



Q & A: The USDA Food Guide Pyramid

What is the Food Guide Pyramid?

- Choose some low-fat dairy products and low-fat foods from the meat and beans group every day.
- It's fine to enjoy fats and sweets *occasionally*.
- If you have a specific health condition like diabetes, hypertension or heart disease, be sure to work closely with a health professional to choose a diet that works for you.

The Pyramid is a teaching tool for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

- Aim for Fitness
- Build a Healthy Base
- Choose Sensibly...for Better Health.

The Guidelines are reviewed every five years and that is what's happening now. The USDA is also looking at the Pyramid so that it will reflect the revised Guidelines. The process is public and involves scientific research as well as consumer ideas and information about food consumption in our country. UW-Extension will begin using the new version of the Pyramid when it is available from USDA next year.

Will the revised pyramid be very different?

The Food Guide Pyramid is advice to keep us healthy in the long term. It will recommend an eating pattern that helps prevent chronic disease like diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Because we all need some high-carbohydrate foods like grains, fruits and vegetables, it is unlikely that the new pyramid will be greatly changed.

What should I be eating now?

- Use the Food Guide Pyramid to help make healthy food choices you can enjoy.
- Base your eating patterns on a variety of plant foods, including whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

The Great Pyramid Wrap

An easy sandwich idea that includes all of the food groups.

- 6 8-inch flour tortillas
- Well-dried lettuce leaves
- 4 oz. lean sliced ham or 6-oz tuna, drained
- 2-3 Tbsp. low-fat mayonnaise or cream cheese spread
- 1 small can pineapple tidbits, drained
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- ¼ - ½ cup shredded cheese

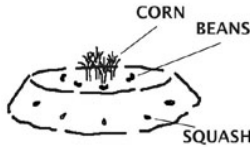
Place lettuce leaves on tortillas. Top with remaining ingredients—you can mix them together if using tuna. Place filling so there's a 1-inch margin around the edge of tortilla. Fold in one or both ends and roll from one edge of tortilla.

Makes 6 servings

Grow a “3 Sisters” Garden

For centuries, Native Americans grew three companion crops together: corn, beans, and squash. The corn shades the squash and provides a structure for the beans to climb. The beans feed the soil. The squash keeps the soil moist and weed free.

To grow your own 3 Sisters Garden, you will need a garden section at least 4 feet by 4 feet. The garden needs to get both morning and afternoon sun. Mound the soil into flat-topped hill.



Plant the bean and corn seed next to each other about 1” deep and about 8” apart. Plant the squash about 6-12 inches away from the corn and bean seeds. Golden Bantam Corn seed works well for a small garden because it only grows to 5 feet tall. Any type of pole bean will work. Delicata squash grows well in Wisconsin, but you can experiment with many types of squash including zucchini. Be sure to water your garden and keep the weeds pulled.

At the end of summer you can make this recipe with your garden produce.

3 Sisters Corn Casserole

16 oz frozen whole kernel corn
16 oz frozen green beans
4 cups summer squash, diced (about 1 pound)
1 pint sour cream
2 eggs, beaten
4 Tbsp margarine or butter, melted
1 cup yellow cornmeal
½ cup Jalapeño peppers, diced
½ cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
Vegetable oil spray

In a large mixing bowl, mix sour cream and eggs together. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Coat a baking pan or casserole dish with vegetable oil spray and fill with mixture. Bake at 350° F for 45 minutes until golden brown.

Yield: 10 (1cup) servings

To make this recipe lower in fat, use fat free sour cream, ½ cup egg substitute and reduced fat cheese

The Diet Confusion

Do your coworkers tell you that the pasta salad you are eating will make you fat? Maybe you heard that a Hollywood star is eating only raw vegetables and fruits. The TV infomercial swears that this little pill or diet drink will melt the pounds away. Your neighbor tells you to stay away from carrots, too high a glycemic index. The information floating around in magazines, books, TV and the general public can be overwhelming! Everyone is an expert on the best ‘diet’.

So how can **you** tell when a diet is just a fad diet? Look for a few red flags:

- It promises a quick fix.
- The weight will melt away with no work on your part.

- Whole food groups are eliminated.
- The diet has very complicated formulas based on no proven research.
- It sounds too good to be true.

Most people who have lost weight and **KEPT** it off know that there is no quick fix. Permanent weight control can and has been achieved by eating healthy and being active. Try following the serving sizes recommended on the Food Guide Pyramid and being physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week. The weight loss may be slow, but it will be a healthy, permanent weight loss. You will also be making the best lifelong choice to help prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, some cancers, and diabetes.

Clean! Wash Hands and Surfaces Often

You can't see, taste, or smell them. They're sneaky little critters, and they can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, sponges, countertops, and food. What are they? Bacteria—and if eaten, they can cause food-borne illness. So...on your mark, get set, go...clean!

How long should you wash your hands to send bacteria down the drain?

- a. 5 seconds
- b. 10 seconds
- c. 15 seconds
- d. 20 seconds

(See answer on last page.)

The Big 3: Use these tips to keep your hands, surfaces, and utensils squeaky clean!

1. Splish, Splash

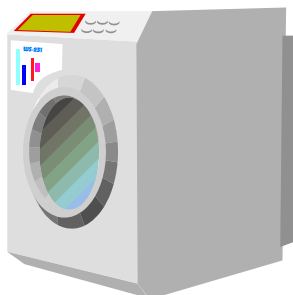
Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces in hot, soapy water before and after food preparation, especially after preparing raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood. Remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.

2. All A-board

Cutting boards (including plastic, non-porous, acrylic, and wooden boards) should be run through the dishwasher or washed in hot, soapy water after each use. Discard boards that are excessively worn.

3. Towel Toss

Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. When done, throw away the towel. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.



Dear Sue Keeney ...

Meet Sue Keeney--your source of research-based information about nutrition and health! Readers of all ages like Sue's practical tips on eating for good health, stretching the food dollar & more!

*Dear Sue Keeney,
My family and I have a chance to grow vegetables on a small plot of land this summer but I don't know where to start.*

Eaton Wright

Dear Eaton,

How lucky your family is! You'll be able to serve them fresh, good tasting food that has not been treated with chemicals. Gardening also provides healthful outdoor exercise in which your whole family can become involved.

Most vegetables are fairly easy to grow in southern Wisconsin. Be sure to grow vegetables your family likes. Try the "3 Sisters" garden in this issue.

Your local library or Extension office (see phone number on back page) has a lot of good information on gardening. Extension publications are also printable online at <http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/>. Select Horticulture then Vegetables. Find Growing Vegetables at Home (A2801) and The Vegetable Garden (A1989).

Won't it be fun to share your produce with your family and friends!

Sue



Canned, Fresh and Frozen Foods are packed with nutrition

Canned foods taste good and help us make quick meals. But are they as nutritious as fresh and frozen foods?

A study done by the University of Illinois compared nutrition in canned foods with fresh or frozen foods. It also looked at the role canned foods play in our diet.

Canned foods are convenient for recipe ingredients. What many consumers don't realize is canned foods are not only quick, delicious alternatives to fresh, but are just as nutritious when prepared for the table. A nutritional analysis of five popular recipes shows that using canned ingredients in recipes provides comparable nutritional value to using fresh and frozen.

In general, if a fruit or vegetable is healthy and nutritious when it is fresh, it also will be nutritious in its canned form. The reason – the heat process used in canning causes only minor loss of most nutrients, similar to what is lost when fresh foods are cooked at home.

Answer to Clean Quiz:

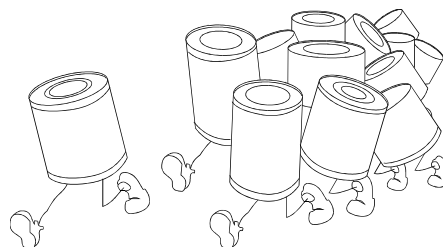
d. 20 seconds

Once the product is canned, it maintains its nutrient levels, even after one to two years of storage. This is important since canned products are harvested at the peak of ripeness and usually canned only a few hours after they're picked, sealing in the nutrients.

Meanwhile, "fresh" fruits and vegetables often are picked before their nutrient content has peaked and may spend as many as 7 to 14 days in transit, even before they get to the store. Add to this the number of days they spend in the store – and in the crisper drawer before they're consumed – and it's easy to see that "fresh" can just as easily be found in the canned food aisle as in the produce department. And unlike many fresh items, canned products are available year-round at their peak quality.

Compare prices of fresh, canned and frozen vegetables and fruits. Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables may cost less when fresh vegetables are out of season. All are nutritious.

Source: University of Illinois, Dept. of Food Science and Human Nutrition



WNEP education is supported by the USDA Food Stamp Program, UW-Extension and local partners. Food stamps can help provide a healthy diet. To find out more about food stamps, call 920-386-3790. To learn more about the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program in Columbia or Dodge County, please contact:

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