

Nutrition Basics

OUTLINE FOR A HEALTHY DIET



REALCHOICES
MODERATION | BALANCE | VARIETY

Nutrition Basics

A Formula for Eating Healthy

The USDA Food Guide Pyramid is a tool you can use to better understand what it means to eat a healthy diet. The pyramid and its recommendations take time to fully understand and apply. The information at www.mypyramid.gov can help you establish an individual dietary plan but in the mean time, consider this basic outline to a healthy diet, based on the pyramid recommendations.

Good nutrition is not about eating a perfect diet but rather the balance, variety and composition of your overall eating patterns. When considering your personal nutrition goals, measure how well you meet these goals over a period of a few days or weeks, not at each and every meal. Consider the following guidelines to get you on your way to a healthy diet.



MyPyramid.gov
Steps to a Healthier You

Get your day off to a good start by eating within two hours of waking. Make sure to include:

1. 1-3 ounces of a high-fiber, unrefined carbohydrate food(s) such as:

- 1/2 cup oatmeal
- 1 slice multigrain or whole wheat bagel, toast, English muffin, tortilla or pita
- 3/4 cup high-fiber cereal such as bran flakes, raisin bran, granola, grape nuts
- 1/2 -1 low fat bran or whole grain muffin
- 1/2 cup home style potatoes with skin

2. Add 1-2 servings of a low fat, high-protein food(s) such as:

- 1 cup 1%, skim, or soy milk
- 1 cup low fat yogurt
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese
- 1 oz. cheese
- 1 oz. vegetarian sausage
- 1-2 tablespoons peanut butter (high calorie)
- 1 egg
- 1 oz. Canadian bacon

3. Balance with 1-2 cups of fruit and/or vegetables such as:

- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- medium sized piece of fruit
- cut fruit
- vegetables in omelet
- 2 tablespoons of dried fruit

Breakfast pitfalls to avoid:

Skipping meals, high-sugar cereals, pastries and sodas, high-calorie coffee drinks, high-calorie meats (bacon, sausage)

Continue your day with two additional energizing meals that include

1. 1-3 ounces (or equivalents) of a lean, protein-rich food(s) such as:

- 1-2 oz. lean turkey, chicken, fish, shellfish or beef
- 1/2 cup beans
- 1 oz. soy or mozzarella cheese
- 1-2 tablespoons peanut butter (high calorie)
- 2-4 oz. tofu, vegetarian meat substitute, tempeh, or seitan
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese,
- 1 cup 1%, skim or soy milk
- 1 cup low fat yogurt
- 2 tablespoons nuts or seeds

2. Add 1-2 cups of fruit and/or vegetables

- salad with dark greens and variety of mixed veggies (light on dressing)
- cooked vegetables without sauce
- broth-based vegetable soup
- 1 medium-sized piece of fruit
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- cut fruit
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit

3. Balance with 2 or more ounces of grains aiming for mostly unrefined, high-fiber choices:

- 1/2 cup grains (rice, pasta, barley, couscous, polenta, quinoa)
- 1 slice multigrain or whole grain bread, tortilla, or pita
- 3 oz. sweet potato or baked potato with skin
- 1 cup broth-based soup with grains
- 1/2 cup beans
- 3/4 cup dry cereal

These “formulas” provide guidelines for healthy meals in your café. Please be aware that not all selections are available at all meal periods and you may need to visit several stations in order to select balanced meals. In addition, individual dietary needs may vary and this guide should not substitute for advice from your health care professional. For individual dietary guidelines go to www.mypyramid.gov.

4. Add condiments as needed for flavor. Each of the following contains approximately 100-150 calories:

- 1 tablespoon butter, margarine or oil
- 1-2 tablespoons regular salad dressing
- 2-4 tablespoons low fat or fat-free salad dressing
- 3 tablespoons cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons ketchup, BBQ or steak sauce (usually no fat)
- 2 tablespoons chocolate or pancake syrup (usually no fat)
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 2-4 tablespoons cream sauce

5. Allow yourself to have a high-calorie, high-fat, and/or high-sugar foods occasionally...not daily.

Examples include:

- Hamburgers, cheeseburgers, fried chicken sandwiches
- Desserts
- French fries
- Cream based soups
- Buffalo wings
- Fried vegetables

6. Be aware of calories in beverages. Regular soda contains an average of 150 calories per 12 oz. portion. Although fruit juices and milk can also contribute as many calories, they do provide other essential nutrients for a healthy body. Calorie free beverages include unsweetened tea, water, plain coffee, as well as artificially sweetened soda and lemonades.

Balance your meals with 1-3 healthy snacks each day to include

1. Choose 1 fruit or vegetable at each snack and

2. Add one of the following:

- A whole grain food
- 2 tablespoons nuts or seeds
- 1 cup low fat yogurt, milk or cottage cheese
- 1-2 oz. lean meat, cheese or vegetarian proteins