



## Fit For Life: A Family Approach

# Eating a Variety of Foods

By Kathleen M. Stadler and Joan C. Elledge\*

Fit For Life: A Family Approach is a nutrition series for families. The information, challenges, games, puzzles, and food preparation suggestions are designed to encourage you and your family to discuss daily habits that promote good health.

Read the publication, solve the puzzles, and play the Table Talk Challenge with your family. Become a "Fit for Life Family!" and meet the Virginia Cooperative Extension's challenge!

- 🍏 Eat a Variety of Fruits, Vegetables, and Whole-Grain Foods
- 🍏 Eat 2 Servings of Calcium Rich Foods
- 🍏 Be Physically Active
- 🍏 Handle Food Safely

Your challenge is to help your family eat a variety of colorful foods from each food group in the Food Guide Pyramid every day.

Eating a variety of colorful foods gives your family many nutrients to live a healthy, active life. The Food Guide Pyramid is a general guideline to help you eat a well-balanced diet. It is based on the 2000 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Children, teens, adults, and older adults need to eat at least the minimum number of servings from each food group. Each of the five major food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid gives you a variety of vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Foods in one group cannot replace the foods in another group.

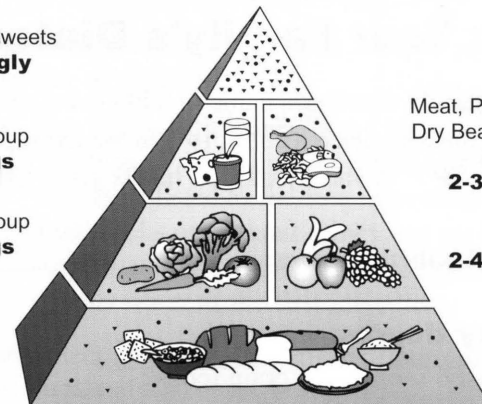
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### Food Guide Pyramid

Fats, Oils & Sweets  
**Use Sparingly**

Milk, Yogurt  
& Cheese Group  
**2-3 Servings**

Vegetable Group  
**3-5 Servings**



Meat, Poultry, Fish,  
Dry Beans, Eggs &  
Nuts Group  
**2-3 Servings**

Fruit Group  
**2-4 Servings**

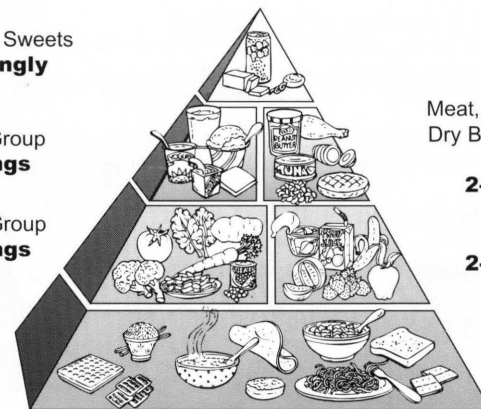
Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group  
**6-11 Servings**

### Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

Fats, Oils & Sweets  
**Use Sparingly**

Milk, Yogurt  
& Cheese Group  
**2-3 Servings**

Vegetable Group  
**3-5 Servings**



Meat, Poultry, Fish,  
Dry Beans, Eggs &  
Nuts Group  
**2-3 Servings**

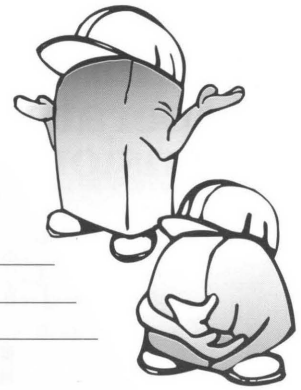
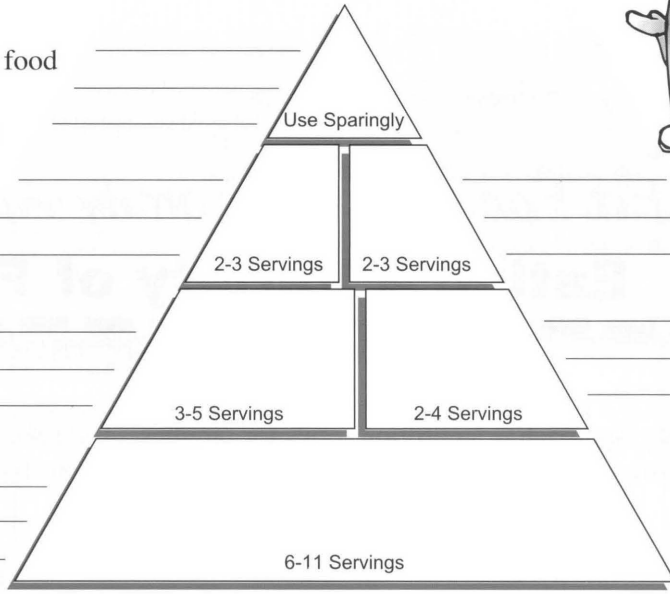
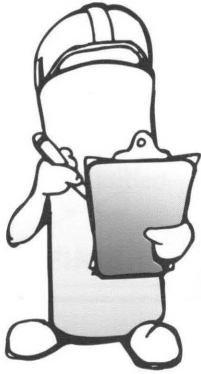
Fruit Group  
**2-4 Servings**

Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group  
**6-11 Servings**

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## Guess the Food Groups

Name the parts of the Food Guide Pyramid. Write in the name of each food group and the top of the Pyramid. Name your family's 3 favorite foods by each food group.



## Check Your Family's Dietary Habits?

Write each family member's name in a blank below. Ask each family member all the dietary habits questions. For a "yes" answer, place a check (✓) in the appropriate blank. Congratulations to the person who got the most check marks (✓)! A variety of food habits gives you a variety of nutrients.

Family Members' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

### Each day do you....

- ✓ Eat at least 6 servings of grain foods?
- ✓ Eat whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread or whole grain cereals?
- ✓ Eat at least 2 servings of fruits?
- ✓ Eat at least 3 servings of vegetables?
- ✓ Drink 2 glasses of milk or eat 2 servings of dairy foods?
- ✓ Eat a variety of foods from all food groups?
- ✓ Eat and prepare foods with less sugar?
- ✓ Eat and prepare foods with less fats?
- ✓ Eat and prepare foods with less salt?
- ✓ Drink 100% fruit or vegetable juices?
- ✓ Drink several glasses of water?
- ✓ Drink alcoholic beverages in moderation?  
*(If you do drink alcohol)*
- ✓ Take walks or perform other physical activities?
- ✓ Store food safely?

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Add up the total checks (✓): \_\_\_\_\_

# The "ABC" Tips to a Family's Health

The Food Guide Pyramid is based on the 2000 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Aim, Build, and Choose these tips to put variety into your family's meals and lifestyle.

Parents, circle the habits that you practice or that you help your family practice. Remember to set a good example for your children with your eating and health habits.

## AIM FOR FITNESS...

- ▲ Aim for a healthy weight.
  - ✓ Eat a variety of colorful foods from each food group.
  - ✓ Eat at least the minimum number of servings for all 5 food groups.
- ▲ Be physically active each day.
  - ✓ Try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the day. Walk to visit a friend, play with your child, take the stairs, do leg and arm lifts, or jog with the dog.



## BUILD A HEALTHY BASE...

- ▲ Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
  - ✓ Fruits + Vegetables + Grains should fill most of your plate.
  - ✓ Add 3-4 colors to every meal.
  - ✓ Try new foods. Offer one new food at a meal once a week.
- ▲ Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
  - ✓ Eat whole grain breads, cereals, rice, pasta, pancakes, & crackers.
- ▲ Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
  - ✓ Eat 2-3 different colorful fruits and veggies-fresh, canned, frozen or dried.



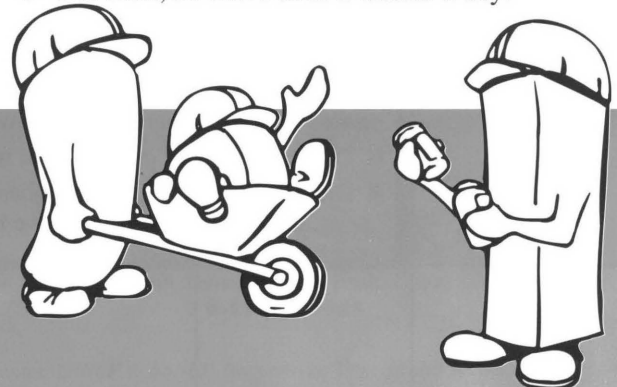
## Preschoolers Are Special!

- Children under the age of 6-years need fewer calories and smaller serving sizes of food.
- Give 2- to 3- year olds a smaller portion of foods.
- One serving size for children 4 to 6 years old is about 2/3 the serving size of older children, except for milk.
- Children 2 to 6-years of age need two servings from the milk group each day, the same as for adults or older children. For example, 2 glasses (8 ounces each) of milk.

- ▲ Keep food safe to eat.
  - ✓ Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
  - ✓ Don't leave food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

## CHOOSE SENSIBLY...

- ▲ Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
  - ✓ Buy lower fat foods, such as lean cut meats. Trim or drain the fat from meats.
  - ✓ Go easy on adding fats, oils, butter, margarine, fatback, gravy, salad dressings, sour cream, or mayonnaise in cooking and at the table. Use half the butter, margarine, or oil called for in recipes.
  - ✓ Limit eating fried foods. Eat more baked, broiled, or steamed foods.
- ▲ Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
  - ✓ Buy 100% fruit juices. Read the nutrition label. The type of juice (apple, orange, and tomato) should be listed as the first ingredient. Avoid fruit drinks or cocktail drinks that are mostly sugar water and list high fructose or sucrose (sugar) water as the first ingredient.
  - ✓ Select natural or low-sugar desserts and snacks, such as fruits or angel food cake.
- ▲ Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
  - ✓ Read food labels for lower sodium content. Add little or no salt at the table.
- ▲ If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.
  - ✓ For women, no more than 1 drink a day.
  - ✓ For men, no more than 2 drinks a day.



# Table Talk Challenge

## Game Rules:

1. 2-3 players.
2. The youngest person takes the first turn.
3. Select a dried bean, uncooked macaroni, or a nut as a game piece for each player.
4. Use the list of questions letting the child answer, then the adult.
5. Follow instructions written on the game board.
6. The first player to reach or get the closest to the "Healthy Family" square is the winner.



**FINISH**



## Game Moves

- 🍏 Did you eat a vegetable or fruit for a snack today? If yes, move 3 spaces.
- 🍏 Did you eat and/or prepare foods with less salt today? If yes, move 1 space.
- 🍏 Did you eat or drink at least 2 servings of dairy foods today? If yes, move 3 spaces. If no, move backward 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Every day do you eat more whole grain foods than white flour foods? If yes, move 2 spaces. If no, move backward 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Before eating or preparing fresh, raw fruits, everyone needs to wash them. Did you wash all your fruits today? If yes, move 1 space. If no, move back 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Did you take a walk or perform another physical activity for 15-20 minutes today? If yes, move 2 spaces. Good Job!
- 🍏 Did you eat and/or prepare foods with less fat today? If yes, move 1 space.
- 🍏 Did you choose to eat a fruit instead of a high fat or sugar food? If yes, move 2 spaces. If no, move back 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Did you eat 2 servings of fruit today? If yes, move 2 spaces. Bonus: Move 1 extra space if you ate 2 different forms—fresh, canned, frozen, or dried.
- 🍏 Did you eat 3 servings of vegetables today? If yes, move 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Did you eat at least 6 servings of different foods from the Bread, Cereal, Pasta & Rice group today? Move 2 spaces, if you did. Bonus: Move 1 extra space for each whole grain food you ate today. GREAT!
- 🍏 Did you eat at least 2 servings of Meats, Fish, Dried Beans, Eggs or Nuts today? If yes, move 1 space. If no, move back 1 space.
- 🍏 Did you drink water today? If you drank at least 4 glasses of water, move 1 space. If you drank more than 4 glasses of water, move 2 spaces.
- 🍏 Name the foods that you ate for dinner. Did you eat at least 3 different colored foods for dinner? If yes, move 2 spaces! If no, move back 3 spaces!
- 🍏 Did you eat and/or prepare foods with less sugar today? If yes, move 1 space.
- 🍏 Did you eat the minimum number of servings from all 5 food groups? If yes, move 5 spaces. If no, move backward 3 spaces.

