

# The Food Guide Pyramid



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## What's in this booklet for me?

**T**his booklet introduces you to The Food Guide Pyramid. The Pyramid illustrates the research-based food guidance system developed by USDA and supported by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It goes beyond the “basic four food groups” to help you put the Dietary Guidelines into action.

The Pyramid is based on USDA’s research on what foods Americans eat, what nutrients are in these foods, and how to make the best food choices for you.

The Pyramid and this booklet will help you choose what and how much to eat from each food group to get the nutrients you need and not too many calories, or too much fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, sodium, or alcohol.

The Pyramid focuses on fat because most Americans’ diets are too high in fat. Following the Pyramid will help you keep your intake of total fat and saturated fat low. A diet low in fat will reduce your chances of getting certain diseases and help you maintain a healthy weight.

This booklet will also help you learn how to spot and control the sugars and salt in your diet, and make lower sugar and salt choices.

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## What's the Best Nutrition Advice?

It’s following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These are seven guidelines for a healthful diet – advice for healthy Americans 2 years of age or more. By following the Dietary Guidelines, you can enjoy better health

and reduce your chances of getting certain diseases. These Guidelines, developed jointly by USDA and HHS, are the best, most up-to-date advice from nutrition scientists and are the basis of Federal nutrition policy.

### THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

**Eat a variety of foods** to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need for good health.

attack and certain types of cancer and to help you maintain a healthy weight.

**Balance the food you eat with physical activity — maintain or improve your weight** to reduce your chances of having high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain cancers, and the most common kind of diabetes.

**Choose a diet moderate in sugars.** A diet with lots of sugars has too many calories and too few nutrients for most people and can contribute to tooth decay.

**Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium** to help reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

**Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables, and fruits** which provide needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, and complex carbohydrates, and can help you lower your intake of fat.

**If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.** Alcoholic beverages supply calories, but little or no nutrients. Drinking alcohol is also the cause of many health problems and accidents and can lead to addiction.

**Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol** to reduce your risk of heart

# The Food Guide Pyramid

## A Guide to Daily Food Choices

### KEY

● Fat (naturally occurring and added)

▼ Sugars (added)

These symbols show fat and added sugars in foods.

Fats, Oils, & Sweets  
**USE SPARINGLY**

Milk, Yogurt,  
& Cheese  
Group  
**2-3 SERVINGS**

Meat, Poultry, Fish,  
Dry Beans, Eggs,  
& Nuts Group  
**2-3 SERVINGS**

Vegetable  
Group  
**3-5 SERVINGS**

Fruit  
Group  
**2-4 SERVINGS**

Bread, Cereal,  
Rice, & Pasta  
Group  
**6-11 SERVINGS**

### What is the Food Guide Pyramid?

The Pyramid is an outline of what to eat each day. It's not a rigid prescription, but a general

guide that lets you choose a healthful diet that's right for you.

The Pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need

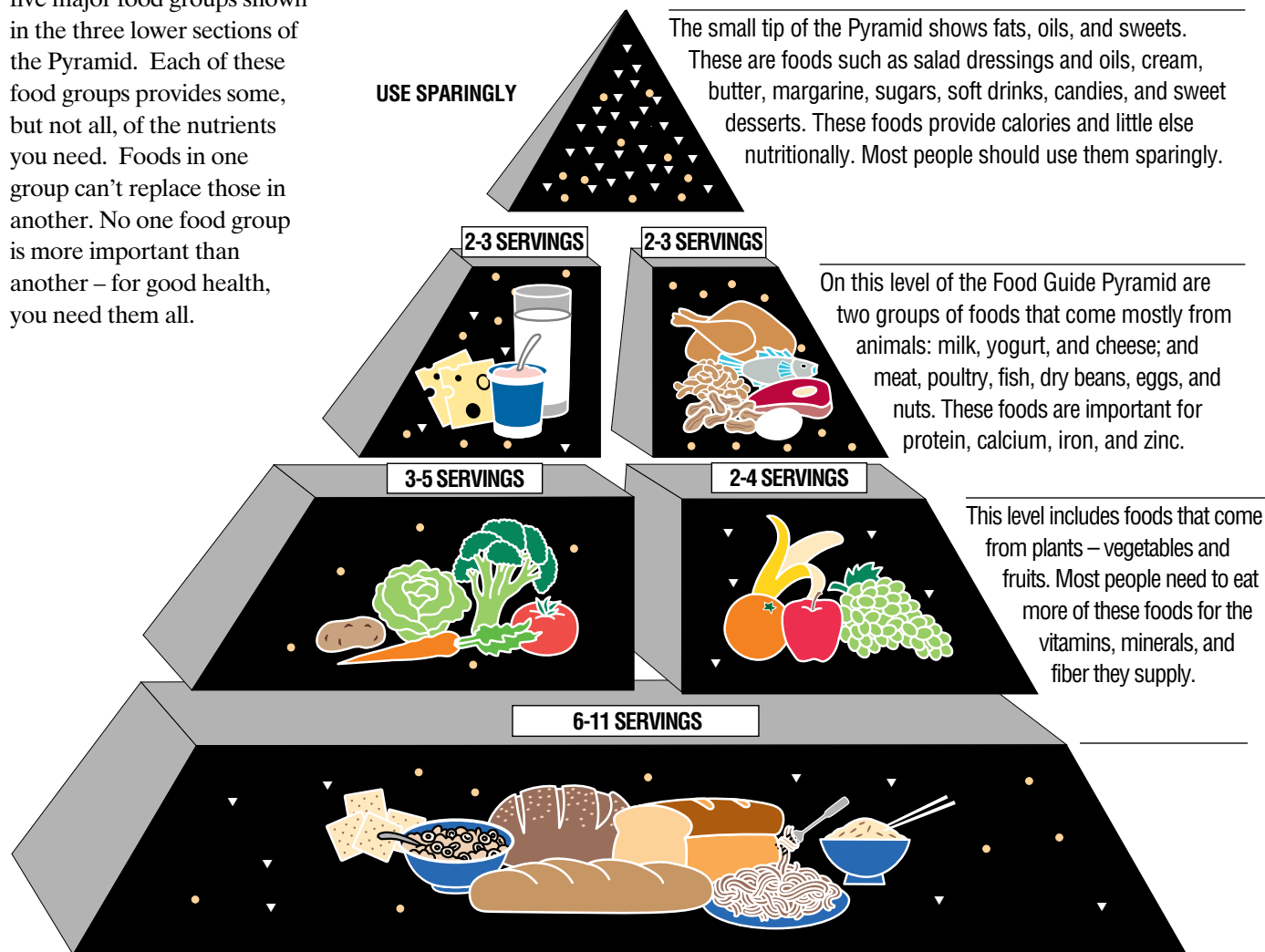
and at the same time the right amount of calories to maintain or improve your weight.

The Pyramid also focuses on fat because

most American diets are too high in fat, especially saturated fat.

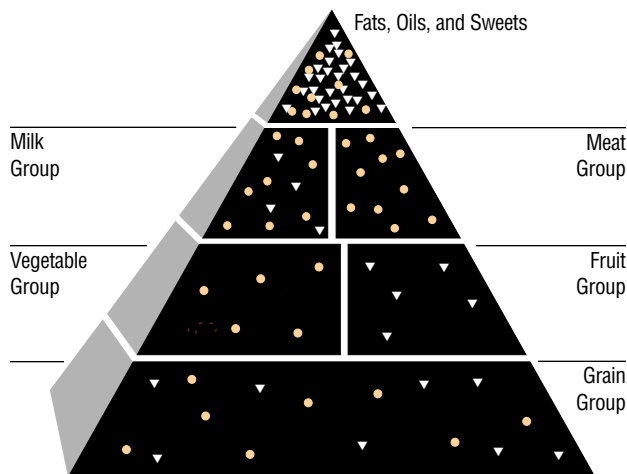
# Looking at the Pieces of the Pyramid

The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes foods from the five major food groups shown in the three lower sections of the Pyramid. Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. Foods in one group can't replace those in another. No one food group is more important than another – for good health, you need them all.



At the base of the Food Guide Pyramid are breads, cereals, rice, and pasta — all foods from grains. You need the most servings of these foods each day.

# A Closer Look at Fat and Added Sugars



**KEY:** ● Fat (naturally occurring and added) ▼ Sugars (added)



As you can see, fat and added sugars are concentrated in foods from the Pyramid tip—fats, oils, and sweets. These foods supply calories, but little or no vitamins and minerals. By using these foods sparingly, you can have a diet that supplies needed vitamins and minerals without excess calories.

Some fat or sugar symbols are shown in the food

groups. That's to remind you that some food choices in these food groups can also be high in fat or added sugars. When choosing foods for a healthful diet, consider the fat and added sugars in your choices from the food groups, as well as the fats, oils, and sweets from the Pyramid tip.

## Fat

● In general, foods that come from animals (milk and meat groups) are naturally higher in fat than foods that come from plants. But there are many lowfat dairy and lean meat choices available,

and these foods can be prepared in ways that lower fat.

Fruits, vegetables, and grain products are naturally low in fat. But many popular items are prepared with fat, like french-fried potatoes or croissants, making them higher fat choices.

For example:

### ONE BAKED POTATO



Calories: 120

Fat: trace

*Or*

### 14 FRENCH FRIES



Calories: 225

Fat: 11 grams

## Added Sugars

▼ These symbols represent sugars added to foods in processing or at the table, not the sugars found naturally in fruits and milk. It's the added sugars that provide calories with few vitamins and minerals.

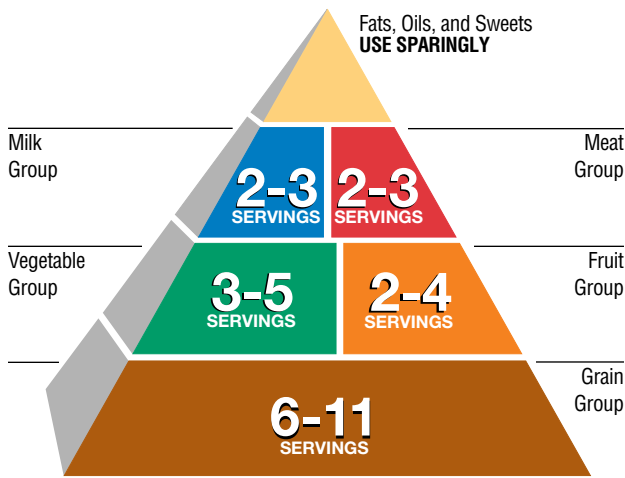
Most of the added sugars in the typical American diet come from foods in the Pyramid tip—soft drinks, candy, jams, jellies, syrups, and table sugar we add to foods like coffee or cereal.

Added sugars in the food groups come from foods such as ice cream, sweetened yogurt, chocolate milk, canned or frozen fruit with heavy syrup, and sweetened bakery products like cakes and cookies. The [chart on page 16](#) shows you the amounts of added sugars in some popular foods. You may be surprised!

## Fat and Sugar Tips:

- ☞ Choose lower fat foods from the food groups most often.
- ☞ Go easy on fats and sugars added to foods in cooking or at the table—butter, margarine, gravy, salad dressing, sugar, and jelly.
- ☞ Choose fewer foods that are high in sugars—candy, sweet desserts, and soft drinks.

# How To Make the Pyramid Work for You



## How many servings are right for me?

The Pyramid shows a range of servings for each major food group. The number of servings that are right for you depends on how many calories you need, which in turn depends on your age, sex, size, and how active you are. Almost everyone should have at least the lowest number of servings in the ranges.

The following calorie level suggestions are based on recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences and on calorie intakes reported by people in national food consumption surveys.

## For adults and teens

**1,600** calories is about right for many sedentary women and some older adults.

**2,200** calories is about right for most children, teenage girls, active women, and many sedentary men. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding may need somewhat more.

**2,800** calories is about right for teenage boys, many active men, and some very active women.

## For young children

It is hard to know how much food children need to grow normally. If you're unsure, check with your doctor. Preschool children need the same variety of foods as older family members do, but may need less than 1,600 calories. For fewer calories they can eat smaller servings. However, it is important that they have the equivalent of 2 cups of milk a day.

## For you

Now, take a look at the table below. It tells you how many servings you need for your calorie level. For example, if you

are an active woman who needs about 2,200 calories a day, 9 servings of breads, cereals, rice, or pasta would be right for you. You'd also want to eat about 6 ounces of meat or alternates per day. Keep total fat (fat in the foods you choose as well as fat used in cooking or added at the table) to about 73 grams per day.

If you are between calorie categories, estimate servings. For example, some less active women may need only 2,000 calories to maintain a healthy weight. At that calorie level, 8 servings from the grain group would be about right.

## SAMPLE DIETS FOR A DAY AT 3 CALORIE LEVELS

	Lower about 1,600	Moderate about 2,200	Higher about 2,800
<b>Grain Group Servings</b>	6	9	11
<b>Vegetable Group Servings</b>	3	4	5
<b>Fruit Group Servings</b>	2	3	4
<b>Milk Group Servings</b>	2-3 <sup>1</sup>	2-3 <sup>1</sup>	2-3 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Meat Group<sup>2</sup> (ounces)</b>	5	6	7
<b>Total Fat<sup>3</sup> (grams)</b>	53	73	93
<b>Total Added Sugars<sup>4</sup> (teaspoons)</b>	6	12	18

<sup>1</sup>Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, teenagers, and young adults to age 24 need 3 servings.

<sup>2</sup>Meat group amounts are in total ounces. (See [pages 22 and 23](#) for details on how to count amounts of meat and other foods in this group.)

<sup>3</sup>See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart for details on how to count total fat ([pages 25 to 27](#)).

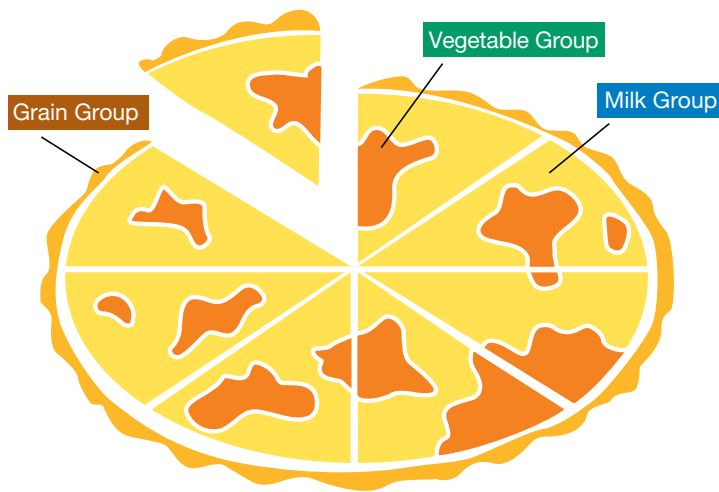
<sup>4</sup>See [chart on page 16](#) for details on how to count teaspoons of added sugars.

# What is a Serving?

The amount of food that counts as a serving is listed on the next page. If you eat a larger portion, count it as more than one serving. For example, 1/2 cup of cooked pasta counts as one serving in the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group. If you eat 1 cup of pasta, that would be two servings. If you eat a smaller portion, count it as part of a serving.

## Isn't 6 to 11 servings of breads and cereals a lot?

It may sound like a lot, but it's really not. For example, a slice of bread is one serving, so a sandwich for lunch would equal two servings. A small bowl of cereal and one slice of toast for breakfast are two more servings. And, if you have a cup of rice or pasta at dinner, that's two more servings. A snack of 3 or 4 small plain crackers adds yet another serving. So now you've had 7 servings. It adds up quicker than you think!



## Do I need to measure servings?

No. Use servings only as a general guide. For mixed foods, do the best you can to estimate the food group servings of the main ingredients. For example, a generous serving of pizza would count in the grain group (crust), the milk group (cheese), and the vegetable group (tomato); a helping of beef stew would count in the meat group and the vegetable group. Both have some fat — fat in the cheese on the pizza and in the gravy from the stew, if it's made from meat drippings.

## What if I want to lose or gain weight?

The best and simplest way to lose weight is to increase your physical activity and reduce the fat and sugars in your diet.

ings from the five major food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid. You need them for the vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and protein they provide. Just try to pick the lowest fat choices from the food groups.

To gain weight, increase the amounts of foods you eat from all of the food groups. If you have lost weight unexpectedly, see your doctor.

But be sure to eat at least the lowest number of serv-

## WHAT COUNTS AS A SERVING?

### Food Groups

#### Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta

1 slice of bread

1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

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

#### Vegetable

1 cup of raw leafy vegetables

1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw

3/4 cup of vegetable juice

#### Fruit

1 medium apple, banana, orange

1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit

3/4 cup of fruit juice

#### Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

1 cup of milk or yogurt

1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese

2 ounces of process cheese

#### Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts

2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish

1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or 1 egg counts as 1 ounce of lean meat. 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or 1/3 cup of nuts count as 1 ounce of meat.

# Fats

## How much fat can I have?

It depends on your calorie needs. The Dietary Guidelines recommend that Americans limit fat in their diets to 30 percent of calories. This amounts to 53 grams of fat in a 1,600-calorie diet, 73 grams of fat in a 2,200-calorie diet, and 93 grams of fat in a 2,800-calorie diet.

You will get up to half this fat even if you pick the lowest fat choices from each food group and add no fat to your foods in preparation or at the table.

You decide how to use the additional fat in your daily diet. You may want to have foods from the five major food groups that are higher in

fat—such as whole milk instead of skim milk. Or you may want to use it in cooking or at the table in the form of spreads, dressings, or toppings.

## How to check your diet for fat

If you want to be sure you have a lowfat diet, you can count the grams of fat in your day's food choices using the [Pyramid Food Choices Chart on pages 25 to 27](#), and compare them to the number of grams of fat suggested for your calorie level.

You don't need to count fat grams every day, but doing a fat checkup once in awhile will help keep you on the right track. If you find you are eating too much fat, choose lower fat foods more often.

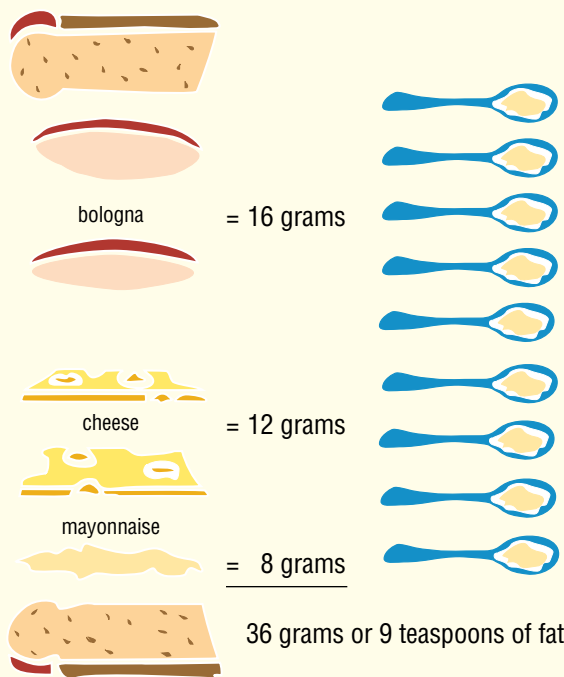
You can figure the number of grams of fat that provide 30% of calories in your daily diet as follows:

A. Multiply your total day's calories by 0.30 to get your calories from fat per day. *Example: 2,200 calories  $\times$  0.30 = 660 calories from fat.*

B. Divide calories from fat per day by 9 (each gram of fat has 9 calories) to get grams of fat per day. *Example: 660 calories from fat  $\div$  9 = 73 grams of fat*



## WHERE'S THE FAT?



The fat in some foods adds up quickly. A bologna-and-cheese sandwich made with 2 slices (2 oz.) of bologna, 2 slices (1-1/2 oz.) of cheese, and 2 teaspoons of mayonnaise counts up to about 36 grams of fat, about 9 teaspoons. However, a similar sandwich made with lean beef, lettuce, tomato, and lowfat mayonnaise, and served with a cup of nonfat milk instead of the cheese, has only about 6 grams of fat. **Note: 4 grams of fat = 1 teaspoon**

## Are some types of fat worse than others?

Yes. Eating too much saturated fat raises blood cholesterol levels in many people, increasing their risk for heart disease. The Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting saturated fat to less than 10 percent of calories, or about one-third of total fat intake.

All fats in foods are mix-

tures of three types of fatty acids—saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated.

**Saturated fats** are found in largest amounts in fats from meat and dairy products and in some vegetable fats such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils.

**Monounsaturated fats** are found mainly in olive, peanut, and canola oils.



**Polyunsaturated fats** are found mainly in safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean, and cottonseed oils and some fish.

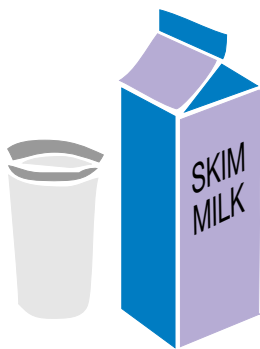
### How do I avoid too much saturated fat?

Follow the Food Guide Pyramid, keeping

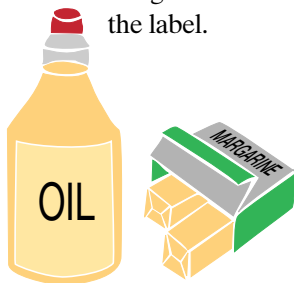
your total fat within recommended levels. (See [the table on page 9 for the number of grams suggested at various calorie levels.](#)) Choose fat from a variety of food sources, but mostly from those foods that are higher in polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fat.

### Here are some selection tips:

☛ Use lean meats and skim or lowfat dairy products.



☛ Use unsaturated vegetable oils and margarines that list a liquid vegetable oil as first ingredient on the label.



☛ Read nutrition and ingredient labels on food packages to check the kinds and amounts of fat they contain.



☛ Limit use of products that contain a large amount of saturated fats. Examples are nondairy creamers and rich baked products such as pie crusts and other pastries, cakes, and cookies.

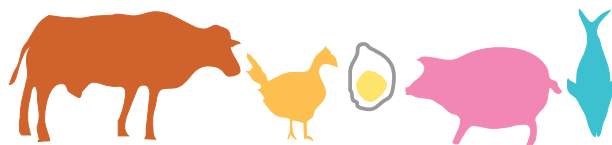
## Cholesterol

### What about cholesterol?

Cholesterol and fat are not the same thing. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance present in all animal foods—meat, poultry, fish, milk and milk products, and egg yolks. Both the lean and fat of meat and the meat and skin of poultry contain cholesterol. In milk products, cholesterol is mostly in the fat, so lower fat products contain less cholesterol. Egg yolks and organ meats, like liver, are high in cholesterol. Plant foods do not contain cholesterol.

Dietary cholesterol, as well as saturated fat, raises

blood cholesterol levels in many people, increasing their risk for heart disease. Some health authorities recommend that dietary cholesterol be limited to an average of 300 mg or less per day. To keep dietary cholesterol to this level, follow the Food Guide Pyramid, keeping your total fat to the amount that's right for you. (See [table on page 9.](#)) It's not necessary to eliminate all foods that are high in cholesterol. You can have three to four egg yolks a week, counting those used as ingredients in custards and baked products. Use lower fat dairy products often and occasionally include dry beans and peas in place of meat.



### WHERE'S THE CHOLESTEROL?



## WHERE ARE THE ADDED SUGARS?

Food Groups

Added Sugars (teaspoons)

Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta	
Bread, 1 slice	0
Muffin, 1 medium	* 1
Cookies, 2 medium	* 1
Danish pastry, 1 medium	* 1
Doughnut, 1 medium	* * 2
Ready-to-eat cereal, sweetened, 1 oz.	* *
Pound cake, no-fat, 1 oz.	* * 2
Angelfood cake, 1/12 tube cake	* * * * * 5
Cake, frosted, 1/16 average	* * * * * 6
Pie, fruit, 2 crust, 1/6 8" pie	* * * * * 6

Fruit	
Fruit, canned in juice, 1/2 cup	0
Fruit, canned in light syrup, 1/2 cup	* * 2
Fruit, canned in heavy syrup, 1/2 cup	* * * * 4

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese	
Milk, plain, 1 cup	0
Chocolate milk, 2 percent, 1 cup	* * * 3
Lowfat yogurt, plain, 8 oz.	0
Lowfat yogurt, flavored, 8 oz.	* * * * * 5
Lowfat yogurt, fruit, 8 oz.	* * * * * * 7
Ice cream, ice milk, or frozen yogurt, 1/2 cup	* * * 3
Chocolate shake, 10 fl. oz.	* * * * * * * * 9

Other	
Sugar, jam, or jelly, 1 tsp.	* 1
Syrup or honey, 1 tbsp.	* * * 3
Chocolate bar, 1 oz.	* * * 3
Fruit sorbet, 1/2 cup	* * * 3
Gelatin dessert, 1/2 cup	* * * * 4
Sherbet, 1/2 cup	* * * * * 5
Cola, 12 fl.oz.	* * * * * * * * 9
Fruit drink, ade, 12 fl.oz.	* * * * * * * * * * 12

\*Check product label. \* = 1 teaspoon sugar

**Note: 4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon**

## Sugars

### What about sugars?

Choosing a diet low in fat is a concern for everyone; choosing one low in sugars is also important for people who have low calorie needs. Sugars include white sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, corn syrup, honey, and molasses; these supply calories and little else nutritionally.

To avoid getting too many calories from sugars, try to limit your added sugars to 6 teaspoons a day if you eat about 1,600 calories, 12 teaspoons at 2,200 calories, or 18 teaspoons at 2,800 calories. These amounts are intended to be averages over time. The patterns are illustrations of healthful proportions in the diet, not rigid prescriptions.

Added sugars are in foods like candy and soft drinks, as well as jams, jellies, and sugars you add at the table. Some added sugars are also in foods from the food groups, such as fruit canned in heavy syrup and chocolate milk. The chart on page 16 shows the approximate amount of sugars in some popular foods.

## Salt and Sodium

### Do I have to give up salt?

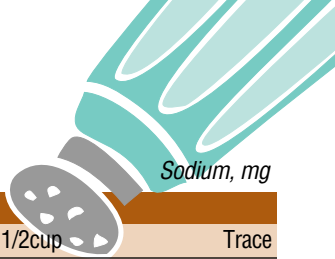
No. But most people eat more than they need. Some health authorities say that sodium intake should not be more than 2,400 mg. Nutrition labels also list a Daily Value (upper limit) of 2,400 mg per day for sodium. Much of the sodium in people's diets comes from salt they add while cooking and at the table. (One teaspoon of salt provides about 2,000 mg of sodium.)

Go easy on salt and foods that are high in sodium, including cured meats, luncheon meats, and many cheeses, most canned soups and vegetables, and soy sauce. Look for lower salt and no-salt-added versions of these products at your supermarket.

The [table on page 18](#) will give you an idea of the amount of sodium in different types of foods. Information on food labels can also help you make food choices to keep sodium moderate.

**WHERE'S THE SALT?**

*Food Groups*



<b>Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta</b>	
Cooked cereal, rice, pasta, unsalted, 1/2cup	Trace
Ready-to-eat cereal, 1 oz.	100-360
Bread, 1 slice	110-175
Popcorn, salted, 1 oz.	100-420
Pretzels, salted, 1 oz.	130-880

<b>Vegetable</b>	
Vegetables, fresh or frozen, cooked without salt, 1/2 cup	Less than 70
Vegetables, canned or frozen with sauce, 1/2 cup	140-460
Tomato juice, canned, 3/4 cup	660
Vegetable soup, canned, 1 cup	820

<b>Fruit</b>	
Fruit, fresh, frozen, canned, 1/2 cup	Trace

<b>Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese</b>	
Milk, 1 cup	120
Yogurt, 8 oz.	160
Natural cheeses, 1-1/2 oz.	110-450
Process cheeses, 2 oz.	800

<b>Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts</b>	
Fresh meat, poultry, fish, 3 oz.	Less than 90
Tuna, canned, water pack, 3 oz.	300
Bologna, 2 oz.	580
Ham, lean, roasted, 3 oz.	1,020
Peanuts, roasted in oil, salted, 1 oz.	120

<b>Other</b>	
Salad dressing, 1 tbsp.	75-220
Ketchup, mustard, steak sauce, 1 tbsp.	130-230
Soy sauce, 1 tbsp.	1,030
Salt, 1 tsp.	2,325
Dill pickle, 1 medium	930

## Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta



### Why are breads, cereals, rice, and pasta important?

These foods provide complex carbohydrates (starches), which are an important source of energy, especially in lowfat diets. They also provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests 6 to 11 servings of these foods a day.

### What counts as a serving?

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal
- 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

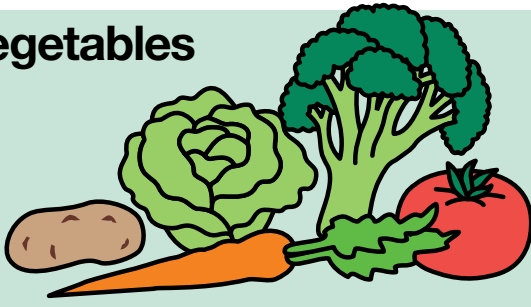
### Aren't starchy foods fattening?

No. It's what you add to these foods or cook with them that adds most of the calories. For example: margarine or butter on bread, cream or cheese sauces on pasta, and the sugar and fat used with the flour in making cookies.

### Here are some selection tips:

- ☞ To get the fiber you need, choose several servings a day of foods made from whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread and whole-grain cereals.
- ☞ Choose most often foods that are made with little fat or sugars. These include bread, english muffins, rice, and pasta. [\(See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart on page 25 for others.\)](#)
- ☞ Baked goods made from flour, such as cakes, cookies, croissants, and pastries, count as part of this food group, but they are high in fat and sugars.
- ☞ Go easy on the fat and sugars you add as spreads, seasonings, or toppings.
- ☞ When preparing pasta, stuffing, and sauce from packaged mixes, use only half the butter or margarine suggested; if milk or cream is called for, use lowfat milk.

## Vegetables



### Why are vegetables important?

Vegetables provide vitamins, such as vitamins A and C, and folate, and minerals, such as iron and magnesium. They are naturally low in fat and also provide fiber. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests 3 to 5 servings of these foods a day.

### What counts as a serving?

- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw
- 3/4 cup of vegetable juice

### Here are some selection tips:

☞ Different types of vegetables provide different nutrients. For variety eat:

- ▶ dark-green leafy vegetables (spinach, romaine lettuce, broccoli);
- ▶ deep-yellow vegetables (carrots, sweet potatoes);

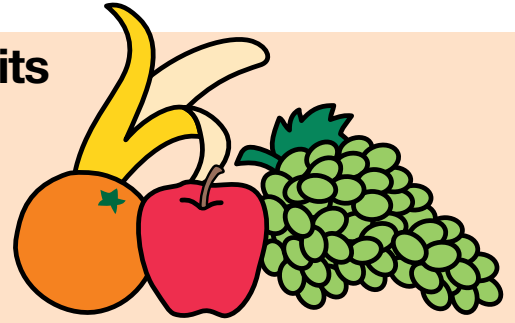
- ▶ starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas);
- ▶ legumes (navy, pinto, and kidney beans, chickpeas);
- ▶ other vegetables (lettuce, tomatoes, onions, green beans).

☞ Include dark-green leafy vegetables and legumes several times a week—they are especially good sources of vitamins and minerals. Legumes also provide protein and can be used in place of meat. [\(See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart on page 27.\)](#)

☞ Go easy on the fat you add to vegetables at the table or during cooking. Added spreads or toppings, such as butter, mayonnaise, and salad dressing, count as fat. [\(See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart on pages 25 to 28 for more information on how to count fat.\)](#)

☞ Use lowfat salad dressing.

## Fruits



### Why are fruits important?

Fruits and fruit juices provide important amounts of vitamins A and C and potassium. They are low in fat and sodium. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests 2 to 4 servings of fruits a day.

### What counts as a serving?

- a medium apple, banana, or orange
- 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- 3/4 cup of fruit juice

### Here are some selection tips:

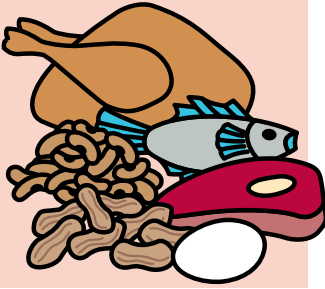
☞ Choose fresh fruits, fruit juices, and frozen, canned, or dried fruit. Pass up fruit canned or frozen in heavy syrups and sweetened fruit juices unless you have calories to spare.

☞ Eat whole fruits often—they are higher in fiber than fruit juices.

☞ Have citrus fruits, melons, and berries regularly. They are rich in vitamin C.

☞ Count only 100 percent fruit juice as fruit. Punches, ades, and most fruit “drinks” contain only a little juice and lots of added sugars. Grape and orange sodas don’t count as fruit juice. [\(See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart on page 26.\)](#)

## Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts



### Why are meat, poultry, fish, and other foods in this group important?

Meat, poultry, and fish supply protein, B vitamins, iron, and zinc. The other foods in this group — dry beans, eggs, and nuts — are similar to meats in providing protein and most vitamins and minerals. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests 2 to 3 servings each day of foods from this group. The total amount of these servings should be the equivalent of 5 to 7 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish per day.

### What counts as a serving?

- Count 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as a serving. A 3-ounce piece of meat is about the size of an average hamburger, or the amount of meat on a medium chicken breast half.
- For other foods in this group, count 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or 1 egg as 1 ounce of lean meat. 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or 1/3 cup of nuts count as 1 ounce of meat (about 1/3 serving).

Counting to see if you have an equivalent of 5-7 ounces of cooked lean meat a day is tricky. Portion sizes vary with the type of food and meal. For example, 6 ounces might come from:  
 —1 egg (count as 1 oz. of lean meat) for breakfast;  
 —2 oz. of sliced turkey in a sandwich at lunch; and  
 —a 3 oz. cooked lean hamburger for dinner.

## Lean Choices

### BEEF

Roasts/Steaks:

*Round*

*Loin*

*Sirloin*

*Chuck Arm*

### PORK

Roasts/Chops:

*Tenderloin*

*Center Loin*

*Ham*

### VEAL

*All cuts except ground*

### LAMB

Roasts/Chops:

*Leg*

*Loin*

*Fore Shanks*

### CHICKEN & TURKEY

*Light & dark meat, without the skin*

### FISH & SHELLFISH

*Most are low in fat; those marinated or canned in oil are higher*

### Here are some selection tips:

☞ Choose lean meat, poultry without skin, fish, and dry beans and peas often. They are the choices lowest in fat.

☞ Prepare meats in lowfat ways:  
 —Trim away all the fat you can see.

—Broil, roast, or boil these foods, instead of frying them.

☞ Go easy on egg yolks; they are high in cholesterol. Use only one yolk per person in egg dishes. Make larger portions by adding extra egg whites.

☞ Nuts and seeds are high in fat, so eat them in moderation. ([See the Pyramid Food Choices Chart on page 27.](#))

## Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese



### Why are milk products important?

Milk products provide protein, vitamins, and minerals. Milk, yogurt, and cheese are the best source of calcium. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests 2 to 3 servings of milk, yogurt, and cheese a day—2 for most people, and 3 for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, teenagers, and young adults to age 24.

### What counts as a serving?

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese
- 2 ounces of process cheese

### Here are some selection tips:

- ☞ Choose skim milk and nonfat yogurt often. They are lowest in fat.
- ☞ 1-1/2 to 2 ounces of cheese and 8 ounces of yogurt count as a serving from this group because they supply the same amount of calcium as 1 cup of milk.
- ☞ Cottage cheese is lower in calcium than most cheeses. One cup of cottage cheese counts as only 1/2 serving of milk.
- ☞ Go easy on high fat cheese and ice cream. They can add a lot of fat (especially saturated fat) to your diet.
- ☞ Choose “part skim” or lowfat cheeses when available and lower fat milk desserts, like ice milk or frozen yogurt.

## The Pyramid Food Choices Chart

The following chart lists commonly used foods in each food group and the amount of fat in each. Only a few of the thousands of foods we eat are listed. However, they will give you an idea of foods from each food group that are higher and lower in fat.

The Food Guide Pyramid symbol (▲) next to the food item means that food is one of the lowest fat choices you can make in

that food group.

You can use the food label to count fat in specific foods. Many labels on foods list the grams of fat in a serving.

### How much is a gram of fat?

To help you visualize how much fat is in these foods, keep in mind that 1 teaspoon (1 pat) of butter or margarine has 4 grams of fat.

### For this amount of food... count this many...

Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group		
Eat 6 to 11 servings daily	Servings	Grams of Fat
▲ Bread, 1 slice	1	1
▲ Hamburger roll, bagel, english muffin, 1	2	2
Tortilla, 1	1	3
▲ Rice, pasta, cooked, 1/2 cup	1	Trace
Plain crackers, small, 3-4	1	3
Breakfast cereal, 1 oz.	1	*
Pancakes, 4" diameter, 2	2	3
Croissant, 1 large (2 oz.)	2	12
Doughnut, 1 medium (2 oz.)	2	11
Danish, 1 medium (2 oz.)	2	13
Cake, frosted, 1/16 average	1	13
Cookies, 2 medium	1	4
Pie, fruit, 2-crust, 1/6 8" pie	2	19

\*Check product label

(continued...)

**For this amount of food... count this many...**

<b>Vegetable Group</b>		
<i>Eat 3 to 5 servings daily</i>	Servings	Grams of Fat
▲ Vegetables, cooked, 1/2 cup	1	Trace
▲ Vegetables, leafy, raw, 1 cup	1	Trace
▲ Vegetables, nonleafy, raw, chopped, 1/2 cup	1	Trace
Potatoes, scalloped, 1/2 cup	1	4
Potato salad, 1/2 cup	1	8
French fries, 10	1	8

<b>Fruit Group</b>		
<i>Eat 2 to 4 servings daily</i>	Servings	Grams of Fat
▲ Whole fruit: medium apple, orange, banana	1	Trace
▲ Fruit, raw or canned, 1/2 cup	1	Trace
▲ Fruit juice, unsweetened, 3/4 cup	1	Trace
Avocado, 1/4 whole	1	9

<b>Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group</b>		
<i>Eat 2 to 3 servings daily</i>	Servings	Grams of Fat
▲ Skim milk, 1 cup	1	Trace
▲ Nonfat yogurt, plain, 8 oz.	1	Trace
Lowfat milk, 2 percent, 1 cup	1	5
Whole milk, 1 cup	1	8
Chocolate milk, 2 percent, 1 cup	1	5
Lowfat yogurt, plain, 8 oz.	1	4
Lowfat yogurt, fruit, 8 oz.	1	3
Natural cheddar cheese, 1-1/2 oz.	1	14
Process cheese, 2 oz.	1	18
Mozzarella, part skim, 1-1/2 oz.	1	7
Ricotta, part skim, 1/2 cup	1	10
Cottage cheese, 4 percent fat, 1/2 cup	1/4	5
Ice cream, 1/2 cup	1/3	7
Ice milk, 1/2 cup	1/3	3
Frozen yogurt, 1/2 cup	1/2	2

**For this amount of food... count this many...**

<b>Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts Group</b>		
<i>Eat 5 to 7 oz. daily</i>	Servings	Grams of Fat
▲ Lean meat, poultry, fish, cooked	3 oz*	6
Ground beef, lean, cooked	3 oz*	16
Chicken, with skin, fried	3 oz*	13
Bologna, 2 slices	1 oz*	16
Egg, 1	1 oz*	5
▲ Dry beans and peas, cooked, 1/2 cup	1 oz*	Trace
Peanut butter, 2 tbsp.	1 oz*	16
Nuts, 1/3 cup	1 oz*	22

\* Ounces of meat these items count as  
[See page 22 for how to count servings.](#)

<b>Fats, Oils, and Sweets</b>		
<i>Use sparingly</i>	Servings	Grams of Fat
Butter, margarine, 1 tsp.	-	4
Mayonnaise, 1 tbsp.	-	11
Salad dressing, 1 tbsp.	-	7
Reduced calorie salad dressing, 1 tbsp.	-	*
Sour cream, 2 tbsp.	-	6
Cream cheese, 1 oz.	-	10
Sugar, jam, jelly, 1 tsp.	-	0
Cola, 12 fl. oz.	-	0
Fruit drink, ade, 12 fl. oz.	-	0
Chocolate bar, 1 oz.	-	9
Sherbet, 1/2 cup	-	2
Fruit sorbet, 1/2 cup	-	0
Gelatin dessert, 1/2 cup	-	0

\* Check product label

### What about alcoholic beverages?

If adults choose to drink, they should have no more than 1 to 2 drinks a day. Alcoholic beverages provide calories, but little or no nutrients. These standard-size drinks each provide about the same amount of alcohol.

<b>Alcoholic Beverages</b>	<b>Calories</b>
Beer, 12 fl. oz. (1 regular can)	150
Wine, dry, 5 fl. oz.	100
Liquor, 1-1/2 oz.*	100

\*A mixer such as a soft drink will add more calories.





# For More Information

Contact USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. The address is:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
1120 20th St., NW  
Suite 200, North Lobby  
Washington, DC 20036-3475

For additional advice on maintaining a healthy diet, you may contact your county extension home economist (Cooperative Extension System); or a nutrition professional in your local public health department, hospital, American Red Cross, dietetic association, or private practice.

**Availability of Nutrition Information –** Many USDA nutrition publications may be purchased in single copies and bulk quantities from the Consumer Information Center and the Government Printing Office. For a list of available publications and ordering instructions, contact the address above.

Some nutrition materials, including this publication, the Food Guide Pyramid graphic, and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (HG-232), may be accessed through the CNPP Home Page (World Wide Web) at: <http://www.usda.gov/fcs/cnpp.htm>

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