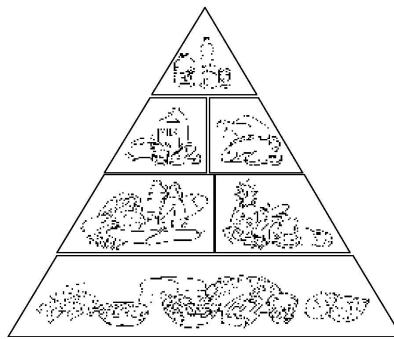




Putting the Guidelines Into Practice: Build a Healthy Base

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures. There are many foods and many ways to build a healthy diet and lifestyle...so there is a lot of room for choice. Enjoy the food you and your family eat and take action for good health. This is the second of a series of articles on the ABC's of nutrition for your health and that of your family...Build a healthy base.

Let the Pyramid guide your food choices. Different foods contain different nutrients and other healthful substances. No single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts you need. To make sure you get all the nutrients you need for health, build a healthy base by using the Food Guide Pyramid as a starting point. Last month's article featured the recommended number of daily servings from each of the food groups.



To create a healthy eating pattern, start with the three food groups at the base. Use plant foods as the foundation and enjoy meals that have whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, and rice, accompanied by plenty of fruits and vegetables and a moderate amount of low-fat foods from the milk group and the meat and beans group.

Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains. These provide vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates (starch and dietary fiber), and other substances that are important for good health and may protect you against many chronic diseases. Eat 6 or more servings of grain products daily—to increase your intake of whole grain foods, choose brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal, low-fat whole wheat crackers, oatmeal, whole wheat pasta or whole barley in soup.

Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily. To promote your health, eat a variety of fruits and vegetables—at least 2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables—each day. Dark-green, leafy vegetables, deeply colored fruits, and dry beans and peas are especially rich in many nutrients. Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, some are high in fiber, and many are quick to prepare and easy to eat.

Keep food safe to eat. Wash hands and kitchen surfaces often. Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, or storing. Cook foods to a safe temperature. Refrigerate perishable foods promptly. Check and follow the label. When in doubt, throw it out.

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