

## Evaluating Information

When evaluating food and nutrition information, the most important point to keep in mind is “consider the source.” Where did the information come from? The most reliable sources include government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and nonprofit organizations such as the American Heart Association. If the organization or company providing the information is trying to sell a product, the information may be biased and therefore unreliable. Always check your sources and use critical thinking skills to determine which sources are trustworthy. See Fig. 35-5.

## Recognizing Myths and Fads

Have you heard that chocolate causes acne, or that margarine contains less fat than butter? Although these statements might sound true, they are actually false. Like other types of myths, food myths are spread by word of mouth or through the media. To make informed food choices, you need to be able to separate the facts from the myths.

Be especially skeptical of fad diets that promise quick and easy weight loss. Some fad diets limit

you to special diet bars or milk shakes. Others include large amounts of one nutrient, such as protein, but almost no others. Avoid any diet that excludes one or more of the major nutrients or that calls for eating 800 calories or less per day. Such diets do not provide enough vital nutrients. Also avoid diet pills that suppress the appetite—they can have harmful side effects.

## *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Developed jointly by the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services, the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** offer science-based advice for making smart choices from every food group, finding balance between food and physical activity, and getting the most nutrition out of your calories. These guidelines are revised every five years and are designed to help you reach your best level of health.

*Fig. 35-5. Lots of magazines include articles about food and nutrition. What clues would you look for when evaluating whether the information is reliable?*



## Aiming for Good Health

Good health involves making smart food choices and being physically active every day. Follow these guidelines to maintain or improve your level of good health:

- **Get enough nutrients within your calorie needs.** Choose a variety of foods and beverages packed with nutrients from the basic food groups. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs. MyPyramid, as described on pages 514 and 515, can help you adopt a balanced eating plan.
- **Manage your weight.** Maintaining a healthy weight helps you live longer and reduces your risk for certain diseases. Balance the calories you consume from foods and beverages with calories used in physical activities. You may want to review the discussion of weight management in Chapter 33.

- **Be physically active each day.** Daily physical activity promotes health, well-being, and a healthy body weight. Try to include 60 minutes of moderate physical activity in your daily routine. Even simple changes—such as riding a bike instead of driving, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator—will make a difference. See Fig. 35-6.
- **Focus on key food groups.** No single food provides all the nutrients in the amounts you need. Choose a healthy eating plan that emphasizes whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. Foods made from grains provide your body with many essential nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and fiber. Examples of whole grain foods include whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal. Vegetables and fruits provide vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other important nutrients for good health. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day will help you stay healthy and may reduce your risk of many chronic diseases. See Fig. 35-7.
- **Limit fats.** Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat. Dietary fats, especially saturated fats and cholesterol, can contribute to high blood pressure and heart disease. Within each food group, look for the low-fat choices, such as lean meats and poultry. Choose low-fat or skim milk and foods

### TEXTLINK ≈

You will learn more about *keeping foods safe to eat* in Chapter 38.



*Fig. 35-6. Physical activity helps you look and feel better, manage stress, and maintain a healthy weight. What are some other possible benefits?*



**Fig. 35-7.** Fruits and vegetables—especially dark orange and green ones—are packed with vital nutrients. *What new-to-you fruits and vegetables would you like to try?*

that are broiled or baked instead of fried. In addition, limit your intake of high-fat toppings, such as butter, sour cream, and oily salad dressings. Choose healthy oils.

- **Be choosy about carbohydrates.** Pair whole-grain carbohydrate foods, such as brown rice, with vegetables and beans. Choose other beverages and foods to moderate your intake of added sugars. No food is “bad” in itself, including sugar, but eating too much of some foods is a poor choice. Foods high in added sugar can lead to tooth decay as well as weight gain. Check the ingredients of the foods you eat—sucrose, glucose, maltose, lactose, fructose, and syrups are all forms of sugar.
- **Reduce sodium and boost potassium.** Sodium, which you get mainly from salt, plays an important part in controlling fluids and blood pressure in your body. It

can also contribute to high blood pressure in some people. Choose foods that are low in salt, and try seasoning foods with herbs and spices instead of salt. In addition, eat plenty of potassium-rich foods and beverages, such as fruits and vegetables, to counteract the effects of sodium with high blood pressure.

- **Play it safe with food.** Keep food safe to eat from bacteria and hazards by knowing how to prepare, handle, and store food properly.

## *MyPyramid*

*MyPyramid*, shown in Fig. 35-8, is a symbol and interactive food guidance system developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is design to



encourage you to make healthier food choices and to be active every day. It divides foods into five basic groups (plus oils) and arranges them in a pyramid shape with vertical color-bands of varying widths representing each food group. The color bands are wider at the base than they are at the top to show you that not all foods within a food group are equally healthful. For example, a baked sweet potato is a more healthful choice than a portion of French fries.

Foods from all groups are needed every day. The five groups are:

- **Grain group.** Foods in this group are the richest source of carbohydrates. They also provide B vitamins, vitamin E, iron, fats, incomplete proteins, and fiber. For the most nutritional value, select whole-grain, enriched, or fortified grain products. Whole-grain means that the natural nutrients were never removed. **Enriched** indicates that many of the nutrients lost in processing have been added back. **Fortified** indicates that specific nutrients have been added during processing.
- **Vegetable group.** Vegetables are valuable sources of carbohydrates and are high in fiber. They provide many important vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried vegetables, eaten raw or cooked, and vegetable juices.
- **Fruit group.** Fruits and 100 percent fruit juice contain many of the same nutrients as vegetables. They are good sources of fiber and carbohydrates and provide essential vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits, eaten raw or cooked, and fruit juices.
- **Milk group.** Milk is a source of carbohydrates, fat, and protein. It is rich in

riboflavin, as well as vitamin A, and is often fortified with vitamin D. Drinking milk is an excellent way to get calcium and phosphorus. Yogurt and cheese are also nutritious choices.

- **Meat and beans group.** All foods from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of this group. They are all sources of protein and B vitamins. These foods also provide vitamins A and E, iron, and other minerals. Many foods in this group contain saturated fats, though excess fat can be removed.

The narrowest color band in MyPyramid represents oils. Although oils are needed for good health and help the body absorb some nutrients, they are high in calories. Eat them sparingly.

Designing an eating plan based on the food groups is easy. You can adapt your choices to your own food preferences, eating patterns, family circumstances, and cultural traditions. Food combinations, such as lasagna, include foods from several groups.

## How Much Food?

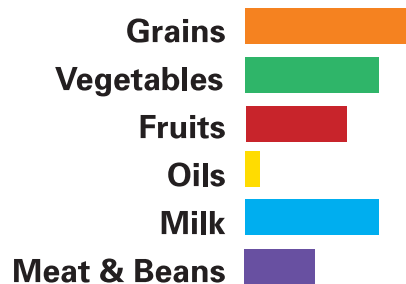
Notice that MyPyramid gives a range of recommended food amounts from each group. That's because people's calorie needs vary, depending on their age, gender, body size, and activity level. Here are several examples of how much food a person will need to eat at specific calorie levels:

- **1600 Calories.** A person at this calorie level will need to eat 5 ounces of grains (at least half whole-grain), 2 cups of vegetables, 1½ cups of fruit, 3 cups of milk or milk product, and 5 ounces of foods from the meat and beans group.
- **2200 Calories.** An individual needing this calorie level should eat 7 ounces of grain



# MyPyramid.gov

STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



## GRAIN GROUP

**Key nutrients:** carbohydrates; B vitamins, especially thiamin, niacin, folate; minerals, including iron; fiber

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 1 ounce-slice of whole-grain bread; 1 tortilla; 1/2 bagel, burger bun, or English muffin; 1 ounce ready-to-eat whole-grain cereal; 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

## OILS

**Key nutrient:** fat

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 1 teaspoon olive oil or other healthy oils

## VEGETABLE GROUP

**Key nutrients:** carbohydrates; vitamins, especially vitamins A and C and folate; minerals, including potassium; fiber

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 1 cup dark green leafy vegetables; 1 cup dark green or dark orange cooked or chopped raw vegetables; 6 ounces cup vegetable juice

## MILK GROUP

**Key nutrients:** protein, calcium and other minerals, B vitamin (riboflavin)

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 1 cup milk or yogurt; 1½ ounces natural cheese, such as cheddar; 2 ounces process cheese

## FRUIT GROUP

**Key nutrients:** carbohydrates; vitamins, especially vitamins A and C and folate; minerals, especially potassium; fiber

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 1 medium apple, banana, or orange; 1 cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit; 6 ounces fruit juice; 1/4 cup dried fruit

## MEAT & BEANS GROUP

**Key nutrients:** protein, B vitamins (thiamin, niacin), iron, zinc

**Examples of Food Amounts:** 2 to 3 ounces cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1/2 cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons peanut butter count as 1 ounce of meat

**Fig. 35-8.** MyPyramid is your easy-to-use guide to daily food choices and physical activities.

(at least half whole-grain), 3 cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, 3 cups of milk or milk product, and 6 ounces of foods from the meat and beans group.

Note that the caloric level a person requires is directly related to how many calories that person burns through physical activity. MyPyramid offers you a personalized, interactive way to identify the foods you need to eat and how much you need to eat of them. Figure 35-9 provides some additional guidance on portion amounts.

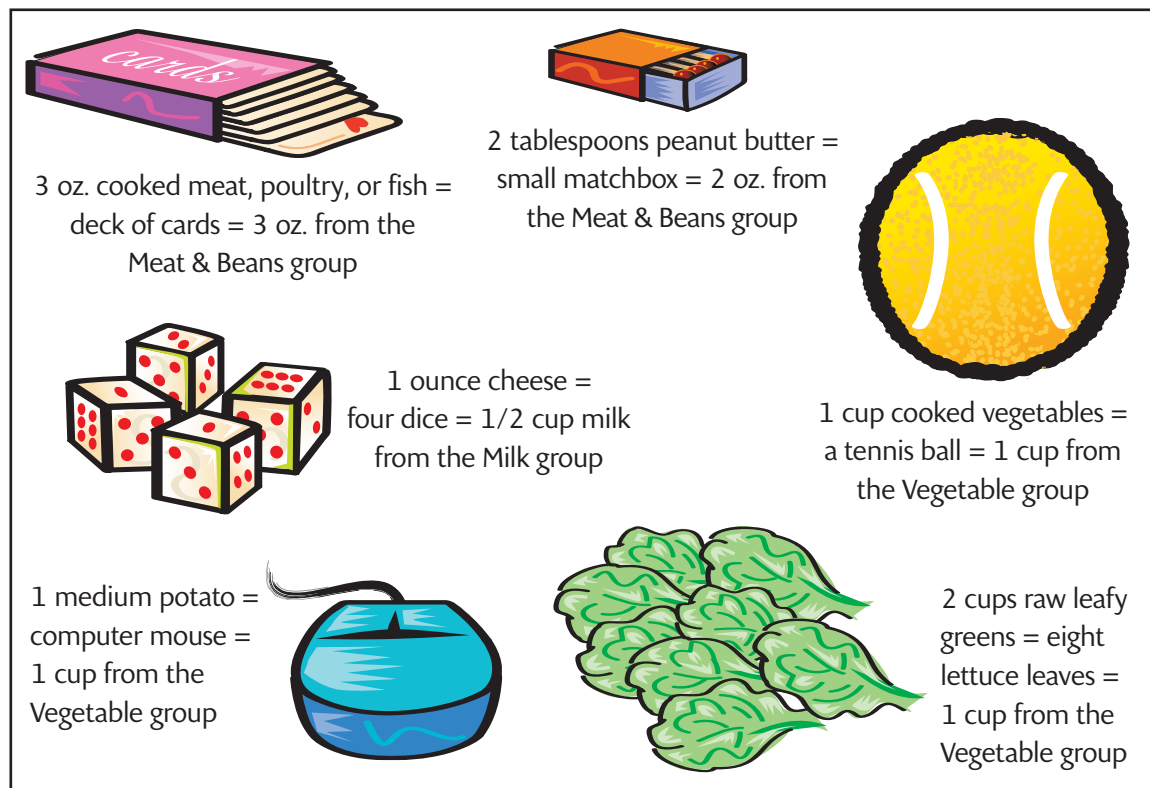
## Choosing Wisely

When using MyPyramid, be sure to vary your choices within each food group. For

example, enjoy many different types of vegetables rather than choosing the same two or three kinds all the time.

Choose plenty of low-fat, high-fiber, nutrient-dense foods. **Nutrient-dense** foods are low or moderate in calories and rich in important nutrients. In general, nutrient-dense foods are also low in fats and added sugars. Such foods include whole-grain products; fresh fruits and vegetables; legumes; lean meats, poultry, and fish; and dairy products. When choosing dairy products, read the labels and choose non-fat or low-fat varieties. Limit your intake of foods with low nutrient density, such as potato chips, soft drinks, and ice cream.

## What Do Food Amounts Look Like?



**Fig. 35-9.** Keep these images in mind when you are counting your daily food amounts.



## FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS



### Using Free Association

If you want to find a creative solution to a problem, you'll need to give your creativity a jump start. One useful technique for doing just that is called free association.

#### How It Works

You can use this technique whether you're working on a problem by yourself or in a group. Start by defining the problem in one or two words. Write them at the top of a sheet of paper. Then jot down any related words and phrases that pop into your head. For example, if you were free associating on the words *more active*, your list might include words and phrases like *jump, run, sweat, tired, fun, shoes, basketball*, and so on.

As you go through this process, don't pressure yourself to come up with a solution to your problem. The goal is simply to get your brain going in new directions. Write down everything that comes to mind, even if it seems as though you're getting off the subject. If you give your mind the freedom to roam, one of the words or phrases you come up with could eventually lead to the solution you're looking for.

#### Try It Out

Most people have some good eating habits and some that aren't so good. The problem with habits is that they aren't always easy to change. See if free association can help you come up with ideas for improving your own eating habits.

**▶ Your Turn** *Free associate on the words "good nutrition." Come up with as many words and phrases as you can. Then look back at your list. What ideas are sparked by the words and phrases you wrote down? Do any of them suggest ways you could improve your everyday food choices? Do any of them suggest reasons for some of the poor choices you make now?*

### Evaluating Your Choices

You have the information you need to develop a healthy eating plan. Now you need to put it into practice. Start by evaluating your current eating habits. Do you tend to eat too much from one of the food groups and too little from another? If you need to

make changes, do so gradually. Start by adding or cutting out an amount of food from one of the food groups. As each change becomes a habit, make another one, until you are following the pyramid guidelines. Then use them every day as your easy-to-follow road map to good nutrition.

### Chapter Summary

- Food meets a variety of physical, emotional, and social needs.
- A person's food choices are affected by both social and personal influences.
- You can make informed food choices by evaluating nutrition information, avoiding food myths and fads, and following government nutrition guidelines.
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans offer recommendations for better health.
- The MyPyramid organizes the five food groups according to the number of servings needed each day.
- To use the MyPyramid effectively, pay attention to amounts of food, make wise selections from each food group, and balance the calories you eat with those you burn through physical activity.

### Reviewing Key Terms & Ideas

1. Briefly explain how food meets physical and emotional needs.
2. What is the difference between **hunger** and **appetite**?
3. How does food serve social needs?
4. Name three social influences and three personal influences on food choices.
5. What kinds of organizations offer the most reliable nutrition information?
6. List four recommendations from the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans**.
7. Name the five food groups from the **MyPyramid**, and identify one or more of the chief nutrients each group supplies.
8. Give an example of a food amount from each of the food groups.
9. What is the difference between **enriched** foods and **fortified** foods?
10. Why should you limit the amount of fats and oils you eat?
11. Explain the importance of amounts of food when following MyPyramid.
12. What does **nutrient-dense** mean? Give four examples of nutrient-dense foods.

### Thinking Critically

1. **Drawing Conclusions.** Why do people need to be aware of the emotions that stimulate them to eat? How can they benefit from that awareness?
2. **Defending Your Position.** Do you think that the food pyramid is an effective tool for guiding daily food choices? Why or why not? Be prepared to defend your position to someone who holds the opposite view.



## Applying Your Knowledge

- 1. Evaluating Nutrition Information.** Find a newspaper or magazine article about a nutrition-related topic. Use critical thinking skills to evaluate the reliability of the article. Explain your conclusions.
- 2. Applying the Dietary Guidelines.** List each of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Next to each guideline, name two steps you could take to improve your eating or physical activity habits. For example, next to “Limit added sugars,” you might say, “Replace sugary snacks with more healthful choices.”
- 3. Making an Eating Plan.** Using the food pyramid and the Dietary Guidelines, devise an eating plan for one day. Include an explanation of how your plan follows the Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid.

## Making Connections

- 1. Science.** Use Internet or library resources to learn more about the processes of enriching and fortifying foods. Find out what kinds of foods are typically enriched or fortified, with what nutrients, and why. Summarize your findings in a brief report.
- 2. Language Arts.** With a classmate, write an article for a nutrition magazine on one of the following topics: “The Truth About Saturated Fats” or “Sugar: The Inside Scoop.” Include reasons for cutting back on saturated fat or sugar.

## Managing Your Life

### Changing Your Eating Habits

How do you rate your current eating habits in light of what you have learned in this chapter? Do you need to make some fundamental changes? You're more likely to be successful if you identify specific actions to take, then set priorities. Make a list of three eating habits that you would like to change. Beside each item, write a new habit that you would like to adopt instead. Number them in order of priority. Over the next few weeks, work on introducing these changes into your life gradually.

## Using Technology

- 1. Presentation Software.** Use appropriate software to create a presentation called “Are You Hungry?” that explains the difference between hunger and appetite. Use illustrations and explanatory text to help viewers understand how the hunger mechanism works and how appetite can persuade people to eat when they are not hungry.
- 2. Photography.** Prepare a visual guide to serving sizes that will help you and your family follow pyramid guidelines. Prepare and photograph portions of a variety of foods from each food group. Use the photos to create a poster that you can display in your kitchen or dining room.