-rich foods? Where do they fit on MyPyramid? Can you name others?

#### 4. Meat and Beans—Go lean with protein

Eat ENOUGH lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, or cooked dry beans for iron and protein. Both adults and children need iron and protein.

**Ask:** Are there any lean protein choices in your container? Where do they fit on MyPyramid? What lean protein choices would you choose?

#### 5. Oils

Oils are not a food group, but you need some for good health. Get your oils from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, canola oil, and olive oil.

#### ASK

Ask for a parent or two to describe a mixed food their family eats and what food group(s) it is from. For example Pizza: Crust—Grain Group; Tomato sauce and mushrooms—Vegetables Group; Toppings—Cheese from the Milk Group and meats from the Meat and Beans Group.

#### SUM UP

- Encourage them to use MyPyramid for making food choices.
- Repeat that choosing a variety of foods from each food group provides nutrients the family needs.
- Reinforce that MyPyramid poster is based on 2,000 calories and many people need more or less than this.
- Use MyPyramid.gov to get ideas for every family member.

Once parents know about MyPyramid, explore other issues related to healthful eating for their children and families presented in the *Nibbles for Health* newsletters, for example:

- No. 1 *A Closer Look at MyPyramid*
- No. 14 *Together...Try New Foods!*
- No. 15 *Teaching Good Food Habits*
- No. 16 *Trying, Sharing, Enjoying Different Foods*