



Using MyPyramid in Your Life – Children & Youth

My Pyramid will help you build an eating plan that works for you. You will find the right amount of foods to eat to meet your calorie needs for growth and healthy weight. Your eating plan will also give you nutrients you need for energy, muscle growth, and strong bones?

Step 1: Estimate Your Daily Calorie Needs

Use the **Estimated Daily Calorie Needs** chart to find a calorie level that's right for you. First, find your gender and age. Then select a calorie level that fits your lifestyle (from sedentary up to active) – see definitions below. Your calorie level may be between the two levels in the chart, depending on how active you are.

The calorie levels are right for young people of average height and at a healthy weight. If you are a large person, your calorie needs may be higher. If your weight is causing health problems, you can move toward a healthier weight by following the calorie level in the chart for your gender and age group. Be sure you don't lose weight quickly, since that can cause health problems. You should not feel hungry a lot, and you need to eat enough food to get all of the nutrients you need! Check with your doctor for more information about a healthy body weight for you.



Estimated Daily Calories Needs			
This chart gives an estimate of calorie needs for specific age and gender groups. Calorie ranges are based on physical activity level, from sedentary to active.			
Activity Level	Sedentary	UP TO	Active
Females			
4-8 years	1,200	UP TO	1,800
9-13 years	1,600	UP TO	2,200
14-18 years	1,800	UP TO	2,400
Males			
4-8 years	1,400	UP TO	2,000
9-13 years	1,800	UP TO	2,600
14-18 years	2,200	UP TO	3,200

Sedentary – less than 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.

Active – 60 or more minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.



My **Estimated Daily Calorie Needs** are _____ calories. This calorie level is about right for a person my age and gender of average height, who is at a healthy weight.

Remember, calorie needs vary from day to day, depending on how active you are. Also, when you go through a “growth spurt” you will need more calories than usual. Use the chart on the next page to build your eating plan?

Step 2: Build Your Eating Plan

Find your calorie level at the top of the **My Eating Plan** chart.

Follow the column below your calorie level to see how much food to eat from each of the food groups.

There are tips for each food group on the next page. Eat healthy foods that you enjoy and that fit your lifestyle! Think about how you will get all the fruits and veggies that you need! You can use a menu planner to plan your day! See the worksheet at: <http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/pyramid/adobe/worksheet.pdf>

Note: oz-eq means ounce-equivalent; see the Grains and Meat and Beans groups below to understand how these work.



My Eating Plan									
Calorie Level	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,600	3,200
Grains	4 oz	5 oz	5 oz	6 oz	6 oz	7 oz	8 oz	9 oz	10 oz
Vegetables	1½ cups	1½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	2 ½ cups	3 cups	3 cups	3½ cups	4 cups
Fruits	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ cups	1½ cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups
Milk	2 cups	2 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups
Meat and Beans	3 oz	4 oz	5 oz	5 oz	5.5 oz	6 oz	6.5 oz	6.5 oz	7 oz
Oils	4 tsp	4 tsp	5 tsp	5 tsp	6 tsp	6 tsp	7 tsp	8 tsp	11 tsp

Fruit Group includes all fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and fruit juices. In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit is considered 1 cup from this group.





Vegetable Group includes all fresh, frozen, canned, and dried vegetables and vegetable juices. In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the vegetable group.

Grains Group includes all foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, or barley, such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits. In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from this group. At least half of all grains eaten should be whole grains.



Milk Group includes all fluid milk products and foods made from milk that retain their calcium content, such as yogurt and cheese. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not part of the group. Make most milk group choices fat-free or low-fat. In general, 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese is considered as 1 cup from this group.

Meats & Beans Group: In general, 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon peanut butter, ¼ cup cooked dry beans, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the meat and beans group.



Oils include fats from many different plants and from fish that are liquid at room temperature, such as canola, corn, olive, soybean, and sunflower oil. Some foods are naturally high in oils, like nuts, olives, some fish, and avocados. Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft margarine.

Adapted from the University of Florida, IFAS Extension, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, 2005, <http://fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/pyramid/index.htm>
For more information, visit <http://MyPyramid.gov>

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