

# Food Guide Pyramid — A Guide to Daily Food Choices

Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, University of Missouri-Columbia Use the Food Guide Pyramid to help you eat better every day ... the Dietary Guidelines way. Start with plenty of breads, cereals, rice and pasta; vegetables; and fruits. Add two to three servings from the Milk group and two to three servings from the Meat group.

Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients that you need. No one food group is more important than another — for good health you will need them all. But go easy on fats, oils and sweets, the foods in the small tip of the pyramid.



# How to use the daily food guide

## What counts as one serving?

### Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta

6-11 servings per day

1 slice of bread

1/2 cup of cooked rice or pasta 1/2 cup of cooked cereal

1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

### Vegetables

3-5 servings per day

1/2 cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables

1 cup of leafy raw vegetables

### Fruits

2-4 servings per day

1 piece of fruit or melon wedge

3/4 cup of juice

1/2 cup of canned fruit

1/4 cup of dried fruit

### Milk, Yogurt and Cheese

2-3 servings per day

1 cup of milk or yogurt

1-1/2 to 2 ounces of cheese

### Meats, Poultry, Fish and Dry Beans

2-3 servings per day

2-1/2 to 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry or fish

Count 1/2 cup of cooked beans, or 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter as 1 ounce of lean meat (about 1/3 serving)

## Fats, Oils and Sweets

Use sparingly each day

**Limit calories from these**, especially if you need to lose weight

### A helping vs. a serving

The amount you eat may be more than one serving. For example, the helping of spaghetti you eat for dinner might count as two or three servings of pasta.

**Table 1. How many servings do you need each day?**

	<b>Women and some older adults</b>	<b>Children, teen girls, active women, most men</b>	<b>Teen boys, active men</b>
<b>Calorie level<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>About 1,600</b>	<b>About 2,200</b>	<b>About 2,800</b>
Bread Group	6	9	11
Vegetable Group	3	4	5
Fruit Group	2	3	4
Milk Group	2-3 <sup>2</sup>	2-3 <sup>2</sup>	2-3 <sup>2</sup>
Meat Group	2, for a total of 5 ounces	2, for a total of 6 ounces	3, for a total of 7 ounces

<sup>1</sup>These are the calorie levels if you choose lowfat, lean foods from the five major food groups and use foods from the fats, oils and sweets group sparingly.

<sup>2</sup>Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, teenagers and young adults to age 24 need at least three servings.

## A closer look at fat and added sugars

The small tip of the pyramid shows foods high in fats, oils and sweets. These are foods such as salad dressings, cream, butter, margarine, sugars, soft drinks, candies and sweet desserts. Alcoholic beverages are also part of this group. These foods provide calories, but few vitamins and minerals. Most people should go easy on foods from this group.

Some foods in the other food groups can also be high in fat and added sugars. Examples are cheese and ice cream from the milk group, or french fries from the potatoes in the vegetable group. When choosing foods for a healthful diet, consider the fat and added sugars in your choices from all the food groups, not just fats, oils and sweets from the pyramid tip.

To order a copy of "The Food Guide Pyramid" booklet, send a \$1 check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents to: Consumer Information Center, Department 159-Y, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

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