

4 Shortcuts in the Kitchen

1. Rely on quality convenience foods:

ready-packed vegetables and salad greens; pre-trimmed meats; frozen fruits and veggies. Avoid foods with added fats, sugars or salt. Identify them by reading food labels.

2. Design 4-square meals:

1. a small serving of lean protein
2. a big portion of vegetables
3. whole-grain rice, bread or pasta (be sure the package says "whole")
4. fruit for dessert



3. Collect cookbooks or recipes with short, easy, healthy recipes:

create a master list of favorites to ease decision-making on busy days.

4. Stock up on staples such as:

canned beans and broth (low sodium), salsas and fat-free dressings and fat-free or reduced-fat sour cream.

The bottom line: Don't underestimate serving size and calorie intake. Examine labels for the amount of servings and multiply that by the number of calories listed per serving. Most important, keep food servings low in fat, varied and small.

How to Eat Less

Identify situations that lead to overeating.

Decide how much you'll eat before certain events — a social gathering, eating out or watching a movie — and try to stay aware of that limit.

Recognize when you've eaten enough to satisfy your hunger, and leave the table or put the food away. You're more likely to notice you are full when you eat slowly and savor the flavors of your food.

Measure servings. Don't eat directly out of a large package. Place a single serving (as defined on the nutrition label) into a dish.

How to Cut Fat and Calories

Here are some tips to help you reduce fat and calories in your diet.

- **Fear** of frying is good. Steam, boil, bake or roast without adding grease.
- **Remember** that you don't need to add oil to foods when you use nonstick cookware.
- **If** you ask, most restaurants will easily hold the salad dressing, cheese, oil or butter from your food.
- **Drain** off excess fat that appears during cooking.
- **Remove** excess fat from meats and skin from poultry before eating these foods.
- **Hold** the mayonnaise. It adds about 5 grams of fat per tablespoon. If you have to have it, opt for fat free or low-fat varieties.
- **Fill** up on fiber. More fiber gives you a better feeling of fullness. **Good sources:** dried peas and beans, whole-grain breads and cereals, fresh fruits such as apples, oranges and grapefruit.

Join the Club

By using the MyPyramid Plan food intake and physical activity assessment tools, you'll be part of a growing number of people aiming for a healthier lifestyle through nutrition and exercise. **Here are some other resources you can use:**

Nutrition:

American Dietetic Association:
www.eatright.org

Fitness:

The American Council on Exercise:
www.acefitness.org

THE MY PYRAMID PLAN

STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



FIND YOUR PERSONAL PYRAMID

For years, the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Guide Pyramid offered one formula for nutrition, but it was not very effective. The USDA now uses an individualized approach, the **MyPyramid Plan**.

What's New About Nutrition? Good nutrition has always focused on consuming more vegetables, fruits and grains over fatty foods. But because people require more or fewer calories based on their age, gender and activity level, the MyPyramid Plan was developed to help with three specific objectives:

- **Make smart choices from every food group**
- **Find your balance between food and physical activity**
- **Get the maximum nutrition from the calories you consume**

The takeaway message? Exercise more and eat mostly low-fat foods with lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Reduce foods with saturated and trans fat, and those with added sugar and salt.

This brochure will help you use the MyPyramid Plan and presents valuable tips for cooking, eating less and cutting the fat. So set a goal for yourself, and **GO FOR IT**.

Getting Started

The MyPyramid Plan is accessible through the Internet at www.mypyramid.gov. You can anonymously enter your age, sex and activity level to generate a nutrition plan.

Depending on your individual need, the site will determine the amount of total calories you need each day. It will also list the amount of fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, milk and beans, and fat that you should consume daily.

MyPyramid.gov also features a meal tracker and activity assessment for which you'll need to register a user name and password of your choice. Try to access the site as often as you can, at least weekly, while working toward your nutrition, weight and fitness goals.

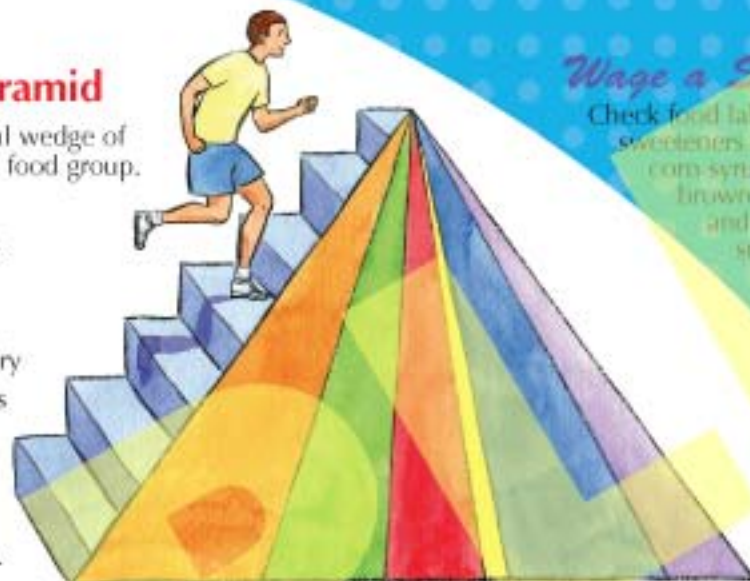


Reading the Pyramid

Nutrition: Each vertical wedge of the pyramid represents a food group.

- **Brown** for grains
- **Green** for vegetables
- **Red** for fruits
- **Yellow** for oils
- **Blue** for milk and dairy
- **Purple** for lean meats and beans (protein)

Fitness: The person on the stairs represents taking steps toward reaching physical fitness.



Wage a Sweet Defense

Check food labels for added sugar and sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup, corn sweetener, brown sugar, malt, glucose and dextrose. Unless the sugar is natural, such as that found in fresh fruits and milk (lactose), stay away from it. You're piling on empty calories.

Pyramid Tools You Can Use

Assess Your Food Intake: Pick a day that represents your usual eating patterns. Report all that you ate on the My Pyramid Tracker food intake assessment. **Benefit:** You'll receive an overall evaluation that compares the amounts of food you ate to current nutritional guidance.



You'll be asked to consider specific items you have eaten and the amount; general amounts are presented in the drop-down menus. Don't forget to fill in the quantity fields.

Remember: Living in a fast-food culture, chances are you might not be eating your recommended daily amount of the essential foods. Do not be discouraged, though. The ultimate goal is to change your lifestyle habits, immediately if you can or gradually if you can't.

Assess Your Physical Activity:

After entering a full day of activity details on the My Pyramid Tracker physical activity assessment, you'll receive an overall score. The site will consider the types and duration of each physical activity and then compare your score to the score recommended for health.

Benefit: You can track your fitness over time.



Note: Guidelines call for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week, increasing duration, as your weight and fitness goals require. Remember that other activities outside of exercise count toward physical activity and burning calories ... vigorous housework and yard work, waxing your car and some carpentry work. The point is to get moving any chance you have.



Energy Balance: Based on the information you've provided about the foods you have eaten, the site analyzes your caloric intake as it relates to the estimated calories

you should eat based on your profile. **Analysis example:** "Your reported food energy intake is higher than your Estimated Energy Requirement for the day. An increase of 100 to 200 calories per day over time may result in some gradual weight gain. If you consume 100 calories more a day than you need, you could gain about 10 pounds per year. At 200 calories more a day, this will double the weight gained to 20 pounds per year."

Tips & Resources: Use this tool to learn how mixed foods — pizza, chicken potpie and pasta salad, to name a few — break down by food groups and estimated calories. It can help you make wiser food choices as you work toward your weight and nutrition goals.