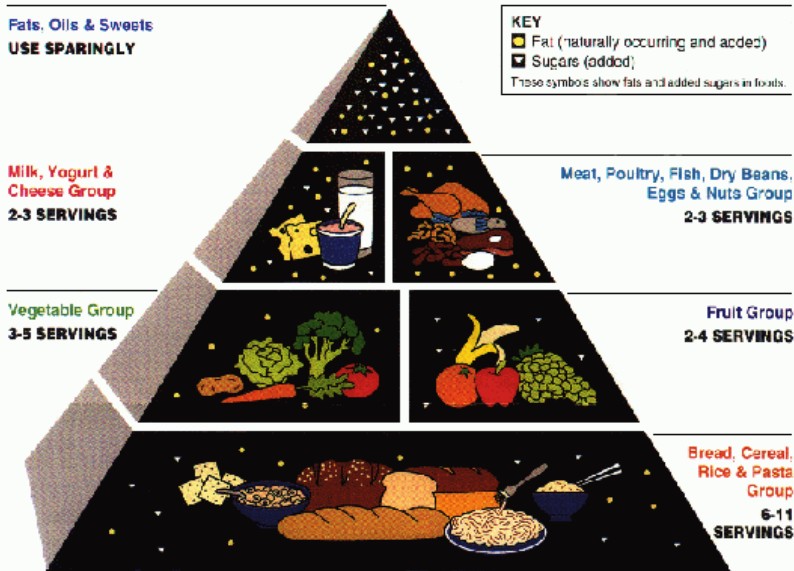


About Nutrition

If you have taken any type of health class then you have probably seen a food guide pyramid. Each level shows the number of servings of each type of food you should consume, with breads, rice, and pasta being the base, and fats being the tip, and suggested smallest consumed item. In reality, how many people actually follow this guide? There are very few people who you will catch saying, “Wow, what a tasty cauliflower!” As a result, we each end up with our own lopsided pyramid.



Does it matter? As long I eat enough to keep active and perform the best I believe I can, no problems, right? *Wrong.*

Consuming the appropriate number of each food group is important for several reasons. Each food provides various vitamins and minerals that another food may not provide. Each vitamin and mineral serves different critical functions in the body. For example, vitamin A is found in foods such as mangos, apricots and beef liver, while Niacin is supplied through foods such as baked potatoes,

mushrooms and pork chops. Vitamin A is important for vision and bone and tooth growth while Niacin, also known as vitamin B₃ is important for supporting the health of skin, the nervous system, and digestive system. For our bodies to stay healthy and function the best possible, each of the vitamins and minerals must be supplied.

Following the nutrient guidelines are especially important for the physically active. Not only because exercise places additional stress on the body, but also because there must be an adequate energy supply to allow for maximal performance. This means consuming the right foods. Complex carbohydrates, such as those found on the bottom of the food guide pyramid will provide the body with the best source of calories (energy) for prolonged activity. Foods with high levels of fat content should be limited because over-consumption results in decreased digestion of carbs, leaving the body with less energy supply to use.

Be sure that you are eating the right foods in the right amounts by keeping track of the foods you eat throughout the day. Make food choices based on what you have or have not eaten according to the pyramid. Also, check out web sites such as www.5aday.com, which provides guidelines and benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables, or www.lifelines.com that provides additional healthy eating tips and recipes.