

## What's the Best Nutrition Advice?

The best advice is to follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and use the Food Guide Pyramid. By following the Dietary Guidelines, you can enjoy better health and lower your risks of getting certain diseases.

Below are seven guidelines for a healthy diet for healthy Americans 2 years of age or more.

- **Eat a variety of foods** to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need.
- **Balance the food you eat with physical activity - maintain or improve your weight** to lower your risks for high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain types of cancers, and diabetes.
- **Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables, and fruits.** They have vitamins, minerals, fiber, and starches, and can help you lower your intake of fat.
- **Choose a diet low in sugars.** A diet with lots of sugars has a lot of calories and little nutrition and can decay your teeth.
- **Choose a diet low in salt and sodium** to help lower your risk for high blood pressure.
- **If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink less.** Alcoholic beverages have little or no nutrition. Drinking alcohol is also the cause of many health problems.
- **Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol** to lower your risk for heart attack and cancer and to help you maintain a healthy weight.

## What is the Food Guide Pyramid?

The Pyramid is a guide that lets you choose a healthy diet that's right for you. The Pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods and eating the right amount of calories to maintain or improve your weight.



The Pyramid divides foods into groups according to the type of nutrition they provide.

### How many servings are right for me?

The number of servings that are right for you depends on:

- your age
- sex
- size
- how active you are

**Everyone should have at least the lowest number of servings for each food group.**

On the next page is a list on the amount of food that counts as a serving for each food group.

**Remember if you eat a larger portion count it as more than one serving.**

### WHAT COUNTS AS A SERVING? Food Groups

| Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta                   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1 slice of bread                                 | 1 ounce of ready to-eat cereal   | 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta |
| Vegetable  |  |  |
| 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables                    | 1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw   | 3/4 cup of vegetable juice               |
| Fruit  |  |  |
| 1 medium apple, banana, orange                   | 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit  | 3/4 cup of fruit juice                   |
| Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese                         |  |  |
| 1 cup of milk or yogurt                          | 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese   | 2 ounces of process cheese               |
| Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts   |  |  |
| 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish | 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or 1 egg counts as 1 ounce of lean meat. 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or 1/3 cup of nuts count as 1 ounce of meat. |  |

### Isn't 6 to 11 servings of breads and cereals a lot?

It may seem a lot, but it's really not. For example:

- a slice of bread is one serving, so a sandwich for lunch would equal two servings
- A small bowl of cereal and one slice of toast for breakfast are two more servings.
- And if you have a cup of rice or pasta at dinner, that's two more servings.
- A snack of 3 or 4 small plain crackers adds yet another serving.

**So now you've had 7 servings. It adds up quicker than you think!**

## How Many Calories are right for me?

The table below shows you how many servings you need for your calorie level. For example:

- **For young children:** It is hard to know how much food children should eat. If you're not sure, ask your doctor. Children should have 2 cups of milk or any other food from the milk group a day.
- **For adults and teens**
  - **1,600** calories for women that are not active and older adults.
  - **2,200** calories for children, teenage girls, active women, and men that are not active. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding may need more.
  - **2,800** calories for teenage boys, active men, and very active women.

### SAMPLE DIETS FOR A DAY AT 3 \*\*\*CALORIE LEVELS

|                                | Lower about<br>1,600 | Moderate about<br>2,200 | Higher about<br>2,800 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Grain Group Servings           | 6                    | 9                       | 11                    |
| Vegetable Group Servings       | 3                    | 4                       | 5                     |
| Fruit Group Servings           | 2                    | 3                       | 4                     |
| Milk Group Servings *          | 2-3                  | 2-3                     | 2-3                   |
| Meat Group (ounces)**          | 5                    | 6                       | 7                     |
| Total Fat (grams)              | 53                   | 73                      | 93                    |
| Total Added Sugars (teaspoons) | 6                    | 12                      | 18                    |

\*Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, teenagers, and young adults to age 24 need 3 servings.

\*\* Meat group amounts are in total ounces.

\*\*\*The calorie level suggestions are based on recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences and on calorie intakes reported by people in national food consumption surveys.

## Tips for Healthy Eating

- Eat breakfast every day.
- Choose whole grains like whole wheat breads and pastas, oatmeal, or brown rice.
- Choose a mix of colorful vegetables every day. Different colored vegetables provide different nutrients.
- Have low-fat, low-sugar snacks at home and at work.
- Eat three meals every day. Do not skip meals or eat a snack instead of a meal.
- Drink plenty of water. About eight cups of water every day.
- When eating out, eat only half your food and take the rest home.
- Exercise more. Take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV.
- Get plenty of sleep.

### For more information contact:

**Food and Nutrition Information Center**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Phone: (301) 504-5719  
[www.nal.usda.gov/fnic](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic)

**MetroPlus Health Plan**  
1-800-579-9798

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for medical care and advice of your doctor.  
Source: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000, jointly released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**MetroPlus Health Plan**  
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1-800-475-METRO

[www.MetroPlus.org](http://www.MetroPlus.org)

# GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY EATING

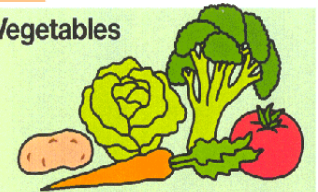
Breads, Cereals,  
Rice, and Pasta



Fruits



Vegetables



Meat, Poultry,  
Fish, Dry  
Beans, Eggs,  
and Nuts



Milk, Yogurt,  
and Cheese

