

Learn at Home: Nutrition Lessons for Healthy Living

MyPyramid Food Groups

By choosing to complete this mail lesson, you have taken the first step in learning more about the importance of nutrition and its relationship to good health. MyPyramid shows us what and how much we need to eat. It also shows us we need to be physically active. To complete this lesson:

- Carefully read this lesson. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Answer the questions included with this lesson.
- When you are finished, place the questions in the prepaid envelope and place the envelope in the mail.

MyPyramid Food Groups

MyPyramid shows the importance of making good food choices from each of the five food groups every day. It also shows the importance of being physically active most days of the week and making changes “one step at a time.” This mail lesson will discuss:



- The MyPyramid symbol
- How much do you need every day?
- MyPyramid food groups
- Where do other foods fit?

◆ MyPyramid Symbol

- The MyPyramid symbol shows six color bands that run from the bottom of the pyramid to the top. There is a color band for each of the five food groups. The sixth color band is for oils.

- **Orange** is for the **Grain** group
- **Green** is for the **Vegetable** group
- **Red** is for the **Fruit** group
- Yellow is for Oils
- **Blue** is for the **Dairy** group
- **Purple** is for the **Protein Foods** group

How Much Do You Need Every Day?

Calorie Level	2,000*
Grain Group	6 ounces
Vegetable Group	2 ½ cups
Fruit Group	2 cups
Dairy Group	3 cups
Protein Foods Group	5 ½ ounces

- Different people may need more or less calories each day. The exact amount that you need to eat depends on your age, gender (male or female), and how much physical activity you get every day.



◆ Let's take a closer look at each food group in MyPyramid!

The Grain Group: 6 ounces every day* The grain group contains foods made from wheat, rice, oats, corn, and barley. Foods found in the grain group include foods such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereal, and tortillas. Foods from the grain group provide our body with its main source of energy. Half (3 ounces) of the foods you choose from the grain group should be whole grains. Examples of whole grain foods are brown rice, oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, and whole-grain breakfast cereals. Grains are important sources of many nutrients including dietary fiber, carbohydrates, B vitamins, and iron. Whole grains, as part of an overall healthy diet, may reduce the risk of certain diseases.

What counts as 1 ounce of grains?

- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup cooked cereal (oatmeal or grits)
- ½ cup cooked rice or pasta
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal (toasted O's, whole wheat flakes, etc.)
- 1 (6-inch) tortilla
- 3 cups popped popcorn



The Vegetable Group: 2 ½ cups every day* The vegetable group includes all fresh, frozen and canned vegetables, and 100% vegetable juice. Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. Vegetables provide important nutrients such as vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and dietary fiber. It is important to eat

a variety of vegetables that vary in color because different vegetables provide different nutrients.

What counts as 1 cup of vegetables?

- 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables
- 2 cup raw leafy greens or lettuce
- 1 cup 100% vegetable juice
- 2 medium carrots or 12 baby carrots
- 1 cup cooked dry beans or peas
- 1 cup mashed potatoes



The Fruit Group: 2 cups every day* The fruit group includes fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits, and 100% fruit juice. Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. Fruits have important nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and dietary fiber. Fruit juice should be limited to less than half of total fruit intake because it does not have fiber.

What counts as 1 cup of fruit?

- 1 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup dried fruit (raisins, dried cranberries, prunes, etc.)
- 1 small apple (2½ inches in diameter)
- 1 large banana
- 32 large seedless grapes
- 1 large peach (2¾ inches in diameter)



The Dairy Group: 3 cups every day* The dairy group includes dairy foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt. Foods from the dairy group are rich in calcium, protein, and vitamins to help build strong bones and teeth. Choose foods from the dairy group that are fat-free or low-fat, such as 1% or skim milk, low-fat or fat-free cheese, and low-fat or fat-free yogurt.

What counts as **1 cup of dairy**?

- 1 cup milk
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup yogurt (8 ounce container)
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1 1/2 ounces hard cheese (Cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan)
- 2 ounces processed cheese (American)
- 1 cup pudding made with milk
- 1 cup frozen yogurt



The Protein Foods Group: 5 1/2 ounces every day* The protein foods group includes all foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Foods from this group provide nutrients that are important for growing, building strong muscles and organs, and staying healthy. Choose meat and poultry that are lean or low-fat by choosing poultry without skin, extra lean ground beef and, cuts of beef and pork with “loin” or “round” in the name. Choose cooked dry beans or peas as a main dish or as part of a meal several times a week. Choose fish, nuts, and seeds a couple of times a week because they contain healthy oils that are good for us.

What counts as **1 ounce of protein foods**?

- 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1/4 cup (about 2 ounces) tofu
- 1 egg
- 1/2 ounce nuts or seeds
- 1/4 cup cooked dry beans, or dry peas.

Common portions and how many ounces that equals:

- 1 small steak = 3 1/2 to 4 ounces
- 1 small hamburger = 2 to 3 ounces
- 1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounces
- 1 small can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4 ounces
- 12 almonds, 24 pistachios, or 7 walnut halves = 1 ounce



Oils

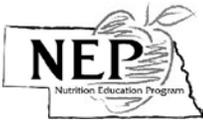
Oils are an important part of a healthy diet because they provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E. Oils, fish, nuts, and seeds are sources of good fats. Limit fats that are solid at room temperature such as butter, shortening, and stick margarine.

*All amounts given above are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. The amount that you need to eat may vary depending on your age, gender, and how physically active you are.

◆ Where do other foods fit into MyPyramid?

There are a number of foods that do not clearly fit into MyPyramid, like candy, soda/pop, and sweets. MyPyramid is a guide that includes all of the foods that you need to eat to be healthy. Candy, soda/pop, and sweets are foods that are not necessary to be healthy. However, these foods can be eaten/drunk in moderation and still be a part of a healthy diet. The key is to only eat/drink these in moderation. Soda/pop or other sweetened drinks can add hundreds of extra calories to your diet, if not consumed in moderation. Choose water or milk to drink more often, and soda/pop less often to keep your calorie intake at healthy levels.

This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-430-3244.



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MyPyramid Food Groups

MyPyramid Food Groups Questions:

- Based on MyPyramid, how many cups should the typical American eat from the fruit group every day?
 - 5 cups
 - 2 cups
 - 8 cups
 - 3 cups
- True or False.** At least half (3 ounces) of the foods you eat from the grain group should come from whole grains.
- What are examples of whole grain foods?
 - Oatmeal
 - Whole-wheat bread
 - Brown rice
 - All of the above
- What foods should you try to choose from the dairy group?
 - Low-fat
 - Fat-free
 - Skim milk
 - All of the above
- True or False.** Foods from the dairy group are rich in calcium, protein, and vitamins to help build strong bones and teeth.
- True or False.** Based on MyPyramid, a typical American should eat 8 ounces from the protein foods group every day.



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7. Based on the MyPyramid, how many cups should the typical American eat from the vegetable group every day?
- a. 1 cup
 - b. zero cups
 - c. 3 cups
 - d. 2 ½ cups
8. **True or False.** Oils are an important part of a healthy diet because they provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E.
9. **True or False.** Fish, nuts, and seeds contain healthy oils that are good for us.
10. **True or False.** All amounts given from MyPyramid are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. The amount that you need to eat may vary depending on your age, gender and how physically active you are.

Mini Goals

Setting goals is important when making healthy lifestyle choices. Please choose or create at least one mini-goal to complete *before your next* lesson.

Based on what you have learned during this mail lesson, what is one lifestyle change you plan to make?

Do you have an idea for a mini-goal? Go ahead and share your idea with your NEP staff member!

For Office Use Only:

Client's Name: _____ ID: _____

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

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