

## Utilizing the Food Pyramid for a Healthy Diet Plan

In our never-ending quest to be slim and fit, different people have different ideas about what type of body looks best. And due to this diversity in opinion, some of us are going to the extremes of the dieting spectrum. Losing weight is one thing, starving ourselves is completely something else. And the worst part is it's very unhealthy. Our bodies need certain nutrients – including fat – to help keep us alert, focused and energized. And depriving ourselves of the essentials that we need to achieve the highest level of functionality is detrimental in more ones than one. We might be losing weight at a rapid rate by practicing our chosen eating habits (or lack of), but what's the point if we're sick as a result of it? If you want to keep fit and slim, follow a healthy diet plan that will abide by you not just for right now, but throughout the years to come as well. The USDA food pyramid is something that we're all familiar with, but seem to ignore. It was specifically devised to help us reach our fullest nutritional potential and even though it can tend to be a little confusing (which is mainly why we disregard it), the main components ring true at any extent and should always be incorporated into a healthy diet plan. The food pyramid was actually revised in 2005 to indicate six food groups in lieu of there previously only being three. And there's no skimping allowed with it either – serving sizes are mandated, big or small - which will not only guarantee that you're getting your daily requirements, but it will also ensure that you're eating, period. Following are the six required elements and their applicable serving sizes as reflected on the current, recently-revised pyramid that now includes three protein subgroups.

1. Protein Sub-group: Fats, Oils and Sweets (in moderation)
2. Protein Sub-group: Milk, Yogurt and Cheese – 2 to 3 servings
3. Protein Sub-groups: Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts – 2 to 3 servings
4. Carbohydrates: Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta – 2 to 11 servings
5. Vegetables – 3 to 5 servings
6. Fruits – 2 to 4 servings

And know that the best part of the food pyramid's daily requirements is that you can mix it up. Just because it says 'grains', doesn't mean it has to be boring. There really is an abundance of food choices for each different group. For example, fruit and vegetable servings can include juice as well – you don't necessarily have to wolf down 4 apples a day. You just have to take a little time to discover which choices you enjoy the most and make you happiest as you follow your healthy diet plan. And if you've got any chronic health issues that require certain necessary dietary habits, e.g. diabetes, heart disease, a thyroid condition, always consult with your physician before making any changes to your eating habits. He or she can map out the healthy diet plan that will work best for you, not against you, and in most cases, improve and maintain your overall well-being, not only from a nutritional standpoint.

## About the Author

A diabetes meal plan is a guide that tells you how much and what kinds of food you can choose to eat at meals and snack times. A good meal plan should.

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