

# Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

## Portion Wise

ARE YOU EATING ENOUGH OF THE right foods to get the vital nutrients you need for good health? Do you know how many servings of each food you should be eating per day? What constitutes a serving size of each food type?

The Food Guide Pyramid, produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, answers these questions and more. In a world where super-sizing has become the norm, a single serving may be much smaller than you what you're accustomed to. The following recommendations should be used as a general guideline, as individual nutrition needs vary widely according to factors such as age and activity level.

### *Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta*

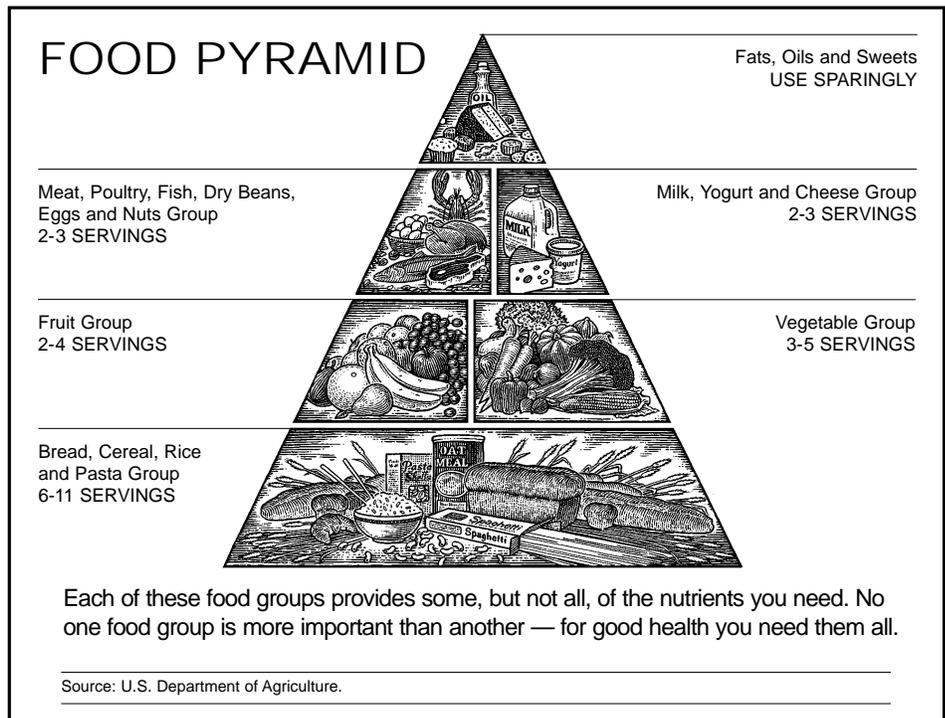
Beginning with the bread, cereal, rice and pasta portion of the pyramid, most of us should strive to consume six to 11 servings. A serving consists of one slice of regular-sized bread. A jumbo bagel served at most coffee shops, however, may contain as many as five servings. A serving of pasta is about one-half cup, which is about the size of half a baseball. Many restaurants serve up to four times that amount.

### *Vegetables and Fruit*

Vegetables should make up a substantial portion—three to five—of your daily servings. A portion of leafy green vegetables fills about one cup, the size of a small fist. Other veggies, such as broccoli or squash, fill about one-half cup per serving. The Food Guide Pyramid also suggests eating two to four servings of fruit per day. A medium banana, apple or orange each make an easy and convenient serving. Or, if you prefer, three-quarters of a cup of fruit juice or one-half cup of canned fruit is also equivalent to one serving.

### *Dairy and Protein Sources*

It is important to watch the fat content of the next three groups because foods that come



from animals are generally higher in fat than most plant-based foods. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests that an adult should consume two or three servings from the milk, yogurt and cheese group. One cup of milk, one and a half ounces of natural cheese or two ounces of processed cheese all equal one serving. A serving of cheese is roughly the size of your pinky or a one-inch cube.

An equal number of servings, two or three, should come from the meat, fish, poultry, beans, eggs and nuts group, or the main protein group. A serving of cooked lean meat is equivalent to two or three ounces, which is roughly the size of a deck of cards. Beans or legumes may also be consumed as a plant-based protein source. One serving of beans is about one-half cup of cooked dry beans. Eggs are also a high-quality protein source. One egg is equivalent to one ounce of lean meat; therefore, a serving of eggs would be about two or three eggs. Two tablespoons of peanut butter or one-third cup of nuts are also equivalent to one ounce of meat.

### *Extras*

The top portion of the pyramid includes fats, oils and sweets, which should all be used sparingly. These foods provide calories, but few nutritional benefits. Most Americans eat diets that are too high in fat, so experts recommend limiting foods that may contain hidden fats, such as many baked goods, salad dressings and sweets.

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