

# Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

## EATING HEALTHY IS GOOD FOR YOU

### MAKE THE FOOD GUIDE YOUR GUIDE

The Food Guide Pyramid is something you've probably seen hundreds of times and never thought much about. It appears on cereal boxes and on many other food labels as well. From now on, pay close attention to it because it was created to help you translate nutrition facts into practice. By following it, you'll be able to plan nutritious meals. You'll also find it easy to select healthful foods.

### THE GUIDE FOLLOWS FOUR HEALTHY RULES

Four of the seven dietary guidelines for Americans are at the heart of the Food Guide: Eat a variety of foods. Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits and grains. Keep your diet low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. And use sugars in moderation.

(The other three guidelines include maintaining a healthy weight, using salt in moderation and drinking alcohol in moderation, if you drink at all.)

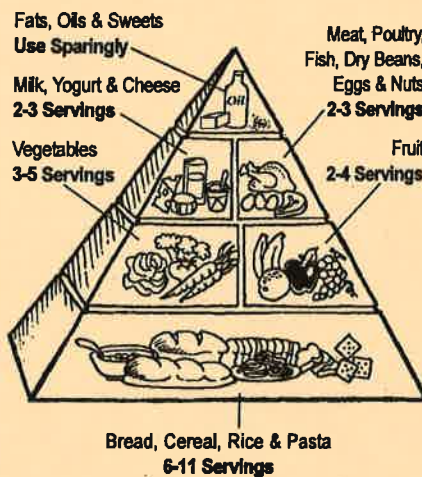
### SOME OF THE GUIDE'S INFORMATION MAY SURPRISE YOU

The healthiest diets focus on whole grains, bread, rice, cereals and pasta — the very foods you may be avoiding because you think starches are fattening. Wrong. These starches, which form the foundation of the Food Guide Pyramid, along with the next pyramid level of fruits and vegetables, are actually a great source of energy-rich carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins and minerals. They're also naturally low in fat.

Fat is the real culprit, not starch or carbohydrates. You should eat only a little of foods high in fat and high in sugar. The Food Guide Pyramid unfortunately lumps high-fat foods with healthier choices, so it's really up to you to read labels.

Develop your own system for counting fat grams until you're savvy about the fat content of various foods.

### FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID Guide to Daily Food Choices



Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A "SERVING"

The Food Guide Pyramid refers to servings, recommending a certain number of daily servings for each food group. You may see the Guide's recommendation for six to 11 servings of bread as a lot of bread, however, one serving of bread can actually be one slice of bread or a small roll, or half a bun, bagel or English muffin. It can also be one ounce of ready-to-eat cereal or one-half cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta. When you look at it that way, six to 11 daily servings is easy.

Likewise a single serving of fruit can be many things, such as a medium apple, banana or orange, one-half cup of chopped, cooked or canned fruit, or even three-quarters of a cup of fruit juice. A serving of vegetables can be a cup of raw leafy vegetables, or one-half cup of

cooked or chopped raw vegetables of any kind, or three-quarters of a cup of vegetable juice.

When the Food Guide Pyramid says to eat one serving of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts, what it really means is you can have two to three ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish. Or you can substitute one-half cup of cooked dry beans, an egg or two tablespoons of peanut butter for one ounce of meat.

A serving of milk, yogurt and cheese can be anything from one cup of milk or yogurt to one and one-half ounces of natural cheese to two ounces of processed cheese.

### YOUR ACTIVITY LEVEL DICTATES YOUR NUMBER OF SERVINGS

Everyone should have at least the minimum servings. Logically enough, active people should have more than non-active folks.

For example, if you exercise fewer than three times a week, follow the lowest range of servings on the Food Guide Pyramid. If you exercise three times a week for 30 minutes at a stretch, use the moderate range. And if you exercise vigorously on a regular basis, go for the higher range. Use your activity level to pick the range that works best for you.

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