

Getting To Know MyPyramid

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Everyone needs food because it helps them grow, glow (keeps them healthy), and go (gives fuel for their bodies). MyPyramid assists in selecting the correct foods to meet the body's needs and emphasizes the importance of physical activity.

Examining MyPyramid

Different color bands represent different groups of foods. Different size bands show different portion of foods we should eat each day. These bands are wider at the base to remind us to select most of our foods with less added sugars and solid fats.

The colored bands represent the different food groups.

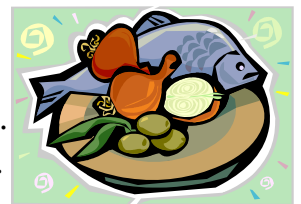


- Orange represents the Grain Group,
- Green represents the Vegetable Group,
- Red represents the Fruit Group,
- Blue represents the Milk Group,
- Purple represents the Meat Group, and
- Narrow yellow band represents healthy fats and oils.



The pyramid promotes variety, moderation, and balance. No one food group is more or less important than another. The five food groups provide different nutrients so you need to eat from all the groups.

- The Grain Group provides fiber and B vitamins.
- The Vegetable Group provides vitamins A and C and fiber.
- The Fruit Group provides vitamins A and C and potassium.
- The Milk Group provides protein and calcium.
- The Meat Group provides protein, iron, and B vitamins.



Some foods are a combination of different food groups. For example, pizza contains grain, milk, vegetable, and sometimes fruit and meat. Some choices are better than others because of fat, sodium (salt), and sugar content.

The importance of being physically active is represented by the stairs at the side of the pyramid. Physical activity is important for flexibility, strength, and endurance. In addition to normal daily activities, adults need an additional 30 minutes of activity while children need to be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day.



Exploring Caloric Needs

Eleven different MyPyramids were created based on an individual's energy needs. The recommended amount of food from each food group is different depending upon our caloric needs. Our energy needs are determined by our gender, age, and amount of physical activity. The only factor that we can control is our physical activity. To be able to consume more foods without gaining weight, we must become more physically active.

Three levels of activity are recognized for determining which MyPyramid an individual should follow. The amount of activity is on top of normal daily activities. The levels include less than 30 minutes daily (sedentary), 30 to 60 minutes daily (moderate), and greater than 60 minutes each day (active). In other words, **sedentary** means a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life while **active** means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

Using the caloric range chart, determine the number of calories to consume each day to maintain your current weight. After finding your caloric level, consult the Amount of Food from Each Group table to identify the amount of food you need from each food group and your discretionary calories for the day.

