

Celebrate! *A Healthier You*

A newsletter devoted to helping individuals of every size live in a healthy body

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<http://extension.missouri.edu/stcharles/celebratenl/index.htm>

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Celebrate! A Healthier You

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Climb the Steps to a Healthier You on MyPyramid.gov

Every five years the federal government gets together a group of scientists to review what is known about health and nutrition. In January, this group presented the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. MyPyramid was developed from these guidelines as a set of tools for consumers to use in making healthful food choices. USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion invites Americans to take steps to a healthier you by using MyPyramid.



The MyPyramid symbol represents two key aspects of good health—healthful eating and physical activity. Each of the colors in the pyramid represents one of the five food groups: orange for grains, green for vegetables, red for fruits, blue for milk and purple for meat and beans. A band of yellow between the blue and purple sections represents oils as a reminder that some are important for good health.

Physical activity is represented by the person climbing the stairs on the side of the graphic. This reminds us of the importance of being active most if not all days of the week.

MyPyramid was designed to show several key messages:

- ◆ **Gradual improvement**
The MyPyramid slogan, Steps to a Healthier You, reinforces that it takes small steps to improve your diet and lifestyle. Building on small consistent changes will lead to permanent changes that benefit health.
- ◆ **Variety**
Variety is symbolized by the 6 color bands representing the 5 food groups of the Pyramid and oils. No one food can give us good health. Foods from all of the different colors are needed each day.
- ◆ **Moderation**
Each band of color is wider at the bottom of the pyramid and narrower at the top. The wider base is where foods with little or no solid fats, added sugars or caloric sweeteners are found. These foods contain the most nutrients for the amount of calories they contain. Foods at the top, where the band narrows, contain fewer nutrients for their calories because they are higher in fat and sugar (for example cookies and French fries). For good health eat foods from the top of the pyramid less often.

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Obesity Research Results in Reality Check

An article in the April 20, 2005 issue of Journal of the American Medical Association indicates once again that determining what constitutes a healthy weight is a difficult thing to pin down. The article concluded that people who are overweight but not obese have a lower risk of death than people of “normal” weight. It was based on research and analysis conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute, two prestigious agencies who do not take weight issues lightly (pun intended!).

The research was a statistical analysis similar to one used to predict cancer risk. Statisticians and epidemiologists looked at body weight and the likelihood of dying independent of smoking, age, race and alcohol consumption. However, it should be noted that this study did not look at a number of other lifestyle variables that may also impact mortality, such as fitness, physical activity, diet, or weight cycling. According to Glen Gaesser, PhD, from University of Virginia and author of Big Fat Lies, had the study included such factors, the results would have lessened the risk of obesity even more.

While this research was not without its critics, A New York Times article from April 20, 2005 noted “Some [researchers] saw the report as a long-needed reality check on what they consider the nation’s near-hysteria over fat.”

The Times article goes on “I love it,” said Dr. Steven Blair, president and chief executive of the Cooper Institute, a research and educational organization in Dallas that focuses on preventive medicine.

“There are people who have made up their minds that obesity and overweight are the biggest public health problem that we have to face,” Dr. Blair said. “These numbers show that maybe it’s not that big.”



Timely Tip #14

Laughter Truly is the Best Medicine

Humor is essential for good mental health. It allows us to laugh at ourselves and our too-human mistakes. Laughter is a great stress reliever and builds bridges between people. Unfortunately, as adults we seem to lose our ability to laugh, maybe because we take everything too seriously.

Humor is a sign of intelligence, and stimulates creativity and problem solving. Make opportunities for humor and laughter.

- ◆ Read the comics section of the newspaper every day—or at least the ones that make you laugh.
- ◆ Share comics with friends and co-workers so they can have a good laugh too.
- ◆ Collect cartoons that remind you of family members or friends. Use them to make special cards for birthdays or “just because.”
- ◆ Pass along funny stories sent to you via email. Do be careful to screen them for offensive content, and be judicious about how much work time you spend doing this.
- ◆ Read joke books or books by humorists like Garrison Keilor, Art Buchwald, and Erma Bombeck.
- ◆ Watch funny movies. Some oldies but goodies are the Marx Brothers’ “Animal Crackers,” Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn in “Bringing Up Baby,” and the Road To movies with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.
- ◆ There are hundreds of thousands of joke and humor sites on the Internet. One that has education-related humor is <http://www.adprima.com/humor.htm>. Check this out for some really funny answers students have given on tests.

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◆ **Proportionality**

Each color band is a different width. The orange band (the grain group) is widest, meaning that we should choose more foods from the grain group. Remember that the widths are a general guide, not exact proportions.

The latest research about what Americans are eating indicates that we are not getting enough of some important nutrients like fiber, vitamin A, potassium and calcium. Too many Americans eat more fats and added sugars than is healthy. Poor eating habits and little physical activity are linked to diseases like diabetes, osteoporosis, high blood pressure and some cancers. MyPyramid has new information to address these concerns.

- ◆ The importance of physical activity is reinforced by the figure climbing the stairs.
- ◆ Whole grains now have a specific recommendation—make half your grains whole.

- ◆ There are more specific vegetable recommendations. Eating more dark green and orange vegetables is encouraged. Legumes like beans, peas and lentils are also good to eat each week.
- ◆ Fruit is good for you, but go easy on fruit juice. Juice contains more sugar and calories but less fiber than whole fruit.
- ◆ Information about “extras” like fat, added sugar and alcohol is provided.
- ◆ The tip of the pyramid (fats, oils and sweets) is gone. Instead, one of the color bands in MyPyramid is yellow, reminding people that some oils are important for good health. A person’s allowance for these oils is based on age, sex and activity level. Most people get enough oil in the foods they eat, for example, in salad dressings and fried foods.

The MyPyramid.gov website has several resources that allow individuals to get more personalized eating plans.

Click On



“**Tour MyPyramid**” to view a short (about 2 minutes) video about the new pyramid.



“**Mini-Poster**” to download a two-page color version of MyPyramid.



“**Inside the Pyramid**” to get in-depth information about each food group, including daily amounts in household measures like cups and ounces along with examples and tips.



“**Tips & Resources**” for extra suggestions and a worksheet to track what you eat. Click on “Physical Activity” for ways to be more active.



“**My Pyramid Tracker**” for more detailed information on the quality of your eating and activity habits by comparing what you eat with current recommendations. Messages tailored to your needs are given.



“**My Pyramid Plan**” to get a quick estimate of what and how much food you should eat from different foods groups by entering age, gender and activity level.

Activity Suggestions for May



If you haven’t gotten around to **spring cleaning**, May is a great time to do it. Open the windows and let in fresh spring breezes and let out stale winter air. Brush cobwebs from the ceilings and walls. Wash windows and light fixtures until they sparkle. Move furniture to get all the dust bunnies swept away. Once the house is clean from top to bottom, tackle the garage. You’ll use and build plenty of muscle and have a fresh, tidy home as a bonus.



You may have rediscovered several pieces of **sports equipment** during that cleaning spree. Now, put them to use. Set up the volleyball net in the back yard, ready for a game while dinner cooks on the grill. Put air in the bicycle tires and take a family bike ride around the neighborhood. Oil up the ball glove and play catch with children or grandchildren.



Take a hike! Hiking is really a highfaluting name for a walk. Put on sturdy boots or shoes, grab a walking stick and hike through the park or any destination you choose. Take water and a light snack with you in a little backpack. Don’t forget the sunscreen and a hat.

Menu of the Month

The month of May brings to mind strawberries and Memorial Day. As a child, Memorial Day weekend meant parades and vintage aircraft dropping flowers onto the graves decorated with flags in the national cemetery that adjoined our backyard. It also meant a trip to the local strawberry patch to pick boxes and boxes of luscious red ripe strawberries. Most of the berries were destined for the freezer or made into yummy preserves, but several quarts were always reserved to eat fresh at a family barbeque on Memorial Day. What a great start to summer!

Celebrate Memorial Day with an all-American barbeque. Pork steaks are a St. Louis tradition, or grill your favorite meat, poultry or fish. Grill or steam ears of corn and serve with Berry Fruit Salad with Strawberry Dressing, a red, white and blue-themed salad. Omit the lettuce leaves for a dessert type fruit salad if you prefer.

Berry Fruit Salad with Strawberry Dressing

1 pint strawberries, stemmed and halved, divided
 1 tsp finely chopped fresh mint or ½ tsp dried mint
 ½ tsp honey
 ½ cup light sour cream
 1 cup blueberries, washed
 1 cup kiwi, peeled and sliced, (about 3 or 4)
 Lettuce leaves



To make strawberry dressing, puree ¼ cup of fresh strawberries until smooth. (Reserve remaining strawberries). Add mint, honey, and light sour cream to puree. Stir until smooth.

Line individual salad plates with lettuce. Place remaining strawberries, blueberries and kiwi on lettuce. Top with Strawberry dressing. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Information: 111 calories, 3 g fat (21% calories from fat), and, 3 g fiber
 Source: California Strawberry Advisory Board

Hint: Plums, peaches, bananas, or other fresh fruit may be substituted for the kiwi and blueberries.



Words to Consider

“People are like stained glass windows—the true beauty can be seen only when there is light from within. The darker the night, the brighter the windows.”—Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

“Gardens and flowers have a way of bringing people together, drawing them from their homes.”—Clare Ansberry

“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy: They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” —Marcel Proust

“I have a rock garden. Last week three of them died.”—Richard Diram

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