

also includes recommendations for choosing healthy oils, discretionary calories, and physical activity. (The following section on the Dietary Guidelines explains that discretionary calories refers to calories in food choices rich in added sugars or solid fat.) For most of us very few discretionary calories are available in daily diet planning.

Start Today - provides tips and resources that include downloadable suggestions on all the food groups and physical activity, and a worksheet to track one's diet.

PUTTING MyPyramid INTO ACTION

To put MyPyramid into action, first you need to estimate your calorie needs (note: the website helps you calculate this). The following table provides a rough guide.

	Calorie Range	
	Sedentary →	Active
Children		
2-3 years	1,000 →	1,400
Females		
4-8 years	1,200 →	1,800
9-13	1,600 →	2,200
14-18	1,800 →	2,400
19-30	2,000 →	2,400
31-50	1,800 →	2,200
51+	1,600 →	2,200
Males		
4-8 years	1,400 →	2,000
9-13	1,800 →	2,600
14-18	2,200 →	3,200
19-30	2,400 →	3,000
31-50	2,200 →	3,000
51+	2,000 →	2,800

Sedentary means a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

Once you have determined the calorie allowance that is appropriate for you, you can use the following table to discover how that calorie allowance corresponds to the recommended number of servings from each food group:

Daily Amount of Food From Each Group												
Calorie Level	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,600	2,800	3,000	3,200
Fruits	1 cup	1 cup	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups
Vegetables ^{1,2}	1 cup	1.5 cups	1.5 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3.5 cups	3.5 cups	4 cups	4 cups
Grains ³	3 oz-eq	4 oz-eq	5 oz-eq	5 oz-eq	6 oz-eq	6 oz-eq	7 oz-eq	8 oz-eq	9 oz-eq	10 oz-eq	10 oz-eq	10 oz-eq
Meat and Beans ²	2 oz-eq	3 oz-eq	4 oz-eq	5 oz-eq	5 oz-eq	5.5 oz-eq	6 oz-eq	6.5 oz-eq	6.5 oz-eq	7 oz-eq	7 oz-eq	7 oz-eq
Milk ⁴	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups
Oils ⁵	3 tsp	4 tsp	4 tsp	5 tsp	5 tsp	6 tsp	6 tsp	7 tsp	8 tsp	8 tsp	10 tsp	11 tsp
Discretionary calorie allowance ⁶	165	171	171	132	195	267	290	362	410	426	512	648

1. Over a week's time a variety of vegetables should be eaten, especially green and orange vegetables.
2. Dry beans and peas can be counted either as vegetables (dry beans and peas subgroup), or in the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts (meat & beans) group. Generally, individuals who regularly eat meat, poultry, and fish would count dry beans and peas in the vegetable group. Individuals who seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish (vegetarians) would count some of the dry beans and peas they eat in the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts group until enough servings from that group are chosen for the day.
3. At least half of these servings should be whole grain varieties.
4. Most of these servings should be fat-free or low fat.
5. Limit solid fats such as butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.
6. Discretionary calories refer to food choices rich in added sugars or solid fat.

What Counts as One Serving?

Grains: 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, or 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or cooked cereal counts as a one ounce equivalent.

Vegetables: 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens counts as 1 cup.

Fruits: 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or 1/2 cup of dried fruit counts as 1 cup.

Milk: 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1.5 ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese counts as one cup.

Meat and Beans: 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, one 1/4 cup cooked dry beans, or 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds counts as a 1 ounce equivalent.

Oils: A teaspoon of any oil from plants or fish that is liquid at room temp counts as a serving, as do such servings of foods rich in oils (e.g. mayonnaise and soft margarine).

What about Physical Activity?

Physical activity simply means movement of the body that uses energy. Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer, or dancing the night away are all good examples of being active. For health benefits, physical activity should be moderate or vigorous and add up to at least 30 minutes on most or all days of the week. For weight loss or preventing weight gain about 60 minutes a day may be needed. (The same goal applies to children and teenagers in general.) For maintaining prior weight loss, at least 60 to 90 minutes of moderate activity may be required.

Moderate physical activities include:

- Walking briskly (about 3-1/2 miles per hour)
- Hiking
- Gardening/yard work
- Dancing
- Golfing (walking and carrying clubs)
- Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour)
- Weight training (general light workout)

Vigorous physical activities include:

- Running/jogging (5 miles per hour)
- Bicycling (more than 10 miles per hour)
- Swimming (freestyle laps)
- Aerobics
- Walking very fast (4-1/2 miles per hour)
- Heavy yard work, such as chopping wood
- Weight lifting (vigorous effort)
- Basketball (competitive)

Note that some physical activities are not intense enough to help meet the recommendations. These include walking at a casual pace, such as while grocery shopping.

Get Going

Start putting MyPyramid into practice and use the MyTracker feature to follow your progress. Implementing even small diet and exercise changes can have positive results. Better health will likely follow as you strive to meet your nutrient needs and balance your physical activity and calorie allowance. In addition, follow the guidance from the Dietary Guidelines regarding alcohol intake and safe food preparation. Take advantage of these helpful tools in your quest for a healthier you.