

30 MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You

MyPyramid's slogan "Steps to a Healthier You" indicates we can benefit from taking daily small steps to improve our diet and lifestyle. Here are some steps from <http://mypyramid.gov> to get started.

<p>1 On the Internet, go to http://mypyramid.gov and calculate your personalized "My Pyramid Plan."</p> 	<p>2 Order veggie toppings for your pizza like mushrooms, green peppers and onions.</p> 	<p>3 Eat foods and beverages low in "added sugars." Naturally occurring sugars such as those which are in milk and fruits do not count as added sugars.</p>	<p>4 Vary your fruit choices. Fruits differ in nutrient content.</p> 	<p>5 Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits dietary fiber provides.</p> 	<p>6 Select vegetables with more potassium often, such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, winter squash, tomato products, beet greens, spinach, dry beans and split peas.</p> 
<p>7 Choose grain products which name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the ingredient list: brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, wild rice.</p>	<p>8 Dried fruits make a great snack. They're easy to carry and store well. Because they're dried, 1/4 cup is equal to 1/2 cup of other fruits.</p> 	<p>9 Sauces or seasonings can add calories, fat and sodium to vegetables. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories and % Daily Value for fat and sodium in plain and seasoned vegetables.</p> 	<p>10 Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer or dancing are all good examples of being active. For health benefits, physical activity should add up to at least 30 minutes a day.</p>	<p>11 Try a main dish salad for lunch. Go light on the salad dressing.</p> 	<p>12 For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.</p> 
<p>13 If you avoid milk because of lactose intolerance, try using a lactose-free milk, consuming the enzyme lactase before consuming milk or using a calcium fortified soy or rice beverage. <i>Bioavailability of calcium from nondairy foods may vary.</i></p>	<p>14 Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter.</p> 	<p>15 Do exercises or pedal a stationary bike while watching television.</p>	<p>16 Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, cauliflower, red and green peppers or celery sticks.</p> 	<p>17 Physical activity may include short bouts of moderate-intensity activity. The accumulated total is what is important and can be accumulated through three to six 10-minute bouts over the course of a day.</p>	<p>18 Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.</p> 
<p>19 Frozen juice bars (100% juice) make healthy alternatives to high-fat snacks.</p> 	<p>20 Park farther from your destination (work, shopping, etc.) and walk the rest of the way.</p> 	<p>21 Look for fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout and herring.</p> 	<p>22 Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.</p> 	<p>23 Substitute whole wheat for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes.</p> 	<p>24 If you drink lattes or cappuccinos — ask for them with fat-free (skim) milk.</p> 
<p>25 Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within TWO hours.</p> 	<p>26 Use the Nutrition Facts label and choose grain products with a higher % Daily Value (%DV) for fiber — the %DV for fiber is a good clue to the amount of whole grain in the product.</p>	<p>27 Select fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melon and orange juice.</p> 	<p>28 For dessert, make pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.</p> 	<p>29 Replace a coffee break with a brisk 10-minute walk. Ask a friend to go with you.</p>	<p>30 For fresh fruit salads, mix apples, bananas or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.</p> 

Original document created by Alice Henneman, University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension

USDA's MyPyramid symbolizes a personalized approach to healthful eating and physical activity. It reminds us to make healthful food choices and to be active every day. The slogan "Steps to a Healthier You" suggests we can benefit from taking small steps each day to improve our diets and lifestyles.

Seven recommendations stressed by MyPyramid include:

- Make half your grains whole grains.
- Vary your veggies.
- Focus on fruits.
- Get your calcium-rich foods.
- Go lean with protein.
- Find your balance between food and physical activity.
- Limit fats, added sugars and sodium.



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