



# Your Personal Path to Health: Steps to a Healthier You!

A healthful lifestyle is easier than you might think.

The path to good health isn't the same for everyone and yours may change over time. To travel down your personal path, take small steps that are right for *you*, one at a time. Every step adds up, so you'll reach your health goals before you know it.

The steps, tips and information in this brochure can start you down your path to good health. Happy Trails!



MyPyramid.gov



# Finding the Right Steps for YOU

Think of MyPyramid as a roadmap that guides you down your path to a healthier you.

MyPyramid offers lots of steps, tips and advice to help you eat healthfully and be physically active. Because your path is unique, you choose the steps that are right for YOU. After all, this is your personal journey!

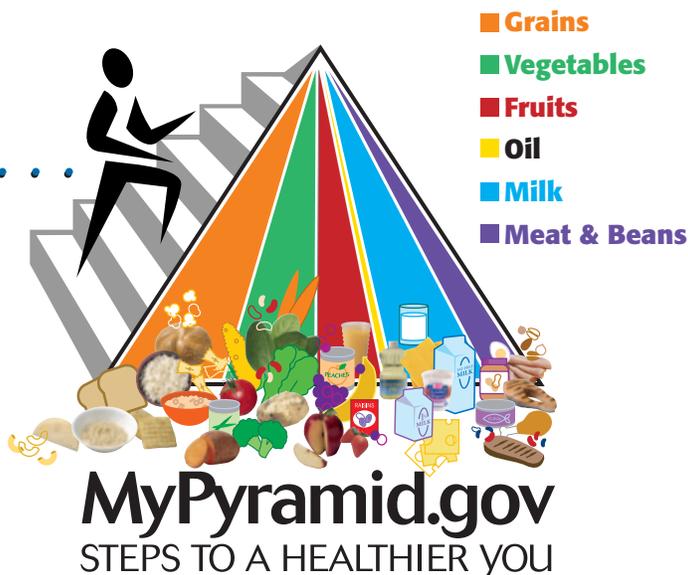
So pick your path by choosing from the steps in this brochure, creating your own or mixing and matching. For more ideas, visit [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov).

## MyPyramid Is Your Pyramid...

Looking for the Pyramid that's right for your personal path to good health?

MyPyramid is your step-by-step guide to healthful eating and physical activity. Visit <http://www.MyPyramid.gov> to calculate your daily calorie needs, learn your recommended amounts from each food group and find a sample week's worth of menus.

See the back page for information on making the most of your visit.



**MyPyramid is made up of five food groups plus oils.**

**For good health, eat a variety of foods from each food group every day. The steps on the next page will help.**

## It's All About You!

Below are some guideposts to help you along your personal path to good health.

### **BE REALISTIC**

Make small changes over time in what you eat and the level of activity you do. After all, small steps often work better than giant leaps.

### **BE ADVENTUROUS**

Expand your tastes to enjoy a variety of foods and physical activities.

### **BE FLEXIBLE**

Go ahead and find your right balance between what you eat and the physical activity you do over several days. No need to worry about just one meal or one day.

### **BE SENSIBLE**

Enjoy the foods you eat, just don't overdo it.

### **BE ACTIVE**

Walk the dog, don't just watch the dog walk.

# Making Smart Choices from My Pyramid's Food Groups

## Grains: Make Half Your Grains Whole

**What's in the Grains group:** Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain. "Whole grains" include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal and brown rice.



- Get a whole grain head start with oatmeal or whole grain cereal.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes such as barley in vegetable soup or stews, bulgur in casseroles or brown rice in stir fries.
- Change it up. Make your sandwich on 100% whole-wheat or oatmeal bread. Snack on popcorn or whole grain crackers.

## Vegetables: Vary Your Veggies

**What's in the Vegetables group:** Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned or dried/dehydrated.



- It's easy going dark green. Add frozen chopped spinach, collard greens or turnip greens into a pot of soup.
- Swap your usual sandwich side for crunchy broccoli florettes or red pepper strips.
- Microwave a sweet potato for a delicious side dish.

## Fruits: Focus on Fruits

**What's in the Fruits group:** Any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried; and may be whole, cut-up, pureed, raw or cooked.



- Bag some fruit for your morning commute. Toss in an apple to munch with lunch and some raisins to satisfy you at snacktime.
- Buy fresh fruits in season when they taste best and cost less.
- Never be fruitless! Stock up on peaches, pears and apricots canned in fruit juice or frozen so they're always on hand.

## Milk: Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods

**What's in the Milk group:** All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk. Examples include cheese and yogurt. Make your Milk group choices fat-free or low-fat.



**Special Tip:** Although cream cheese, cream and butter are made from milk, they don't count in the Milk group because they contain little or no calcium. Instead, if you eat these foods, count them as "extra" calories from solid fats.

- Use fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water when you make oatmeal, hot cereals or condensed cream soups, such as cream of tomato.
- Snack on low-fat or fat-free yogurt. Try it as a dip for fruits and veggies and a topper for baked potatoes.
- Order your latte or hot chocolate with fat-free (skim) milk.

## Meat & Beans: Go Lean with Protein

**What's in the Meat & Beans group:** All foods made from beef, pork, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts and seeds. Make your meat and poultry choices lean or low-fat.



- Trim visible fat from meat and remove skin from poultry.
- Broil, grill, roast or poach meat, poultry or fish instead of frying.
- Enjoy pinto or kidney beans on a salad or a hearty split pea or lentil soup for extra protein.

**Oils—Know Your Fats:** Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature such as canola, corn and olive oils. Mayonnaise and certain salad dressings are made with oils. Nuts, olives, avocados and some fish such as salmon are naturally rich in oils.



**Special Tip:** Solid fats are different from oils because they are higher in saturated and/or trans fats so they are considered extras. Solid fats are found in whole milk, cheese, higher-fat meats and other foods such as butter, lard, chicken skin and shortening. Some oils such as palm, palm kernel and coconut are also higher in saturated fats.

- Use some vegetable oil instead of butter for cooking and baking.
- Toss salad with salad oil and flavored vinegar.
- Try thin slices of avocado on a sandwich or sprinkle some nuts on a salad.



# Are Your Eyes Bigger Than Your Stomach?

The portion you eat or drink may be larger than you think, especially compared to the amount recommended for a whole day. Keeping tabs on how much you eat and balancing out bigger amounts over time with smaller amounts or more physical activity are just a few small steps to help you manage your portion sizes. Or, try these tips—the choice is yours!

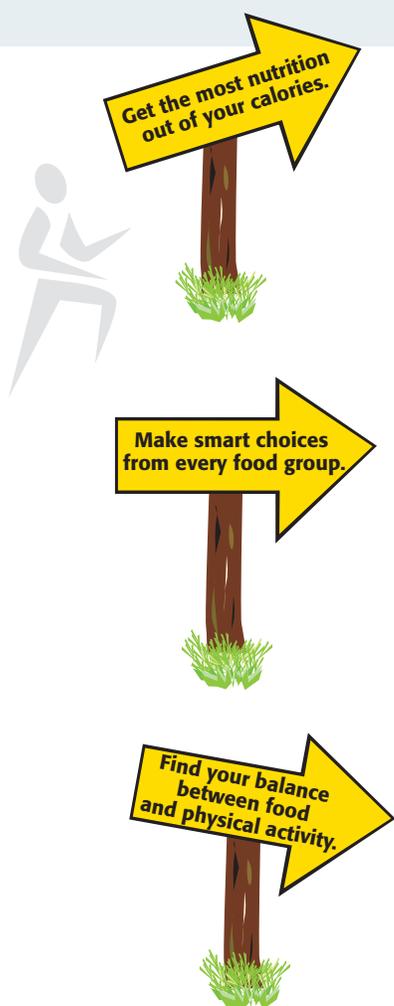
The smaller your plate, the smaller your portion. Eat your meals at home on a smaller plate. Before going back for seconds, wait 10 or 15 minutes. You might not want seconds after all.

Dish it out. When you order fast food, picture the food on a plate. Even better, take it home and put it on a plate. If you're surprised at how full the plate looks, order smaller sizes next time.

Portion out your snack on a plate, not from the bag, to stay aware of how much you're eating.

When dining out, order an appetizer instead of an entree. If you order an entree, take the leftovers home, refrigerate and enjoy another meal or a snack tomorrow.

Buy or portion out treats and snacks in small bags or packages.



## When You "Order Out"

For many of us, prepared foods such as pizza, rotisserie chicken, burgers and Chinese food are a way of life. These small steps help deliver good-for-you meals.

### Smart Requests

- At sandwich shops, ask for leaner cuts and smaller amounts of roast beef, turkey or ham; extra lettuce and tomato; and whole-wheat, oatmeal or rye bread.
- When it's Chinese night, ask for brown rice, extra vegetables in the entree or a side of steamed broccoli.
- Try fast food options such as smaller burgers, grilled chicken sandwiches or salads with low-calorie dressings, cups or bags of fresh fruit, low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice and bottled water. Look for low-sodium options.
- Make your pizza a veggie with toppings like mushrooms, peppers and onions. Ask for whole-wheat crust and half the cheese.

### Easy At-Home Add-Ons

- Serve a side of baby carrots and cherry tomatoes. Or quickly toss a salad made with pre-washed lettuce or spinach.
- Zap veggies in the microwave for a fast and colorful boost to your meal.
- Warm up your meal with ready-to-heat vegetable soup.
- Keep the fruit bowl stocked and within arm's reach. Or, keep a few cans of peaches, pears or fruit cocktail packed in juice in the refrigerator. Pop one open for a speedy side dish or dessert.
- End your meal with pudding made with fat-free milk—and boost your calcium intake, too.
- Drink low-fat or fat-free milk with your meal.

### Play it safe with your food.

Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing or storing. Wash hands and surfaces often. Cook to proper temperatures. Refrigerate promptly.



# Steps to Get Active



## Do Whatever “Moves” You Down Your Personal Path

Finding your right balance between food and physical activity is an important step toward good health. The good news is you don’t have to join a gym or be a trained athlete to benefit from physical activity. All the moves you make add up—just get moving.

To get started and stick with it, choose activities you enjoy that work for you and your lifestyle. Pick from the small steps below or make up your own moves.

- If you’ve been out of action for a while, start with a 10-minute walk and gradually add more minutes over time. You may want to check with your doctor first.
- Activity is as close as your own backyard. Cut grass, pull weeds, rake leaves or wash your car.
- Make TV time count. Stretch, lift weights or pedal a stationary bike while you watch.
- Workout at work! Replace a coffee break with a brisk 10-minute walk. Go solo for some “alone time” or recruit a co-worker for moral support.
- Mix it up. Walk one day, swim the next. On weekends, bike, dance or play basketball. You’ll get fit while you have fun.
- Park once, shop twice. When you’re at a large shopping plaza, park centrally and walk to all your destinations rather than driving to each new location.
- Play with your kids. Kick a ball, shoot some hoops, jump rope or ride bikes.

## How Much Physical Activity\* Do You Need?

- For good health, MyPyramid recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days, preferably daily.
- To prevent weight gain, many people need about 60 minutes of physical activity on most days.
- To keep off lost pounds, many people need about 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Children and adolescents need 60 minutes of physical activity daily, or most days.



\* For health benefits, physical activity should be moderate to vigorous in intensity.

# What about Treats, Sweets and Drinks?

## Budgeting Calories for Once-in-a-While Foods

Your daily “calorie budget” is based on your age, gender and physical activity level. For good health, MyPyramid recommends spending most of your calorie budget on choices from the five food groups that supply the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients and the fewest calories from solid fats and added sugars.

Depending on which foods you choose, how much you eat and how active you are, you may have some “extra” calories left over in your budget.

### Special tip: Step carefully!

- Most people have just a small amount of extra calories to spend. (Usually 100-300 calories per day. Visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov> to determine how many extra calories you have per day.)
- Portion sizes are key especially for once-in-a-while foods such as treats, sweets and drinks.

## Maximizing “Extra Calories”

### If you regularly...

- Get physical activity;
- Choose forms of foods and beverages that are lower in calories, solid fats and/or added sugars;

### ...then you occasionally can

- Eat more foods from any food group;
- Add some higher-calorie forms of foods or beverages—those that contain solid fats or added sugars;
- Add fats or sugars to foods, such as sauces, salad dressings, butter or syrup;
- Consume foods or drinks that contain mostly fats or caloric sweeteners, such as some snacks and soft drinks.



# MyPyramid.gov — Making the Most of Your Visit

## • MyPyramid Plan

- Type in your age and select your gender and activity level to get an estimate of your daily calorie needs and how much food you should eat from each MyPyramid food group.

## • MyPyramid Tracker

- Type in the foods you eat and your physical activity level to receive personal information on your diet quality and physical activity status.

## • Inside MyPyramid

- Look here for in-depth information about physical activity and the MyPyramid food groups, including what's found in each group, recommended amounts and easy tips for following MyPyramid.

## • Tips and Resources

- Check this area for tips and resources about food and physical activity and a worksheet to track what you're eating.

*This brochure provides information about healthful eating and physical activity for people 2 years and older.*

## New to the Internet?

### Start Surfing with These Tips:

Check out the public library. Most provide Internet access and will help you get started. Some libraries offer basic workshops on how to use the computer.



Ask a friend or neighbor for help. Most people enjoy being the "expert" and sharing what they know.

Turn to a Web-savvy teen for some "surfing lessons."

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## For more information

Learn more about nutrition, physical activity and health with the resources below.

For the latest on food, nutrition and food safety topics, visit:  
<http://ific.org>

For in-depth information about MyPyramid, healthful eating and physical activity, visit: <http://www.MyPyramid.gov>

For tips on fitting healthful eating and physical activity into your lifestyle, see IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU OWNER'S MANUAL FOR YOUR BODY at: <http://ific.org/publications/other>

For tips on raising a healthy family, visit: <http://kidnetic.com>

For additional food safety information, visit:  
<http://www.fightbac.org>

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