U.S. Dietary Guidelines

"Diet" Means Eating Right, Not Eating Less

Since 1980, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture have jointly published the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans." These guidelines are reviewed and updated every five years. They serve as the basis for federal food and nutrition programs. For the individual, the Dietary Guidelines provide researched advice on good dietary habits that promote health and reduce risk of major disease. The information is applicable for ages two years and older. The entire publication is available online (see web addresses below).

The Dietary Guidelines describes a **healthy diet** as one that:

1. Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
2. Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and
3. Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

My Pyramid

If you have an older copy of the Food Pyramid, throw it out. The new My Pyramid symbol looks nothing like its predecessors and is designed to deliver nutrition information quickly and easily.

The My Pyramid information can be found online at www.mypyramid.gov. The website is interactive. Click on "Inside the Pyramid," then click on any part of the symbol, and you will get to see information explaining that particular section. Each color is in proportion to the amount that food group should figure in your daily diet.

- The person climbing the stairs: physical activity tips for adults and teenagers
- Orange bar: Grains—Make half your grains whole, and other tips
- Green: Vegetables—Vary your vegetables, and more
- Red: Fruits—Focus on fruits, including suggestions
- Yellow: Oils—Know your fats and limit them
- Blue: Milk—Get your calcium rich foods
- Purple: Meats and Beans—Go Lean on protein, with examples

U.S. Dietary Guidelines, cont.

A Personal Dietary Plan

If you are interested in finding information customized to you as an individual, the MyPyramid website allows for tracking your own pyramid based on your age, gender, weight, height, and level of activity. Plans are also available for pregnant women and those who are breast-feeding. After submitting your personal information, you will receive a quick assessment of your diet and exercise needs. Another click will reveal a personal eating plan with the foods and amounts that are best for you.

Posters for children and adults, a personal planner, and other tips are available at this site. For those who wish their information as simple as possible, the following covers the all the basics of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines:

- Eat a variety of foods.
- Balance the food you eat with physical activity (calories in vs. calories out) to maintain or improve your weight.
- Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits.
- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Choose a diet moderate in sugars.
- Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

For more information on the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, please visit:
http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/
http://www.mypyramid.gov/
http://www.healthierus.gov/nutrition.html