

# Eat Well to Be Well

Did you know? Eating a balanced diet does more than give your body energy. It also helps prevent chronic diseases. These include heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

## **The Guidelines Agree**

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide guidance on choosing nutritious foods. They are updated every five years based on the latest science. They are designed for healthy people ages 2 years through adulthood. The [mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov) website offers practical information and individualized eating plans based on these guidelines.

Many scientific groups who focus on preventing specific chronic diseases also develop nutrition guidelines. These include the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, American Institute for Cancer Research and others. A well-done review found all give similar nutrition guidance<sup>1</sup>.

## **Goals for Healthy Eating**

All the guidelines share these goals.

- Look at your overall eating. All foods can fit in a healthful diet if eaten in the right amounts. Eating a variety of foods helps give you all the nutrients you need.
- Select foods that have a lot of nutrients.
- Limit foods with solid fats or added sugar (“empty” calories).
- Balance the energy you burn with the energy you eat. Regular physical activity helps.



This information is provided by Orlando Health's Lifestyle Medicine Initiative. For more information, visit [orlandohealth.com/lifestylemedicine](http://orlandohealth.com/lifestylemedicine).



## Foods to Choose

All the guidelines advise choosing certain foods often<sup>1,2</sup>.

- Fruits and vegetables — Eat 5 to 9 servings (1/2 cup). Have a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Whole grains — Choose whole grain foods over refined grains. Aim for 3 servings (1 ounce) every day.
- Fat-free milk and dairy – Select fat-free milk or milk products. Have 2 to 3 fat-free milk servings (1 cup) every day.
- Healthy oils — Choose healthy oils instead of solid fats (saturated and trans fat). Examples include olive, canola and safflower oils. Use in moderation. Nuts can also count in this group.
- Lean protein — Choose lean meat, poultry or meat equivalents up to 5 to 6 ounces every day. That's about two servings (3 ounces). Include fish regularly.

Everyone can eat well to be well. It may take some changes in what foods you eat and how much you eat. Learn what choices are right for you. Go to [mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov) to find information and tools that can help.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Susan M. Krebs-Smith, PhD, RD and Penny Kris-Etherton, PhD, RD, *How Does MyPyramid Compare to Other Population-Based Recommendations for Controlling Chronic Disease?* *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2007; 107:830-837.

<sup>2</sup> *MyPyramid.gov.* Accessed 7-14-2010.



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