Lesson 1

Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.

Choose a variety of foods for good nutrition. Not all foods are created equal even if they are in the same food group. Broccoli and peppers are both sources of vitamin C and E. Green beans are not. Keep your meals interesting by varying what you have. If you avoid a food from a food group, be sure to get enough of the right nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups. If you avoid milk, try eating:
- low-fat
- natural cheeses like low-fat cheddar and Swiss
- low-fat yogurt
- natural cheeses like low-fat cheddar and Swiss
- low-fat yogurt

To help eat healthfully, let’s look at building a healthy base. Foods from MyPyramid can help you get started. Let a variety of foods be your healthy. No single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts you need for good health. A good diet includes the nutrients from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy foods and lean meats. Foods from MyPyramid divides the number of servings a person needs based on age, sex and activity level. If you are an older woman or a young child, there are lower numbers of servings per day to your guide. If you are a teenager boy or an active man, there are higher numbers of servings as a guide. Older children, teen girls, active women and most men, have a number somewhere in the middle. For teens, the “Foundation for a Healthier You” guide to see what counts as a serving too.

Compare the recommended number of servings in the booklet with what you usually eat. Some serving sizes may be smaller than what you eat or see on food labels. For example, many people eat 2 slices of bread in a meal, which is two servings from the grains group. Many muffins and snacks you eat contain items from several food groups. For example, a sandwich may provide bread from the grains group, turkey from the meat and beans group, cheese from the milk group and tomatoes from the vegetable group.

Let’s look at what foods are in each food group.

Make grains a staple.

Some grains like breads, cereals and pasta can be made with whole grains and are high in fiber. Whole grain breads are often enriched. This means vitamins and iron that are lost when processing the wheat are added back to the product. Whole wheat products do not need to be enriched because nutrients in general aren’t lost during processing. Some foods like breakfast cereals may have extra nutrients added during processing. These products are labeled as Fortified. These nutrients would not have normally been found in this product.

The Food Stamp Program provides nutritious assistance to people with low incomes. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1-800-852-3345 x4238.

Make at least half your grain servings whole grain. Whole wheat flour and enriched flour aren’t whole grains. Choose foods that name one of the following as the first ingredient on the label’s ingredient list. The ingredient list to increase the amount of whole grains you eat:
- brown rice
- oatmeal
- whole oats
- bulgur
- popcorn
- whole rice
- graham flour
- pear barley
- whole wheat
- whole-grain

Try some of these whole grain foods: whole wheat bread, whole grain ready to eat cereal, low-fat whole wheat crackers or cookies. Check out the Fiber Chart included with this lesson to help you eat more fiber every day.

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What is fiber anyway?

Foods from the grain group can supply fiber. Most of us can name sources of fiber like toasted oats cereals, whole grain bread, fiber supplements, or fruits and vegetables. But this still doesn’t answer the question of what is fiber? Review fiber is the part of foods that we can’t digest. Fiber is important for good health. Scientists have found eating more fiber lowers the risk of dying from a heart attack and may protect against cancer fiber also protects against hemorrhoids, gallstones, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. For all these reasons the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society both suggest that everyone eat between 25-30 grams of fiber every day. This may seem like a lot to eat each day. But if you eat according to MyPyramid this shouldn’t be too hard. Eating more whole grains, fruits, veget­ables, nuts, seeds and beans can help you get the fiber you need.

How to increase your intake of whole grains

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Let’s look at what counts as a serving.

1 cup yellow onions, cut in 8 eighths
2 cups chopped raw potatoes, or 3 medium
2 cups thinly sliced yellow and green squash (about 11/2 in.)
1 1/2 cups cut up fresh green beans (about 1/2 lb.)
2 1/4 cups water
2 Tablespoons minced fresh parsley
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon Paprika
cilantro
1 can (16 oz) tomato paste
1 1/2 uncooked spaghetti
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Grain foods are often called “staple” because they are usually the foundation of a meal. For example, some families eat rice almost every day. For others, tortillas or pastas are the staple. Because each grain is so different, it is important to eat a variety. Some members of the grain group are crackers, rice, corn, bread and pasta. Some grains like breads, cereals and pasta can be made with whole grains and are high in fiber. Others provide many B vitamins. Still others such as enriched breads and cereals are a good source of iron. To get the most nutrition, get a variety of grains every day.

Look in the “Foundation for a Healthier You” guide to see what counts as a serving.

Enriched and Fortified, what do they mean?

White flour is made from wheat. White bread and other products made with white flour are often enriched. This means vitamins and iron that are lost when processing the wheat are added back to the product. Whole wheat products do not need to be enriched because nutrients in general aren’t lost during processing. Some foods like breakfast cereals may have extra nutrients added during processing. These products are labeled as Fortified. These nutrients would not have normally been found in this product.

Apples are a natural source of sugar and fiber. They also provide vitamins and minerals. Like other fruits and vegetables, apples provide nutrients added during processing. These products are labeled as Fortified. These nutrients would not have normally been found in this product.

Check the Nutrition Facts label of a product.

◆ Try some of these whole grain foods: whole wheat
◆ bread, whole grain ready to eat cereal, low-fat whole wheat crackers or cookies. Check out the Fiber Chart included with this lesson to help you eat more fiber every day.

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Mini Goals

Pick one mini goal to work on this week:
◆ Keep track of your cups of fruits and vegetables on the “5 A Day Chart”
◆ Plan to eat three whole grain foods every day
◆ Check the Nutrition Facts label of several foods you usually buy and compare it to other brands of the same food. See which is higher in the nutrients you want to eat more of.

The Food Stamp Program provides nutritious assistance to people with low incomes. It can help you buy food for a diet that is more nutritious and fits a lower income budget. To find out more, contact 1-800-852-3345, x4238.

Eat Healthy, Stay Fit

Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.

Choose a variety of foods for good nutrition. Not all foods are created equal even if they are in the same food group. Broccoli and peppers are a great source of vitamins A and C. Green beans are not. Keep your meats interesting by varying what you have. If you avoid a food from a food group, be sure to get enough of the right nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups. If you avoid milk, try eating:
◆ low-fat yogurt
◆ natural cheeses like low-fat cheddar and Swiss
◆ macaroni and cheese with low fat cheese
◆ low-fat frozen dinners

Eat a variety of foods to be healthy. No single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts your body needs. For example, carrots and orange juice provide vitamin A and fiber but no vitamin B-12. Cheese provides calcium and vitamin B-12 but no vitamin C and fiber. The two USDA FoodPyramids show the number of servings a person needs based on age, sex and activity level. If you are an older woman or a young child, there are fewer servings per day than for a young adult or teenager. To get enough nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups, if you avoid a food, be sure:
◆ to get enough of the right nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups.
◆ to meet the age and activity level dietary guidelines.
◆ to eat a variety of foods to keep your food interesting.

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◆ to get enough of the right nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups.
◆ to meet the age and activity level dietary guidelines.
◆ to eat a variety of foods to keep your food interesting.
How many fruits and vegetables did you eat today? According to the Dietary Guidelines you should eat at least 4 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables daily. Eating 4 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables daily is important because they’re rich in vitamins, minerals and nutrients that keep you healthy. For example, the vitamin A in carrots protects your vision and the antioxidants in cabbage and broccoli protect your heart. Even better, unlike any other food group, there is no limit on the number of vegetables you can eat in one day. In fact, the more vegetables you eat, the better. Most people do not meet their goal for fruits and vegetables.

Which is better: canned, frozen or fresh?

At times, some fresh fruits and vegetables can cost more than frozen or canned. Not to worry! Food scientists have found that canned fruits and vegetables can have as many vitamins and minerals as fresh. Often they can also be quicker and easier to prepare than fresh. Look for fresh fruits and vegetables in season to save money.

Tips on getting your recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables

Drink 4 sources of 100% juice per day. It equals one serving of fruit.

Pack a sandwich or pita bread with vegetables.

Add vegetables to your favorite soup or salad.

Grab a quick snack like a piece of fruit, apple, banana or grapes.

If you are out at lunch, drink 100% juice instead of a soda.

Short on time? Buy frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. They are already cut up.

Keep fresh fruits and vegetable on the counter so you see them.

Want to save money? Watch for sales and stock up on canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Get into the habit of eating 4 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables every day.

Which fruits and vegetables provide the most nutrients?

Sources of vitamin A

- orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin
- dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, collard, and turnip greens
- orange fruits like mango, cantaloupe, apricots
- tomatoes

Sources of vitamin C

- citrus fruits and juices, kiwi, strawberries, cantaloupe, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes
- leafy greens such as romaine lettuce, spinach, and spinach

Sources of folate

- cooked dry beans and peas, peanuts
- oranges, and orange juice
- dark leafy green vegetables like spinach mustard greens, romaine lettuce

Sources of potassium

- baked white or sweet potato, cooked green beans, winter squash
- bananas, plantains, dried fruits like apricots and prunes, orange juice
- cooked dry beans such as baked beans and lentils

Read the label, set a healthy table.

Food labels have several parts including the front panel, nutrition facts and ingredients list. It is easy for you to find out what is in the foods you eat. The food label can help if you want to know:

- which food has less fat or fewer calories
- how to compare similar foods
- how to pick healthy foods or snacks
- how to buy foods for special diets

Front label facts

Look at the front of a package and you may find words like “low fat” and “light.” The word “light” on a label tells you the food has fewer calories or less fat than the regular version of the food. The front label may also tell you if nutrients have been added. “Enriched” means that vitamins have been added. Watch out though, a product may say “cholesterol free” on the front of the package but look for fresh fruits and vegetables in season to save money.

The ingredients list

Ingredients are listed in order from the largest amount to the smallest amount. They tell you what is in the food, including any fats or sugars that have been added. Canned peaches packed in water or juice have no sugar added. Peaches packed in heavy syrup have about 4 teaspoons of sugar added per serving. It pays to read the ingredients list.

How to read a nutrition facts label

Get the handout “How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label” and follow along.

Use the Nutrition Facts panel to see if a food is a good source of a nutrient or to compare similar foods. For example, you can find which brand of frozen dinner is lower in saturated fat or which brand of breakfast cereal contains more folic acid by comparing the Nutrition Facts labels.

The top of the panel tells you what the serving size is in common household measures. It will also tell you the number of servings per container Calories per serving and the number of calories from fat are also listed at the top of the panel.

Limit the nutrients you consume from total fat, saturated fat, monosaturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. There are other nutrients listed that you want to make sure you get enough of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

Looking at the % Daily Value column to see if a food is high or low in nutrients. If you want to limit certain nutrients like fat, cholesterol or sodium, try to choose foods with a lower % Daily Value. If you want to consume more of a nutrient like calcium, fiber or iron, look for foods with a higher % Daily Value. A guide:

- foods with 5% Daily Value or less, contribute a small amount of the nutrient.
- foods with 20% Daily Value or more contribute a large amount of the nutrient.
Get into the habit of eating 4-1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables each day.

How many fruits and vegetables do you eat today? According to the Dietary Guidelines, you should eat at least 4-1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables daily. Eating 4-1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables daily is important because they’re rich in vitamins, minerals and nutrients that keep you healthy. For example, the vitamin A in carrots protects your vision and the antioxidants in cabbage and broccoli protect your heart. Even better, unlike any other food group, there is no limit on the number of vegetables you can eat in one day! In fact, the more vegetables you eat, the better. Most people do not meet their goal for fruits and vegetables.

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At times, some fresh fruits and vegetables can cost more than frozen or canned. Not to worry! Food scientists have found that canned fruits and vegetables can have as many vitamins and minerals as fresh. Often they can also be quicker and easier to prepare than fresh. Look for fresh fruits and vegetables in season to save money.

Tips on getting your recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables

1. Drink 4 ounces of 100% juice per day. It equals one serving of fruit.
2. Pack a sandwich or pita bread with vegetables.
3. Add vegetables to your favorite soup or salad.
4. Grab a quick snack like a piece of fruit, apple, banana or grapes.
5. If you are out at lunch, drink 100% juice instead of a soda.
6. Short on time? Buy frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. They are already cut up.
7. Keep fresh fruits and vegetable on the counter so you see them.
8. Want to save money? Watch for sales and stock up on canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Which fruits and vegetables provide the most nutrients?

Sources of vitamin A
- orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin
- dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, collards, and turnip greens
- orange fruits like mangos, cantaloupe, apricots
- tomatoes

Sources of vitamin C
- citrus fruits and juices, kiwi, strawberries, cantaloupe
- broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes
- leafy greens such as romaine lettuce, tangelo greens, and spinach

Sources of folate
- cooked dry beans and peas, peanuts
- oranges, and orange juice
- dark leafy green vegetables like spinach mustard greens, romaine lettuce

Sources of potassium
- baked whole or sweet potato, cooked greens, winter squash
- bananas, plantains, dried fruits like apricots and prunes, orange juice
- cooked dry beans such as baked beans and lentils

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- foods with 5% Daily Value or less, contribute a small amount of the nutrient.
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Remember: Nutrition Facts serving sizes may differ from those used in MyPyramid.
From a box of macaroni, the serving size may be 2 ounces dry macaroni. When cooked, this is 1 cup uncooked macaroni or 2 MyPyramid servings (1/2 cup is a serving).

Sources of vitamin A
- orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin
- dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, collards, and turnip greens
- orange fruits like mangos, cantaloupe, apricots
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Sources of vitamin C
- citrus fruits and juices, kiwi, strawberries, cantaloupe
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Get into the habit of eating 4 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables every day.

**Which fruits and vegetables provide the most nutrients?**

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- Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, collards, and turnip greens
- Orange fruits like mango, cantaloupe, apricots
- Tomatoes

**Sources of vitamin C**
- Citrus fruits and juices, kiwi, strawberries, cantaloupe, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes
- Leafy greens such as romaine lettuce, tampa greens, and spinach

**Sources of folate**
- Cooked dry beans and peas, peanuts
- Oranges, and orange juice
- Dark leafy green vegetables like spinach mustard greens, romaine lettuce

**Sources of potassium**
- Baked whole or sweet potato, cooked greens, winter squash
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**Tips on getting your recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.**

1. Drink 4 ounces of 100% juice per day. It equals one serving of fruit.
2. Pack a sandwich or pita bread with vegetables.
3. Add vegetables to your favorite soup or salad.
4. Grab a quick snack like a piece of fruit, apple, banana or grapes.
5. If you are out at lunch, drink 100% juice instead of a soda.
6. Short on time? Buy frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. They are already cut up.
7. Keep fresh fruits and vegetable on the counter so you see them.
8. Want to save money? Watch for sales and stock up on canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

**Which is better: canned, frozen or fresh?**

At times, some fresh fruits and vegetables can cost more that frozen or canned. Not to worry! Food scientists have found that canned and frozen vegetables and fruits can have as many vitamins and minerals as fresh. Often they can also be quicker and easier to prepare than fresh. Look for fresh fruits and vegetables in season to save money.

**Read the label, set a healthy table.**

Food labels have several parts including the front panel, nutrition facts and ingredients list. It is easy for you to find out what is in the foods you eat. The food label can help if you want to know:

- Which food has less fat or fewer calories
- How to compare similar foods
- How to pick healthy foods or snacks
- How to buy foods for special diets
- How to compare similar foods
- Which food has less fat or fewer calories

**Front label facts**

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Use the Nutrition Facts panel to see if a food is a good source of a nutrient or to compare similar foods. For example, you can find which brand of frozen dinner is lower in saturated fat or which kind of breakfast cereal contains more folic acid by comparing the Nutrition Facts labels.

**The top of the panel tells you what the serving size in is common household measures.** It will also tell you the number of servings per container. Calories per serving and the number of calories from fat are also listed at the top of the panel.

Limit the nutrients you consume from total fat, saturated fat, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium. There are other nutrients listed that you want to make sure you get enough of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron and more:

**Foods with 100% Daily Value or less, contribute a small amount of the nutrient.**

**Foods with 20% Daily Value or more contribute a large amount of the nutrient.**

Eat Healthy, Stay Fit
### Lesson 1

#### Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.

Choose a variety of foods for good nutrition. Not all foods are created equal even if they are in the same food group. Broccoli and peppers are both sources of vitamins A and C. Green beans are not. Keep your meals interesting by varying what you have.

If you avoid a food from a food group, be sure to get enough of the right nutrients from foods in that food group or from other food groups. If you avoid milk, try eating:
- low-fat yogurt
- natural cheeses like low-fat cheddar and low-fat mozzarella
- soy based beverage with added calcium
- breakfast cereal or juice with added calcium
- dark green leafy vegetables like collard or turnip greens
- tofu
- enriched and fortified whole grain products do not need to be fortified because vitamins in general aren't lost during processing. Some foods like breakfast cereals may have extra nutrients added during processing. These products are labeled as fortified. These nutrients would not have normally been found in this product.

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