

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County

The New Food Guide Pyramid

When it comes to feeding our children, it may sometimes seem that there are just too many confusing rules to follow. Now there is help from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) in the form of a simplified Food Pyramid for Kids. It is called "**My Pyramid.**" This food guide pyramid for children was created from the original food pyramid. The guide is simplified, focusing on making healthy food choices & increasing physical activity.

The Food Guide Pyramid is an easy and visual way for people to understand how to eat healthy. A rainbow of colored bands represents the five food groups, plus fats and oils. Here's what the colors stand for: **orange-grains**; **green-vegetables**; **red-fruits**; **yellow-fats and oils**; **blue-milk and dairy products**; **purple-meats, beans, fish and nuts**. It is important to eat a variety of foods. A balanced diet is one that includes all the food groups. In other words, have foods from every color, every day.



Tips to help you:

- Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains
- Vary Your Veggies
- Focus on Fruit
- Consume Calcium Rich Foods
- Go Lean with Protein
- Find Your Balance Between Food & Physical Activity

The pyramid guides you to eat less of some food groups and more of others. The bands for meat and protein (purple) and oils (yellow) are not as wide as the others. That's because we need less of these types of foods than we do of fruits, vegetables, grains & dairy foods that the wider bands represent.

It is very important for parents to understand how much their children need to eat to stay healthy. Large portion sizes are a contributing factor to obesity in this country. Through the USDA's *My Pyramid* website: www.mypyramid.gov you can get a copy of recommendations about the correct mix of foods children need to eat as well as how much they should eat. It can be a little tricky though. Depending on the age of the child, whether it is a girl or boy, and the level of daily physical activity, the recommendations can change. Kids who are more active use up more calories, so they need more calories. In order to help you, on the back of this bulletin we've listed some estimates for how much your children need of each food group. If parents are also interested in finding out how much they need to eat to stay healthy, the *My Pyramid* website shown above also lists recommendations for adults.

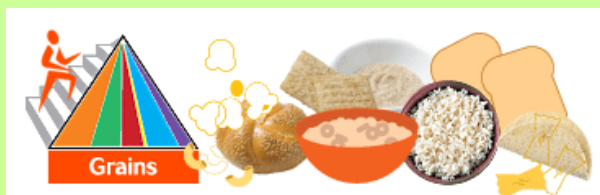


What is a "Healthy Diet"?:

The Dietary Guidelines describe a healthy diet as one that:

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

Estimate for how much your child needs of each food group:



Grains are measured in ounces or equal servings. Eat whole grains, such as 100% wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal.

- ▶ 2 to 3-year-olds: 3 ounces
- ▶ 4- to 8-year-olds: 4 to 5 ounces
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old girls: 5 ounces
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old boys: 6 ounces



Calcium builds strong bones to last a lifetime. If you want something other than milk, you can substitute yogurt, cheese, calcium-fortified orange juice, etc...

- ▶ 2- to 3-year-olds: 2 cups
- ▶ 4- to 8-year-olds: 2 cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old girl: 3 cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old boys: 3 cups



Fruit is definitely part of a healthy diet. Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.

- ▶ 2- to 3-year-olds: 1 cup
- ▶ 4- to 8-year-olds: 1-1½ cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old girls: 1½ cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old boys: 1½ cups



Meats, beans, fish, and nuts contain iron and other nutrients. These foods are measured in ounces or equal servings like: 1 ounce of meat; 1/4 cup cooked dry beans; 1 egg; 1 Tbs. of peanut butter; a small handful of nuts or seeds.

- ▶ 2- to 3-year-olds: 2 ounces
- ▶ 4- to 8-year-olds: 3-4 ounces
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old girls: 5 ounces
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old boys: 5 ounces



You need your vegetables, especially those dark green and orange ones. Vegetable servings are measured in cups.

- ▶ 2- to 3-year olds: 1 cup
- ▶ 4- to 8-year-olds: 1½ cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old girls: 2 cups
- ▶ 9- to 13-year-old boys: 2½ cups



Fats and oils are necessary to maintain body function. They help the body absorb vitamins A, D, E, K, and beta-carotene. Even though fats may be needed to maintain good health, it may be a good idea to limit them, since they still contain calories. Fats shouldn't be restricted in children under age 2.



For information about Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County visit our website: www.StepsFL.com or dial 2-1-1 (Pinellas County cell phone users must call 727-210-4211).

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