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## NF93-130 Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults

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## Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults

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The Food Guide Pyramid was designed to help healthy people stay well. The pyramid contains information about food intake that is useful to many people of all age groups. However, if you are an older adult or have special dietary needs, the pyramid may need to be modified for you. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the pyramid. It outlines what foods should be eaten each day to promote health.

### How to Make the Food Guide Pyramid World For You

The Food Guide Pyramid lists a range of servings of food to be consumed daily for each major food group. The number of servings appropriate for you depends on how many calories you need according to your age, sex, size, and how active you are. Almost everyone should have at least the minimum number of servings listed on the pyramid for each food group. Keep in mind that eating a low-fat, low-cholesterol, high fiber diet is key to healthy eating. It is important at this time in your life to drink 6-8 glasses of fluids, preferably water each day.

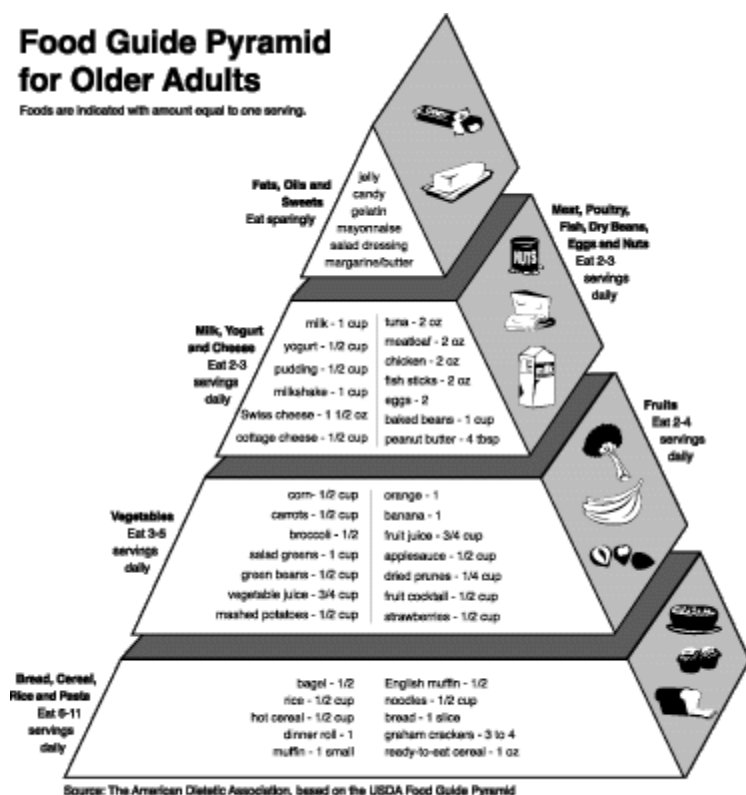
### Determining If You Are at Nutritional Risk

Following are a few key questions to learn more about your nutritional risk. If your answer is "yes" to several of the questions, consult your physician or qualified nutrition professional.

1. Do you have an illness that has made you change the kind and/or amount of food you eat?
2. Do you frequently eat fewer than 2 meals per day?
3. Do you regularly eat few fruits, vegetables, or milk products?
4. Do you often drink 3 or more alcoholic beverages (i.e. beer, liquor or wine)?
5. Do you have tooth or mouth problems that make it hard for you to eat?
6. Do your finances make it difficult to buy the foods you need?
7. Do you eat alone most of the time?
8. Do you take 3 or more different prescribed or over-the-counter drugs each day?
9. Have you lost or gained 10 pounds in the last 6 months without planning to do so?
10. Do you have physical limitations that make it difficult to shop, cook, and/or feed yourself?

## Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults

Foods are indicated with amount equal to one serving.



## Summary and Recommendations

Use the Pyramid to help you eat better every day. Start with plenty of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, vegetables and fruits. Add two to three servings from the milk group and two to three servings from the meat group. Each of these food groups by itself provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. No one food group is more important than the other food groups; for good health, you need them all. Go easy on fats, oils and sweets since these foods provide energy but few nutrients. As your life situation changes, re-evaluate what you are eating. Have your eating habits changed? What can you do to improve them, if they need to be improved? Use this fact sheet as a guideline for healthy eating and seek help from qualified professionals if and when needed.

### Adapted from:

- Kohn, Harriet, Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults: Is It Right For You? NF93-130.
- USDA's FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID, Home and Garden Bulletin No. 249, April 1992.
- Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults, American Dietetic Association, based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid.
- Nutrition Screening Initiative, a project of American Academy of Family Physicians, The American Dietetic Association, and National Council on the Aging.
- Thrive@health - Nutrition Update 1993 Sum: Fitness and well-being in older adults  
<http://www.thriveonline.com/health/Library/CAD/abstract20304.html>

## Helpful Hints for Eating from the Food Guide Pyramid

**Daily  
Food  
Guide**

**Selection Tips**

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Daily Servings</b>	<b>What counts as 1 serving</b>	
<b>Breads, Cereals, Cereal, Rice and Pasta</b>	6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 slice bread</li><li>• 1/2 bun or bagel</li><li>• 1 ounce dry cereal</li><li>• 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose foods low in fat and sugar (i.e. English muffins, bagels and pasta).</li><li>• Whole grain cereals and whole wheat breads contain a good source of fiber.</li></ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 cup raw leafy vegetables</li><li>• 1/2 cup other vegetables (cooked or raw)</li><li>• 3/4 cup vegetable juices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dark green leafy vegetables (i.e. spinach and broccoli)</li><li>• Deep yellow vegetables (i.e. carrots and sweet potatoes)</li><li>• Starch vegetables (i.e. potatoes, corn and peas)</li><li>• Legumes (i.e. navy, pinto and kidney beans and lentils)</li></ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 medium apple, banana, orange</li><li>• 1/2 cup fresh, cooked or canned fruit</li><li>• 3/4 cup fruit juice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citrus fruits, melons, berries</li><li>• Fresh fruits are higher in fiber than canned fruit or fruit juices.</li></ul>
<b>Milk, Yogurt and Cheese</b>	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 cup milk</li><li>• 1 cup yogurt</li><li>• 1 1/2 ounces natural cheese</li><li>• 2 ounces process cheese</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose low-fat foods from this group (i.e. skim milk, 1% milk, mozzarella cheese and low-fat yogurt)</li></ul>
<b>Meat, Poultry,</b>	2-33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-3 ounces of cooked</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trim away all the fat you</li></ul>

**Fish, Dried  
Beans, Eggs and  
Nuts**

meat

- 1/2 cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, and 2 tablespoons of peanut butter equals 1 ounce of meat

can see.

- Broil, roast, or boil instead of frying.
- Consume more egg whites than egg yolks since yolks are high in cholesterol.

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**Fats, Oils and  
Sweets**

Eat  
sparingly

- Foods in this group include margarine, mayonnaise, candy, pop, and salad dressings.

- Use foods in this group to help enhance the flavor of your food, not as your main source of calories.
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***File NF130 under: FOODS AND NUTRITION***

***A-2a, Food Selection***

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