Chapter 29

Guidelines for Healthy Eating

YOU WILL LEARN . . .

➤ To summarize the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
➤ How to recognize the food groups in MyPyramid.
➤ To identify recommended food amounts for specific calorie needs.

TERMS TO LEARN . . .

➤ Dietary Guidelines for Americans
➤ obesity

Imagine . . .

... that you're showing a curious child how to construct a pyramid—explaining that this pyramid is built in colorful, vertical bands that are wide at the bottom and narrow at the top. Like many young children, this one asks, "Why?"

Think About

• How would you answer this young child's question?
• Why is the width of each band in the pyramid significant?
• Why is the band for fats and oils narrower than those for vegetables, fruits, and grains?
EATING AND GOOD HEALTH

What’s the relationship between the way you eat and good health? Plenty, according to health experts. They’ve found that poor eating habits play a big role in serious health problems. The good news is that developing good eating habits now can reduce future health problems. You can use the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the food pyramid to make healthful eating a part of your everyday life.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans include science-based advice for making smart food choices, balancing food choices and physical activity, and getting the most nutrition out of your calories. These guidelines are updated, if necessary, and published every five years by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Making wise food choices and being physically active are the keys to a healthier you. These guidelines are suggestions for healthy people age two and older. They are not for infants and young children, since their food needs differ.

Are you eating the right foods to give your body the nutrients it needs to stay healthy? Are you physically active enough to stay fit and burn those extra calories? By developing healthful habits, you may reduce your risk of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.

Make Your Calories Count

Every person’s calorie needs are different. The number of calories you need depends on your age, activity level, or whether you are trying to gain, maintain, or lose weight. The important factor here is to get enough nutrients within your calorie needs. To do this, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages from the basic food groups.

Your Weight and Physical Activity

To keep your body weight in a healthy range, you need to balance your calories from foods and beverages with the calories you get from physical activity per body weight for at least if you are health prof.

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calories you use in physical activity. Regular physical activity promotes health, well-being, and a healthy body weight. Most teens should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day or almost every day. If you are concerned about your weight, talk with a health professional.

**Key Food Groups**

A healthy eating plan emphasizes making wise choices from the key food groups, including:

- **Fruit group.** Eat a variety of fruits—fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. Juices have more calories.

- **Vegetable group.** Eat a variety of dark green vegetables (such as broccoli), orange vegetables (such as sweet potatoes), and dry beans and peas.

- **Grain group.** Make half of the grains you eat whole grains. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as “whole” on food labels.

- **Milk group.** Children age nine or over and teens need 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk per day or equivalent milk products. If you cannot consume regular milk and milk products, choose lactose-free milk and milk products or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.

- **Meat and bean group.** Go lean with protein foods. Vary your protein choices by including beans, peas, nuts, and seeds along with meat, poultry, and fish.

**Limit Fats**

Fat is an important nutrient for your health. It helps to supply energy and is important for many body functions. Eating some healthful fat or oil is a good idea. Eating too much fat contributes to **obesity**—or being seriously overweight due to an excess of body fat. Obesity is linked to health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.

For children and teens age four to 18, total fat intake should be 25 to 35 percent of calories. Look for foods low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
Reduce Sodium, Increase Potassium

Sodium (salt) helps the body keep a balance of fluids. It also helps regulate blood pressure. Research indicates that too much sodium is linked to high blood pressure. Most of the sodium people eat comes from processed foods. To limit the amount of sodium you eat to a healthful amount, choose and prepare foods with little salt. Eat plenty of potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables.

Limit Added Sugar

Do you have a sweet tooth? Many popular foods, such as ice cream and sweetened cereals, contain high amounts of added sugar. You don’t need sugar in large amounts. Eating too much sugar may lead to weight gain.

Look for foods and beverages that are low in added sugars. Read ingredient labels carefully to make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few ingredients on the list. Examples of added sugars include: sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, and fructose.

Play It Safe with Food

Keeping food safe from harmful bacteria and other hazards is vital to healthful eating. Know how to prepare, handle, and store food safely to keep your family safe and healthy. Here are some helpful guidelines:

• Wash your hands before preparing, handling, and eating food.
• Clean food-contact surfaces to avoid spreading bacteria.
• Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
• Do not rinse meat or poultry to avoid spreading bacteria to other foods.
Health experts agree that no more than 30 percent of your calories should come from fat. Try these ideas that lower the fat in the foods you eat:

- Drink skim or low-fat milk instead of whole milk.
- Eat meat in moderation.
- Choose lean cuts of meat when buying meat. Look for the “Select” or “Lean” label on meat.
- Limit the use of luncheon meats, bacon, and sausage.
- Trim the fat off meat before cooking or eating.
- Cut the skin off chicken or turkey before eating. White meat is lower in fat than dark meat.
- Buy tuna packed in water or rinse the oil off oil-packed tuna.
- Eat broiled, baked, or steamed foods. Limit your intake of fried foods.
- Substitute plain low-fat yogurt for sour cream in dips and on potatoes.
- Use less butter, margarine, mayonnaise, and gravy on foods.
- Limit the use of cheese, nuts, and peanut butter. They’re nutritious, but high in fat.

Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing food.

Chill perishable foods promptly and thaw foods properly. See Chapters 31 and 34 for more information about buying, preparing, and storing food safely.

Substituting herb seasoning for salt offers flavor without excess sodium.

**MYPYRAMID**

*MyPyramid* is a personalized way to approach healthful eating and physical activity every day. As shown on page 410, the pyramid consists of a rainbow of vertical bands that represent the five food groups plus fats and oils. Here is how you can identify them: Orange—Grain group; Green—Vegetable group; Red—Fruit group; Blue—Milk group; Purple—Meat and bean group; and Yellow—Oils.

The Pyramid Message

The USDA changed the pyramid to send a stronger message to Americans about how to be healthy. On the top of...
Examples of Food Amounts

**Grain Group**
- 1 ounce slice whole-grain bread
- ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
- 1 ounce ready-to-eat whole-grain cereal

**Fruit Group**
- 1 orange, apple, banana, or pear
- ¼ cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- 6 ounces fruit juice

**Vegetable Group**
- 1 cup dark green, leafy raw vegetables
- ½ cup other dark green or orange vegetables, cooked or raw
- 6 ounces vegetable juice

**Milk Group**
- 1 cup milk or yogurt
- 1½ ounces ripened cheese
- 2 ounces processed cheese

**Meats & Bean Group**
- 2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 cup cooked dry beans
- 2 Tbsp. peanut butter—equivalent to 1 ounce of meat
the list is that food and exercise go hand in hand. Notice that one side of the pyramid shows a staircase and a figure climbing the stairs. This is your cue to exercise and be active daily. Here are some other pyramid messages:

- **Eat a variety of foods.** Choose foods from every food group on a daily basis for balance.
- **Color-band widths relate to food amounts.** Notice that the color bands on the pyramid are different widths: those for meat and oils are thinner than those for grains, vegetables, and fruits. This indicates that you should eat more of some foods and less of others. In addition, the color bands are wider at the bottom and narrower at the top. This is to show that foods within a group may vary in healthfulness.
- **Personalize your pyramid.** You can get personal recommendations from the USDA's MyPyramid Web site about how much food to eat and the mix of foods to eat for your age, gender, and activity level.

### How Much Should You Eat?

Because of varying factors, you may need to eat more or less food than your friends. If you play a sport or ride a bike, you will burn more calories and will need to eat more calories. The graphic on page 410 shows you examples of food amounts; however, here are some other tips to remember:

- Foods from the grain group are measured in ounces or ounce equivalents. A daily minimum is three ounces.
- Foods from the vegetable, fruit, and milk groups are measured in cups. Teens on average need 2½ cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, and 3 cups of milk daily.
- Foods from the meat and bean group are also measured in ounces or ounce equivalents. Teens need 5 to 6 ounces per day.

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

What have you learned from the guidelines in this chapter? In general, it's important to make nutritious food choices for your calorie needs and be physically active everyday. Doing so leads to good health.