

# Smart Choices

## Nutrition News

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## Inside the Pyramid—Meat & Beans

All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts and seeds are part of the Meat & Beans Group on MyPyramid. Dry beans and peas are part of this group as well as the vegetable group.

For good health, we should try to “go lean with protein”. Most meat and poultry choices should be lean or low-fat. Fish, nuts and seeds contain healthy oils so we can choose these foods frequently in place of meat or poultry for a healthy diet.

The amount of food needed from the Meat and Beans Group depends upon your age, sex and level of physical activity. For a 2,000 calorie diet, most people need about 5 1/2 ounces from this food group daily. Most Americans eat enough food from this group, but should make leaner, healthier selections. You can visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to find a customized eating plan for you.

Foods in the Meat & Beans Group provide nutrients that are important for health and maintenance of your body.

However, some foods from this group are high in saturated fat and cholesterol which may have negative health implications. Protein from foods in this group act as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood as



well as for enzymes, hormones and vitamins. Many foods in this group are also rich in iron which is used to carry oxygen in the blood.

Vegetarians can get enough protein from this group as long as they choose a variety of foods in adequate amounts. Protein sources from the Meat & Beans Group for vegetarians include beans, nuts, nut butters, peas and soy products such as tofu or veggie burgers.

### What Counts as an Ounce in the Meat & Beans Group?

- ♦ 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish
- ♦ 1/4 cup cooked dry beans
- ♦ 1 egg
- ♦ 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ♦ 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds

**3 ounces of meat is about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand.**

### In this Issue:

- **Tips to Help You Make Wise Choices**
- **Baked Chicken with Vegetables**
- **Keep It Safe to Eat**
- **What's the Purpose of SNAP?**

**Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time.**

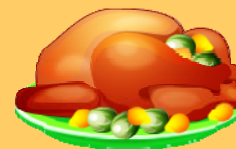
## Tips to Help You Make Wise Choices . . .



- \* **Start with a lean choice** such as round steaks and roasts, top loin, top sirloin and chuck shoulder and arm roasts. For pork, look for pork loin, tenderloin, or center loin. Choose extra lean ground beef.
- \* **Keep it lean.** Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking. Remove the skin from chicken. Broil, grill or roast meats rather than frying. Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
- \* **Vary your protein choices.** Choose fish more often and try those rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, trout and herring. Choose dry beans and peas as a main dish. Choose nuts as a snack.

## Baked Chicken with Vegetables

4 sliced potatoes  
6 sliced carrots  
1 large onion, quartered  
1 raw chicken, cut into pieces, skin removed  
1/2 cup water  
1 teaspoon thyme  
1/4 teaspoon pepper



1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Place potatoes, carrots and onions in large roasting pan.
3. Put chicken pieces on top of the vegetables.
4. Mix water, thyme and pepper. Pour over chicken and vegetables.
5. Spoon juices over chicken once or twice during cooking.
6. Bake at 400 degrees for one hour or more until browned and tender.

Yield: 6 servings

Per Serving: 190 calories, 3.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 135 mg sodium, 13 g carbohydrate, 5 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugars, 26 g protein

## Keep It Safe to Eat

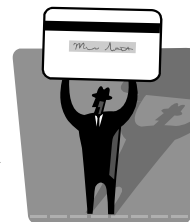


- ♦ Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- ♦ Do not wash or rinse meat or poultry.
- ♦ Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next one.
- ♦ Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- ♦ Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill bacteria. Use a meat thermometer to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through.
- ♦ Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours.
- ♦ Plan ahead to defrost foods. Never defrost food on the counter at room temperature. Thaw foods in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.
- ♦ Avoid raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs or undercooked meat and poultry.

## What's the Purpose of SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) isn't about welfare. Its goal is helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons.

Food stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. No one but you and the grocery check-out clerk will know you are using SNAP. This program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LAHELPU or visit [www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us).



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References: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) and SNAP-Ed Connection