

# Healthy Meals for Healthy Kids: Ages 6-12 years

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## Lesson Goals:

Families will be able to plan meals together that incorporate the basic principles of watching your serving size and balancing your calories intake with physical activity.

## Objective:

1. Parents and their children will be able to plan meals based on the new MyPyramid.
2. Parents and their children will be able to design meals based on nutrients and appropriate serving sizes.

## Leader Resources:

- Healthy Meals for Healthy Kids
- Fit and Healthy Kids: What Parents Can do?
- Cooking with Your Kids
- Learning about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 and MyPyramid
- PowerPoint presentation, available for download online,

## Before the Meeting:

Read the leader's guide and the two handouts  
Gather flip-chart, markers, tape

## At the Meeting:

Distribute the handouts. Encourage discussion of meal plans. Have the participants work on day's menu.

## Discussion Ideas to Start:

1. How many servings of vegetables did you eat yesterday?
2. How many dairy servings did you have yesterday?
3. What food group is the hardest for you to meet the recommendation for?
4. How many food groups are there in the MyPyramid?

## Introduction:

In Nebraska it is estimated that one out of three youth are overweight or at risk for being overweight. With this trend continuing to rise it is important to get back to the basics of food. In addition, most Nebraska youth (80 percent) do not meet the minimum recommendation of five fruit and vegetable servings per day, and based on the new MyPyramid recommendations less than 2 percent would meet the nine servings per day recommendation. Also less than 20 percent of Nebraska youth met the 3-A-Day recommendation for dairy servings per day on a regular basis. (Reference 1-2)

To help parents understand what to feed their children they need to understand how food and the body work together. This lesson is designed to help parents learn the basic nutrients in food, why these nutrients are important and how to incorporate a nutrient-dense diet into their daily lives.

## How do you know if you are getting every nutrient?

The MyPyramid contains the building blocks for a healthy eating plan. The five food groups are:

- Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Meat and dried beans
- Oils can be included in your diet in small amounts.

Foods are grouped into the food groups based on their nutrient content. Foods in one food group can't replace those in another and no one food group is more important than another.

Let's look more closely at the food groups and recommendations based on the MyPyramid. **Hand out the MyPyramid and the Anatomy of the Pyramid.**

To help ensure good health and to prevent family members from becoming overweight there are some general tips to keep in mind:

- Be physically active every day
- Eat in moderation



- Watch the portion size of foods
- Eat a variety of foods
- Make gradual improvements in your eating plan
- Personalize your plan so it meets the needs of you and your family

The principles of the MyPyramid are:

**Eat a variety of foods:** No one food or group can give you all the nutrients you need each day. Choose from all the food groups. The six color bands symbolize variety on the MyPyramid, which represents the five food groups and oils.

**Regulate portion sizes:** Eat the appropriate amounts of foods to get the energy and nutrients your body needs to function. Know what an appropriate serving size for each food group is. On the MyPyramid, portions are represented by the width of the bands. The widths represent how much you food you should choose from each group.

**Enjoy foods in moderation:** Choose foods to meet your energy needs but do not overdo it. Watch your intake of saturated fat, cholesterol, salt and simple sugars. On the MyPyramid the narrowing of the food groups from top to bottom shows moderation. If you look closely at each of the bands you will notice that they are different widths. The wider base bands represents food groups with little or no solid fats or added sugars. These food groups (Grains, Vegetables and Nonfat Dairy) should be selected more often.

**Get the correct amount of physical activity:** You need to be moderately to vigorously physical active at least 60 minutes most days of the week. Moderate physical activity is defined as participating in activities that do not make you sweat or breathe hard for 30 minutes or more. Vigorous physical activity is defined as participating in activities that make you sweat and breathe hard for 20 minutes or more. On the MyPyramid, the steps represent activity. It is a reminder how important daily physical activity is.

If you would like to see what your personal MyPyramid is, go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). Type in your age, if you are male or female and your activity level. Hit enter and your personalized MyPyramid will be displayed.

A **portion** is the amount of food you choose to eat. There is no standard portion size and no single right or wrong portion size. A **serving** is a standard measured amount used to help give advice about how much to eat or to identify the number of calories and nutrients in food.

Most of us do not know what a normal serving size is. Our portion sizes have gone to “super size.” In fact, most of us underestimate what we eat by about 50 percent. This is known as “portion distortion.”

### Teaching Plan:

1. Using the MyPyramid discuss which nutrients are in each food group. Have one or two participants tell you what they had to eat today. Have them put their diet into the food groups and then ask them which two nutrients they received from that food item. The purpose is to look at food not just as calories but also as nutrients. Emphasize choosing foods based on their nutrient density.

### Teaching Plan:

2. Pass out the Anatomy of MyPyramid. Review the principles listed on it. Have each participant write one goal that they are willing to work on based on the philosophy of the MyPyramid.

### Teaching Plan:

3. Have a box of cereal, cooked rice or cooked pasta. Have a participant measure into a bowl what they think is one serving. Take a ½ cup measuring cup and see how they did. Do the same with nuts, carrot coins, canned fruit or whatever you have available to have participants do the activity. Review the tip for at home and eating out from the participant guide.

### Teaching Plan:

4. Have each participant complete the Meal Planning worksheet. Ask them to plan one day’s menu for their family. How did they do in getting each food group? Discuss some of the menu ideas.

### References:

1. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “Overweight among Nebraska Youth,” Nebraska Health and Human Service System, June 2004.
2. Nebraska Health and Human Services System. “Nebraska Adolescents: Results of the 2003 Youth Behavior Survey of Nebraska Public Schools.” November 2004.

### Resources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture:  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

### Handouts:

MyPyramid  
Anatomy of MyPyramid  
How MyPyramid Servings Stack Up  
Meal Planning Worksheet

**Reviewers:** Georgia Jones and Susan Hansen, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

## How MYPyramid Servings Stack Up

	Food Group	What is one serving?	Daily #
<b>Eat less</b>	Oils/Sugar/ Salt/Fats	These foods add extra calories Use them sparingly to add flavor to other foods. Salt less than 1 tsp	6 teaspoons oils Solid Fats Less than 4 tsp Sugars less than 8 tsp
<b>Eat enough</b>	Milk	1 cup milk or yogurt 1½ ounces cheese	2-3 cups
	Meats/Beans	¼ cup dry beans 1 egg 1 tablespoon peanut butter 1 ounce meat, poultry or fish ½ ounce of nuts	5 ½ ounces
<b>Eat more</b>	Vegetables	1 cup raw leafy vegetables, ½ cup cooked or chopped raw vegetables ½ cup juice	2 ½ cups
	Fruits	1 small apple, banana, orange equals 1 cup ½ cup fruit (canned, cooked or raw) ½ cup juice ¼ cup dried fruit equals ½ cup	2 cups
	Bread	1 slice bread or ½ tortilla 1 ounce cereal ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta ½ bagel ½ hamburger bun or ½ an English muffin	6 ounces with 3 from whole grains

Here are some tips for making sensible helping size decisions.

### At home:

- Once or twice, measure your typical helping of foods you eat most often. Use standard measuring cups. This will help you estimate the portion size of these foods and similar foods. Remember the serving sizes from the MyPyramid are in cups, ounces and teaspoons/tablespoons.
- Be especially careful to limit portions of foods high in calories, such as cookies, cakes and other sweets, fats, oils and spreads.
- Try using a smaller plate for your meal.
- Put sensible portions on your plate at the beginning of the meal and don't take seconds.
- Eat from a plate and not a package, so you know how much you are eating.
- Meat, chicken and fish do not have to take up the whole plate.

### When eating out:

- Choose a small or medium helping. This includes main dishes, side dishes and drinks. Remember that water is always a good option for quenching your thirst.
- If main dish helpings are larger than you want, order an appetizer or side dish instead, or share a main dish with a friend.
- Resign from the "clean your plate club." When you've eaten enough leave the rest. If you can chill the extra food right away, take it home in a "doggie bag."
- Ask for salad dressing to be served on the side so you can add only as much as you want.
- Order an item from the menu instead of the all-you-can-eat buffet.



Based on the information you provided, this is your daily recommended amount from each food group.

<b>GRAINS</b> 6 ounces	<b>VEGETABLES</b> 2 1/2 cups	<b>FRUITS</b> 2 cups	<b>MILK</b> 3 cups	<b>MEAT &amp; BEANS</b> 5 1/2 ounces
<p><b>Make half your grains whole</b></p> <p>Aim for at least <b>3 ounces</b> of whole grains a day</p>	<p><b>Vary your veggies</b> Aim for these amounts <b>each week:</b></p> <p><b>Dark green veggies</b> = 3 cups</p> <p><b>Orange veggies</b> = 2 cups</p> <p><b>Dry beans &amp; peas</b> = 3 cups</p> <p><b>Starchy veggies</b> = 3 cups</p> <p><b>Other veggies</b> = 6 1/2 cups</p>	<p><b>Focus on fruits</b></p> <p>Eat a variety of fruit</p> <p>Go easy on fruit juices</p>	<p><b>Get your calcium-rich foods</b></p> <p>Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, or cheese</p>	<p><b>Go lean with protein foods</b></p> <p>Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry</p> <p>Vary your protein routine—choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds</p>

**Find your balance between food and physical activity**

Be physically active for at least **30 minutes** most days of the week.

**Know your limits on fats, sugars, and sodium**

Your allowance for oils is **6 teaspoons a day.**

Limit extras—solid fats and sugars—to **265 calories a day.**

**Your results are based on a 2000 calorie pattern.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

This calorie level is only an estimate of your needs. Monitor your body weight to see if you need to adjust your calorie intake.

# Anatomy of MyPyramid

## One size doesn't fit all

USDA's new MyPyramid symbolizes a personalized approach to healthy eating and physical activity. The symbol has been designed to be simple. It has been developed to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and to be active every day. The different parts of the symbol are described below.

### Activity

Activity is represented by the steps and the person climbing them, as a reminder of the importance of daily physical activity.

### Moderation

Moderation is represented by the narrowing of each food group from bottom to top. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. These should be selected more often. The narrower top area stands for foods containing more added sugars and solid fats. The more active you are, the more of these foods can fit into your diet.

### Personalization

Personalization is shown by the person on the steps, the slogan, and the URL. Find the kinds and amounts of food to eat each day at MyPyramid.gov.

### Proportionality

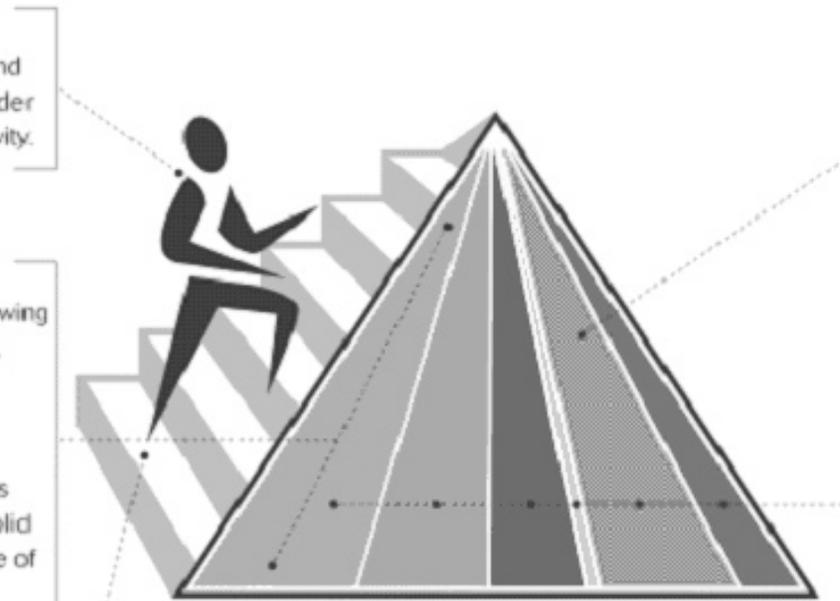
Proportionality is shown by the different widths of the food group bands. The widths suggest how much food a person should choose from each group. The widths are just a general guide, not exact proportions. Check the Web site for how much is right for you.

### Variety

Variety is symbolized by the 6 color bands representing the 5 food groups of the Pyramid and oils. This illustrates that foods from all groups are needed each day for good health.

### Gradual Improvement

Gradual improvement is encouraged by the slogan. It suggests that individuals can benefit from taking small steps to improve their diet and lifestyle each day.



**MyPyramid.gov**  
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

# Meal Planning

## Daily Planner

- Plan meals and snacks for your family for one day.
- Remember to include at least nine servings from the vegetable and fruit groups.
- Include at least three food groups for each meal and at least two food groups for snacks.
- After planning the menu, write your selection on the worksheet on the next page and see how you did meeting your daily needs.

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### MENU

### FOOD GROUPS

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#### Morning meal:

Grains  
Vegetable  
Fruit  
Milk, yogurt, cheese  
Meat and dry beans  
Oils  
Discretionary calories

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#### Mid-day meal:

Grains  
Vegetable  
Fruit  
Milk, yogurt, cheese  
Meat and dry beans  
Oils  
Discretionary calories

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#### Healthy snack

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#### Evening meal

Grains  
Vegetable  
Fruit  
Milk, yogurt, cheese  
Meat and dry beans  
Oils  
Discretionary calories

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#### Healthy snack

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# MyPyramid Worksheet

Check how you did today and set a goal to aim for tomorrow

Write in Your Choices for Today	Food Group	Tip	Goal Based on a 2000 calorie pattern.	List each food choice in its food group*	Estimate Your Total
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>GRAINS</b></p>	Make at least half your grains whole grains	<b>6 ounce equivalents</b> (1 ounce equivalent is about 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, or ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal)	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>ounce equivalents</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>VEGETABLES</b></p>	Try to have vegetables from several subgroups each day	<b>2 ½ cups</b> Subgroups: Dark Green, Orange, Starchy, Dry Beans and Peas, Other Veggies	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>cups</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>FRUITS</b></p>	Make most choices fruit, not juice	<b>2 cups</b>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>cups</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>MILK</b></p>	Choose fat-free or low fat most often	<b>3 cups</b> (1 ½ ounces cheese = 1 cup milk)	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>cups</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>MEAT &amp; BEANS</b></p>	Choose lean meat and poultry. Vary your choices—more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds	<b>5 ½ ounce equivalents</b> (1 ounce equivalent is 1 ounce meat, poultry, or fish, 1 egg, 1 T. peanut butter, ½ ounce nuts, or ¼ cup dry beans)	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>ounce equivalents</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b></p>	Build more physical activity into your daily routine at home and work.	At least <b>30 minutes</b> of moderate to vigorous activity a day, 10 minutes or more at a time.	*Some foods don't fit into any group. These "extras" may be mainly fat or sugar—limit your intake of these.	<p>_____</p> <p>minutes</p>

How did you do today?  Great  So-So  Not so Great

My food goal for tomorrow is: \_\_\_\_\_

My activity goal for tomorrow is: \_\_\_\_\_