

5 smart ways to

Make MyPyramid Work for Your Family

MyPyramid.gov is a great place to find nutrition information. You can use this site to keep track of the foods you have eaten. You can also get a menu plan made just for you. The Web site's newest feature is www.myfoodapedia.gov. Here you can learn about calories and serving sizes for thousands of foods.

1. Make half your grains whole.

Whole grains are rich in nutrients. They also have extra fiber and a delicious, nutty flavor. You may already know about whole-grain breads and cereals. But there many more whole grains that you can try. Why not add a half cup of whole-grain pasta, barley or bulgur (cracked wheat) to your plate as a side dish?



2. Vary your vegetables.

When it comes to picking vegetables, just keep two things in mind – variety and color. You will get the nutrients you need if you enjoy a wide variety of brightly colored veggies. Go green with broccoli, green beans, peas or spinach. Try the reds – beets and tomatoes. You can also try some orange vegetables, like acorn squash, carrots and sweet potatoes. Mushrooms are a white vegetable. Can you think of others?

3. Focus on flavorful fruit.

Fruits and vegetables have lots in common. They taste great. They also have similar nutrients. You can buy them fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Variety and bright colors are also important when choosing fruit. Sweeten your life – morning, noon and night – with blueberries, grapes, grapefruit, melons, pineapple, dried plums and more! If you drink juice, choose 100% fruit juice.

4. Go for calcium-rich foods.

Most Americans don't get enough calcium. This puts our bones at risk. The solution is simple and delicious. Eat three servings of dairy foods every day, like milk, cheese and yogurt. Low-fat and fat-free types are the best choices. Not only will you get calcium, but these foods also give you more than eight other essential nutrients.

5. Get lean protein.

Foods from the meat and beans group have protein, iron, zinc and B-vitamins. These nutrients help to build and maintain muscles, bones, blood and skin. Variety is also important with this group. There are lots of healthy choices. Try lean beef, fish, chicken, turkey, pork and lamb. Don't forget eggs, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds!