

Learn at Home: Nutrition Lessons for Healthy Living

MyPyramid Basics

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 Basics

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:

- MyPyramid basics
- How much do you need every day?
- How do I include them all?
- Physical activity
- Does everyone need the same amount of physical activity?
- Moderate vs. vigorous physical activity
- Physical activity is fun!
- Small amounts add up!
- Physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight



◆ MyPyramid

MyPyramid teaches us four things that are very important for good health: Moderation, Balance, Variety, and Activity:

- **Moderation***: Within each food group there are foods that you should eat more often than others. The foods that you should eat more often go in the wider bottom half of the pyramid. These foods are higher in vitamins and minerals with little or no solid fats or added sugars. The foods that you should eat less often go in the narrower top half of the pyramid. These foods contain more added sugars and solid fats.
 - An example of moderation in the grain group is 100% whole wheat bread and donuts. 100% whole wheat bread has little or no added fat or sugar, so it fits into the bottom half of the pyramid, and should be enjoyed often. Donuts have lots of added fats and sugars, and fits into the top half of the pyramid. Foods in the top half of the pyramid, like donuts, should be eaten less often than foods in the bottom half of the pyramid, like 100% whole wheat bread.

- **Balance***: Some of the color bands are wider than others. The different sizes remind you to choose more foods from the food groups with the widest bands.
- **Variety***: The colors orange, green, red, blue, and purple represent the five different food groups. Each food group provides different nutrients important for good health, so remember to eat foods from all five food groups every day.
- **Activity***: The person climbing the stairs reminds you to be physically active every day. Include activities like running, walking the dog, playing, swimming, biking, or climbing stairs every day. Try to be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. More physical activity may be needed to prevent weight gain or to maintain weight loss.

◆ How Much Do You Need Every Day?

Calorie Level	2,000*
Grain Group	6 ounces
Vegetable Group	2½ cups
Fruit Group	2 cups
Dairy Group	3 cups
Protein Foods Group	5½ ounces

Different people may need more or less calories. 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.

◆ How do I include all of the food groups each day?

- **Plan ahead to prepare meals that include foods from all of the food groups.** When creating your weekly meal plan, include one food from each of the food groups for at least one of your meals each day. For example, plan spaghetti and meatballs, with steamed broccoli, apple slices, and a glass of milk for dinner. This meal includes all five food groups. For the other two meals of the day, make sure you include three or more food groups when planning those meals.

◆ Physical Activity

- The person walking up the steps of MyPyramid reminds us to be physically active every day as part of a healthy lifestyle. It is important to find the balance between the food we eat and the physical activity we get for us to feel and look our best. The rest of this lesson will take a closer look at the physical activity portion of MyPyramid.
- Physical activity means moving the body to burn energy. Activities like dancing, gardening, playing sports, and walking are examples of physical activity that burn energy. You should plan to do at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week in addition to your regular activities.
- Physical activity can relieve stress, give you more energy, and help you feel good. It may also lower your risk for diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Physical activity makes your bones and muscles stronger which may help prevent injuries and osteoporosis, a disease that causes bones to become weak and break easily.

◆ Does everyone need the same amount of physical activity each day?

- Most adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. However, children and teenagers should try to get at least 60 minutes each day. If you are trying to lose weight or trying to keep from gaining weight, you may need to do 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity most days.
- Start slowly if you have not been physically active for a long time. Be sure to see a doctor before starting an exercise program.



◆ What is the difference between moderate and vigorous physical activity?

Some physical activities make you work harder than others. The main difference between moderate physical activities and vigorous physical activities is that vigorous physical activities require harder work and burn more energy. Some examples of moderate and vigorous physical activities are listed below:

Moderate physical activities include:

- Brisk walking (about 3½ miles per hour)
- Hiking
- Gardening/yard work
- Dancing
- Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour)
- Weight training (light work-out)



Vigorous physical activities include:

- Running/jogging (5 miles per hour)
- Bicycling (more than 10 miles per hour)
- Swimming
- Aerobics
- Brisk walking (4½ miles per hour)
- Weight lifting (vigorous effort)
- Basketball (competitive)

There are different types of physical activity.

It is good to do a variety of different activities. Each type of activity uses different muscles. Some activities, called aerobic activities, increase your heart rate. It is important that your physical activity makes you work hard enough to increase your heart rate. Some good examples of aerobic activities include:

- Brisk walking
- Jogging
- Swimming
- Riding a bike

Activities that strengthen your muscles also help keep your bones strong. These types of activities are called weight resistance or strength building exercises. Good examples of weight resistance activities include:

- Lifting weights
- Carrying heavy objects such as a child
- Swimming laps



Some activities stretch your muscles and help with balance. Some great examples of stretching and balance activities include:

- Gentle stretching
- Yoga
- Martial arts
- Dancing

Try doing a variety of activities each week so that your muscles and bones stay strong and your heart stays healthy.

♦ Physical activities should be fun!

You should remain physically active for your whole life. If you include a lot of physical activities that you enjoy, it will be easier for you to stick to your goals and remain active.

Try getting your whole family involved in physical activity. Fun family activities include:

- Riding bikes
- Raking leaves, then jumping in them
- Playing catch
- Playing in the lawn sprinkler
- Planting a garden
- Swimming
- Building a snowman
- Sledding
- Dancing
- Taking a walk



♦ Small amounts of physical activity add up!

If you do not have time to do all your physical activity at once, you can do small amounts throughout the day. These small amounts still add up to good health. Some examples of ways to increase your physical activity throughout the day include:

- Parking further away from your work or the store and walking
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator
- Walking your children to school instead of driving them
- Playing games with your children such as tag, hide & seek, or throwing a ball
- Taking your dog for a walk
- Washing your car by hand instead of going to a car wash



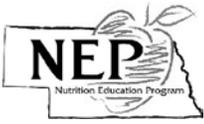
- Getting off the bus early and walking a few extra blocks

Three 10-minute sessions of physical activity can be added up to meet your 30-minute goal for the day.

◆ Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight!

Getting plenty of physical activity along with eating right is the best way to maintain a healthy weight throughout your life.

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 Basics

MyPyramid Basics Questions:

1. Based on MyPyramid, how many cups should a typical American eat from the dairy group every day?
 - a. 4 cups
 - b. 1 cup
 - c. 5 cups
 - d. 3 cups
2. **True or False.** Each food group provides different nutrients important for good health, so it is important to eat foods from all five food groups every day.
3. Foods higher in vitamins and minerals, with little or no solid fats or added sugars should be eaten how often?
 - a. less frequently
 - b. more often
 - c. once per day
 - d. every other day
4. MyPyramid teaches which of the following?
 - a. Moderation
 - b. Balance
 - c. Variety
 - d. All of the above
5. **True or False.** Planning ahead allows you to include all of the food groups in your meals each day.
6. On most days of the week, an average adult should try to do how many *minutes* of physical activity per day?
 - a. 15 minutes
 - b. 30 minutes
 - c. 60 minutes
 - d. 0 minutes



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7. Physical activities that increase your heart rate are called?
- a. Hard work
 - b. Aerobic activities
 - c. Weight Bearing
 - d. Stretching
8. **True or False.** In order for the physical activity to count towards your daily goal, it must be done all at one time.
9. **True or False.** Plenty of physical activity combined with eating right is the best way to maintain a healthy weight throughout your life.
10. How many *minutes* of physical activity should children and teenagers get each day?
- a. 5 minutes
 - b. 30 minutes
 - c. 0 minutes
 - d. 60 minutes

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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