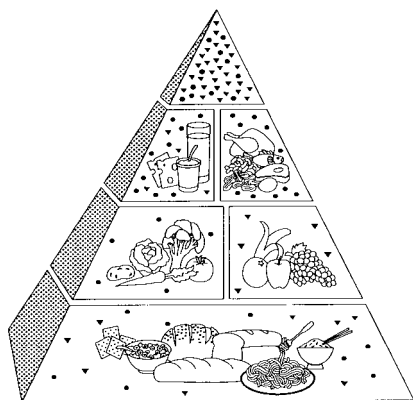


What Should You Eat To Stay Healthy?

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Community Nutrition Clinic
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As the saying goes—“You are what you eat!” You do need a healthy diet to have a healthy body. The guidelines below describe a diet that promotes health and prevents disease.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Keep your diet moderate in total fat.
- Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Use sugar and salt/sodium only in moderation.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation. For women and older people, that is no more than one drink per day. For men, that is no more than two drinks per day.

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MAKE MEALS INTERESTING

The Food Guide Pyramid can help you look at your diet and see how to improve it. Let a variety of foods supply the many nutrients you need. That makes meals more interesting anyway! A good way to have variety is to choose foods each day from the five major food groups. Put lots of colors on your plate! The Food Guide Pyramid suggests this:

Put These In Your Diet Every Day

Vegetables: 3 to 5 servings

Fruits: 2 to 4 servings

Whole grains, breads, cereals, rices, pastas: 6 to 11 servings

Milk, yogurt, cheese: 2 to 3 servings

Meat, poultry, fish, dried beans and peas, eggs, nuts: 2 to 3 servings

FILL UP ON GRAINS AND VEGGIES

Eat plenty of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. These are part of a healthy diet for several reasons. Most fruits and vegetables are great low-fat, low-calorie sources of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. They help prevent constipation. But there is even more to love about them! Research shows that plant foods also may reduce our risk of cancer.

When adding more fiber to your diet, do it a little at a time. This helps your body become used to it. Adding too much fiber too quickly may lead to side effects like diarrhea or gas. Drink plenty of water when you increase the fiber in your diet.

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Make your healthy diet part of a lifestyle that includes some physical activity on most days.

ABOUT FAT

In terms of heart disease, the kinds of fat you eat are as important as how much. Saturated fat can raise your blood cholesterol level more than anything else in your diet. Because of this risk, keep your diet low in saturated fats.

Some of the foods with the most saturated fat are meat, butter, cream, ice cream, and cheese. Coconut and palm kernel oils are two vegetable oils very high in saturated fat. Read labels and limit these.

Trans fat also may raise your cholesterol. Oils that are “hydrogenated,” or hardened, contain trans fat. Use tub or liquid margarine instead of the stick form more often. Use oil instead of hard white shortening (like Crisco) when you can. Trans fat is often found in store-bought cookies and fried snacks. Eat less of those.

Moderate use of oils from some plants may help lower blood cholesterol levels. Use olive, canola, corn, soybean, peanut, safflower, and sunflower in place of other fats and oils.

If you have a special condition, such as pregnancy or disease, it can change your nutritional needs. Talk with your health care provider about your diet.

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