



## SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with  
National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World  
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

### LEADER TRAINING GUIDE

## *MyPyramid Food Choices*

Compiled by Sue Hovey, Clemson Extension Agent, from the USDA Web Site  
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### Objectives:

1. Participants will become acquainted with the new food pyramid from USDA.
2. Participants will learn about the website and a personalized approach to nutrition.
3. Participants will learn about essential calories and discretionary calories, and they'll learn how to guide themselves to healthy food choices most of the time and know when it is ok to "splurge."
4. Participants will learn that MyPyramid is the first food guide from USDA to include physical activity for adults.

### Suggested Program Ideas:

1. Give copies of lesson to five members several days before the lesson. Assign one food group to each person. Each person should bring a sample of a food from that food group. It can be something as simple as an apple for the Fruit Group, a carrot for the Vegetable Group, an empty yogurt carton for the Milk Group, a loaf of 100% whole wheat bread for the Grains Group, and a bag of dry beans for the Meat & Beans Group. Each person is responsible for presenting the information about that food group. As the lesson leader, you are responsible for explaining the 3 points under "Give out Handout 1" and points 6, 7, 8 under "Handout 2."
2. If dessert is served at your meeting, use it to explain "discretionary calories."
3. If possible, use a color computer printer and go to the website:  
[www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MiniPoster.pdf](http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MiniPoster.pdf)  
to print color copies of MyPyramid (and the second page with details) for each club member. Color copies will be much more effective than using the black and white copies included with this lesson.

### Give out Handout 1: Color copy of MyPyramid.

1. Point out the five food groups: Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, Milk, and Meat & Beans. Point out that each food group has a corresponding color with several examples of foods at the bottom of each color. Point out that even though the "Oils" yellow stripe is not a food group, it's there to remind us that we need some oil/fat in our diet. We should choose oil more often than solid fat because it's a healthier form of fat.
2. Explain the term "Essential Calories." We need a certain number of calories each day, depending on our age, gender, and amount of activity. The average female age 60 and above who gets less than 30 minutes of physical activity each day needs 1600 calories per day.
3. Explain the term "Discretionary Calories." This is a new term used in MyPyramid that means we can have goodies like cake and cookies when we know we have eaten the right amounts of food from the five food groups and we still have a few calories extra for the day that we can consume.

**Give out Handout 2 (Color copy of MyPyramid details), and have each leader go through the facts for each food group.**

- 1. The Grain Group is represented by the orange stripe. The slogan for the Grain Group is “Make half your grains whole.” All people age 50 and over need 5 - 6 ounces of grain products each day, and at least 3 ounces (half of them) should be whole grain products. A slice of bread is 1 ounce; so is 1/2 cup of cooked rice or pasta.**

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products.

Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel -- the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples include:

- whole-wheat flour
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- oatmeal
- whole cornmeal
- brown rice

Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins.

Some examples of refined grain products are:

- white flour
- degermed cornmeal
- white bread
- white rice

Most refined grains are *enriched*. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word “enriched” is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains.

- 2. The Vegetable Group is represented by the green stripe. The slogan for this group is “Vary your veggies” which means we need to eat a variety of vegetables. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating 2 cups of vegetables every day, based on a 1600 calorie diet for the average senior woman. This amount may seem like a lot, but remember that vegetables are very nutritious. They’re rich in fiber and nutrients while being low in fats, sugars, and total calories. In addition, vegetables are cholesterol-free.**

What counts as a cup? 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables, 1 cup of vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens are considered a one-cup equivalent. For example, 1 cup of cooked spinach counts as 1 cup of vegetables, while 2 cups of raw spinach are equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables. Other one-cup equivalents are: 3 spears of broccoli (raw or cooked) about 5 inches long, 2 medium carrots or about 12 baby carrots (raw or cooked), 1 large ear of cooked corn (8 – 9 inches long), 1 large bell pepper raw or cooked (3 inches), 1 large raw tomato (3 inches).

Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce your risk for stroke, coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, kidney stones and bone loss. Deeply colored vegetables and fruits contain the most vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This includes all dark green, deep red, purple, and bright orange or yellow plant foods. Eat more dark-green veggies like broccoli, spinach and greens. Include more orange vegetables, like carrots and sweet potatoes in your diet, as well as legumes (dry beans and peas).

To keep meals and snacks interesting, vary your veggie choices. Favor the dark or vividly colored vegetables, but continue to eat and enjoy the lighter colored vegetables to add variety to your diet.

**3. The red stripe represents the Fruit Group. The slogan for this group is “Focus on Fruits.” The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating 1 1/2 cups of fruits every day, based on a 1600 calorie diet. This is the average number of calories for a senior woman. You may need to eat more or less, depending on your activity level.**

What counts as a cup of fruit? One medium-sized piece of fruit, 1 cup of cut-up fruit, 1 cup of 100% fruit juice, 1/2 cup dried fruit, 1 large banana (8 – 9 inches long), 2 peach halves, 32 seedless grapes, 1/4 of a medium cantaloupe, 8 large strawberries or 2 large plums.

Here are some easy ways to add more fruit to your diet. Keep a bowl of fresh whole fruit on the counter, the table, or in the refrigerator for an easy snack. Mix fresh fruit with plain or vanilla low-fat yogurt. Serve fresh fruits salads often; to keep the apples, bananas and pears from turning brown, add acidic fruits like pineapple, oranges or lemon juice.

Fruits contain several nutrients. Some of the main nutrients are potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, folate and many types of phytochemicals.

**Potassium** may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Fruits that are good sources of potassium are bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, pomegranates, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, grapefruit, oranges and orange juice.

**Dietary fiber** helps reduce blood cholesterol levels, may lower risk of heart disease, helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis, and helps provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Most whole or cut-up fruits contain fiber. Fruit juices contain little or no fiber.

**Vitamin C** helps heal cuts and wounds, keeps teeth and gums healthy, and aids in iron absorption. Fruits which are good sources of vitamin C are pomegranates, guava, kiwi, oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, raspberries, cantaloupe, papaya, pineapple and mangoes.

**Folic acid** (sometimes called folate) helps to form red blood cells, and is important during pregnancy to reduce a woman’s risk of having a baby with a spinal cord defect or brain defect. Fruits containing folic acid are oranges and avocados.

**Phytochemicals** help protect against diseases, serve as antioxidants, detoxifiers, immune boosters and anti-inflammatories. Inflammation plays a major role in heart attacks, some cancers, allergies, Alzheimer’s and autoimmune diseases. Two common phytochemicals found in fruits are anthocyanins (in blueberries, cherries, blackberries, and raspberries) and quercetin (in apples). Deeply colored fruits and vegetables contain the most vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This includes all purple, deep red, bright orange, bright yellow, and dark green plant foods. Enjoy some of every color daily.

- 4. The Milk Group is represented by the blue stripe. All adults need 3 cups of milk or the equivalent each day. The equivalent amount of 1 cup of milk would be 1 cup of yogurt; the equivalent amount of cheese would be 2 ounces of processed cheese (like American Cheese) or 1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese (like Cheddar or Swiss Cheese).**

All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Most milk group choices should be fat-free or low-fat.

For those who are lactose intolerant, lactose-free and lower-lactose products are available. These include hard cheeses, yogurt and lactose-reduced milk. Also, enzyme preparations can be added to milk to lower the lactose content. Calcium-fortified foods and beverages such as soy beverages or orange juice may provide calcium, but may not provide the other nutrients found in milk and milk products.

Consuming milk and milk products provides health benefits—people who have a diet rich in milk and milk products can reduce the risk of low bone mass throughout the life cycle. Foods in the milk group provide nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your body. These nutrients include calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein.

#### **Health benefits of dairy products**

- Diets rich in milk and milk products help build and maintain bone mass throughout the lifecycle. This may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- The intake of milk products is especially important to bone health during childhood and adolescence, when bone mass is being built.
- Diets that include milk products tend to have a higher overall nutritional quality.

- 5. The Meat and Beans Group is represented by the purple stripe. The slogan for this group is “Go Lean with Protein.” MyPyramid recommends eating 5 ounces of protein each day, based on a 1600 calorie diet for the average senior woman. It’s important to “go lean with protein” or to make lean choices within the Meat and Beans Group.**

Choose lean or low-fat meat and poultry. If higher fat choices are made, such as regular ground beef (75 to 80% lean) or chicken with skin, the fat in the product counts as part of the discretionary calorie allowance.

If solid fat is added in cooking, such as frying chicken in shortening or frying eggs in butter or stick margarine, this also counts as part of the discretionary calorie allowance.

Select fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring, more often.

Liver and other organ meats are high in cholesterol. Egg yolks are also high in cholesterol, but egg whites are cholesterol-free.

Processed meats such as ham, sausage, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the ingredient list and nutrition panel to help limit sodium intake. Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as “self-basting” or “contains up to \_\_\_% of a flavor solution”.

Sunflower seeds, almonds, and hazelnuts (filberts) are the richest sources of vitamin E in this food group. To help meet vitamin E recommendations, make these your nut and seed choices more often.

**6. Notice the stick figure walking up the steps. It represents physical activity. MyPyramid is the first food guide from USDA that includes physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle, in addition to eating healthy foods.**

Physical activity simply means movement of the body that uses energy. Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer, or dancing the night away are all good examples of being active. For health benefits, physical activity should be **moderate** or **vigorous** and add up to at least 30 minutes a day.

Moderate physical activities include:

- Walking briskly (about 3 ½ miles per hour)
- Hiking
- Gardening/yard work
- Dancing
- Golf (walking and carrying clubs)
- Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour)
- Weight training (general light workout)

Vigorous physical activities include:

- Running/jogging (5 miles per hour)
- Bicycling (more than 10 miles per hour)
- Swimming (freestyle laps)
- Aerobics
- Walking very fast (4 ½ miles per hour)
- Heavy yard work, such as chopping wood
- Weight lifting (vigorous effort)
- Basketball (competitive)

Some physical activities are not intense enough to help you meet the recommendations. Although you are moving, these activities do not increase your heart rate, so you should not count these towards the 30 or more minutes a day that you should strive for. These include walking at a casual pace, such as while grocery shopping, and doing light household chores.

**7. Although the small yellow stripe representing oils is not a food group, it's important to know about oils and fats.**

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the vegetable oils used in cooking. Oils come from many different plants and from fish. Some common oils are:

- canola oil
- corn oil
- cottonseed oil
- olive oil
- safflower oil
- soybean oil
- sunflower oil

Some oils are used mainly as flavorings, such as walnut oil and sesame oil. A number of foods are naturally high in oils, like:

- nuts
- olives
- some fish
- avocados

Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no *trans* fats. Check the Nutrition Facts label to find margarines with 0 grams of *trans* fat. Amounts of *trans* fat has been required on labels since January 1, 2006.

Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. Oils from plant sources (vegetable and nut oils) do not contain any cholesterol. In fact, no foods from plant sources contain cholesterol.

A few plant oils, however, including coconut oil and palm kernel oil, are high in saturated fats, and for nutritional purposes should be considered to be solid fats.

Solid fats are fats that are solid at room temperature, like butter and shortening. Solid fats come from many animal foods and can be made from vegetable oils through a process called hydrogenation. Some common solid fats are:

- butter
- beef fat (tallow, suet)
- chicken fat
- pork fat (lard)
- stick margarine
- shortening

8. **MyPyramid is the first food guide from USDA to offer a personalized approach. You can go to the web site [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) and enter information for your personal circumstances. You will enter your age, gender, and amount of physical activity. The web site then calculates the number of calories you need and the amount of foods from each food group you should be consuming each day. For example, a woman who is 65, who gets less than 30 minutes of exercise each day, needs the following on a daily basis:**

**1600 total calories, 5 ounces grains, 2 cups vegetables, 1 1/2 cups fruit, 3 cups milk, 5 ounces meat & beans, 5 teaspoons oil (130 calories from oil or discretionary calories)**

**It's that easy! Check out MyPyramid today!**



South Carolina Family and Community Leaders



# MyPyramid.gov

## STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

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