



WELLNESS WORKSHEET 63

Putting MyPyramid Into Action: Healthier Choices Within Food Groups

Look over the following lists of examples for each of the food groups. These lists are broken into subgroups to emphasize foods that are particularly good sources of dietary fiber or of certain vitamins and minerals that are low in the diets of many Americans; food items with more fat and sugar are also identified. Hints for making healthy choices within each food group are provided.

For each food group, complete the following:

1. Circle the items you eat most often. If a food you commonly eat doesn't appear on the list, add it to the appropriate group and subgroup and then circle it.
2. Review the circled items, and analyze your current diet. Do your typical food choices conform to the recommendations in the hints section? Do you eat a variety of foods within each group?
3. Based on your analysis of your current diet, and with the goal of eating a variety of healthy foods, choose 3–6 items in each food group either to try for the first time or to eat more often. Choose food items that conform to the advice in the hints section and that are available and affordable.

FRUITS

Citrus, Melons, Berries			Other Fruits		
Blueberries	Honeydew melon	Strawberries	Apple	Guava	Pineapple
Cantaloupe	Kiwifruit	Tangerine	Apricot	Grapes	Plantain
Citrus juices	Lemon	Ugli fruit	Asian pear	Mango	Plum
Cranberries	Orange	Watermelon	Banana	Nectarine	Prickly pear
Grapefruit	Raspberries	_____	Cherries	Papaya	Prunes
_____	_____	_____	Dates	Passion fruit	Raisins
_____	_____	_____	Figs	Peach	Rhubarb
_____	_____	_____	Fruit juices	Pear	Star fruit

Hints:

- Citrus fruits, melons, and berries are particularly good choices.
- Choose whole fruits more often than juices; choose fruit juices over fruit punches, ades, and drinks.
- For canned fruits, choose those packed in 100% fruit juice rather than in syrup.

Foods to try or emphasize:

(over)

VEGETABLES

Dark-Green Leafy		Orange-Deep Yellow		Starchy	
Beet greens	Dandelion greens	Romaine lettuce	Carrots	Breadfruit	Lima beans
Broccoli	Endive	Spinach	Pumpkin	Corn	Potato
Chard	Escarole	Turnip greens	Sweet potato	Green peas	Rutabaga
Chicory	Kale	Watercress	Winter squash	Hominy	Taro
Collard greens	Mustard greens	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Dry Beans and Peas (Legumes)		Other Vegetables			
Black beans	Lima beans (mature)	Artichoke	Cauliflower	Green or red pepper	Snow peas
Black-eyed peas	Mung beans	Asparagus	Celery	Lettuce	Summer squash
Chickpeas (garbanzos)	Navy beans	Bean and alfalfa sprouts	Chinese cabbage	Mushrooms	Tomato
	Pinto beans	Beets	Cucumber	Okra	Turnip
Kidney beans	Split peas	Brussels sprouts	Eggplant	Onions (mature and green)	Vegetable juices
Lentils	Tofu	Cabbage	Green beans	Radishes	Wax beans
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Zucchini
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Hints:

- For variety, eat dark-green leafy vegetables, orange or deep-yellow vegetables, starchy vegetables, legumes, and other types of vegetables. Dark-green leafy vegetables, orange and deep-yellow vegetables, and legumes are particularly high in nutrients and fiber.
- Limit the fat you add to vegetables during cooking and at the table (as spreads and toppings).
- Legumes can be counted as servings of vegetables or as alternatives to meat.

Foods to try or emphasize:

GRAINS

Whole-Grain*		Enriched		Grain Products with More Fat and Sugar	
Amaranth	Pumpernickel bread	Bagels	Italian bread	Biscuit	Danish
Brown rice	Ready-to-eat cereals	Cornmeal	Macaroni	Cake (unfrosted)	Doughnut
Buckwheat groats	Rye bread and crackers	Crackers	Noodles	Cookies	Muffin
Bulgar	Whole-wheat bread, rolls, crackers	English muffins	Pancakes and waffles	Cornbread	Pie crust
Corn tortillas		Farina	Pretzels	Croissant	Tortilla chips
Graham cracker	Whole-wheat pasta	French bread	Rice	_____	_____
Granola	Whole-wheat cereals	Grits	Spaghetti	_____	_____
Millet	Other: _____	Hamburger and hot dog rolls	White bread and rolls	_____	_____
Oatmeal	_____	_____	Other: _____	_____	_____
Popcorn	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quinoa	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*Check labels on specific products to determine if they include whole grains.

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Hints:

- Choose foods made from unprocessed, whole grains.
- Choose foods low in fat and sugars.
- Go easy on the fat and sugars you add as spreads, seasonings, or toppings.

Foods to try or emphasize:

MEAT AND BEANS

Meat, Poultry, and Fish				Alternatives	
Beef	Ham	Pork	Veal	Eggs	Peanut butter
Chicken	Lamb	Shellfish	Luncheon meats, sausage	Dry beans and peas (legumes)	Tofu
Fish	Organ meats	Turkey		Nuts and seeds	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Hints:

- To limit your intake of fat and saturated fat, choose lean cuts of meat and skinless poultry. Trim away all the fat you can see. Watch serving sizes carefully.
- Choose at least one serving of plant proteins (legumes, tofu, nuts, seeds) per day.

Foods to try or emphasize:

MILK

Low-fat Milk Products		Other Milk Products with More Fat or Sugar			
Buttermilk	Low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt	Cheddar cheese	Frozen yogurt	Ice milk	Swiss cheese
Low-fat cottage cheese	Fat-free milk	Chocolate milk	Fruit yogurt	Process cheeses and spreads	Whole milk
Low-fat milk (1% and 2% fat)		Flavored yogurt	Ice cream	Puddings made with milk	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Hints:

- Choose low-fat or fat-free items to limit your overall fat intake. Limit serving sizes of high-fat choices.
- Cottage cheese is lower in calcium than most cheeses.

Foods to try or emphasize:

(over)

OILS, SOLID FATS, SWEETS, AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES					
Oils	Solid Fats		Sweets/Added Sugars		Alcoholic Beverages
Vegetable oil	Bacon, salt pork	Mayonnaise	Candy	Marmalade	Beer
Trans-free margarine	Butter	Salad dressing	Corn syrup	Popsicles and ices	Liquor
Low-fat margarine	Cream	Sour cream	Frosting (icing)	Sherbets	Wine
Low-fat mayonnaise	Cream cheese	Vegetable oil	Fruit drinks	Soft drinks and colas	_____
Light salad dressing	Lard	_____	Honey	Sugar (white and brown)	_____
_____	Margarine	_____	Jam	Table syrup	_____
_____	_____	_____	Jelly	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	Maple syrup	_____	_____

Hints:

- Choose about 5–10 teaspoons of oils per day to obtain the essential fats.
- If your intake of solid fats, sweets and added sugars, and alcoholic beverages is high, consider developing a behavior change strategy to substitute healthier food choices from other groups.
- Limit your intake of reduced-fat versions of foods—they are often very high in both added sugar and calories.
- When choosing among different types of fats, favor unsaturated fats (vegetable and fish oils) over saturated and trans fats (animal fats, palm and coconut oils, hydrogenated fats).

INTERNET ACTIVITY

There are many variations on the basic USDA food guidance system—for people who follow a particular ethnic diet, for vegetarians, and for people in specific age groups. Visit one of the following sites and choose an alternative food plan or pyramid to investigate:

USDA: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.html>

Harvard Nutrition Source: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/pyramids.html>

Plan-pyramid chosen: _____

What are the food groups, and what are examples of foods from each one? How many servings are recommended for each?

Make up a day’s diet that conforms to the plan-pyramid you’ve described:

SOURCES: Shaw, A., et al. 1997. *Using the Food Guide Pyramid: A Resource for Nutrition Educators*. Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. U.S. Department of Agriculture (retrieved January 8, 1998; <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/guide.pdf>); U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2005. *MyPyramid: Inside the Pyramid* (<http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid>; retrieved April 20, 2005).