



Dear *Walk Across Texas* Participant,

Included with this letter is the third topic of the Weight Management Series called “Understanding the Food Guide Pyramid.” The goal of this topic is to help you create better eating habits using the Food Guide Pyramid.

To help you reach this goal, look for key points while reading “Understanding the Food Guide Pyramid.”

- The Food Guide Pyramid has six food groups.
- The foods you should eat the most are at the bottom of the Food Guide Pyramid and the food you should eat the least are at the top.
- Measure serving sizes for a few days to see what they look like.
- Eat less foods high in fats, oils, and sugars.
- Children 2 years old or younger should drink whole milk unless otherwise instructed by your health care provider.

Happy Walking!

Sincerely,



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## Weight Management Series — Health Break 3

# Understanding the Food Guide Pyramid

### Goal:

To create healthier eating habits using the Food Guide Pyramid (FGP)

### Objectives:

Participants will:

- List foods from each group that they like.
- Determine how many servings they should eat from each group based on individual calorie goal.
- Plan a menu for one day to be used at least once a week.

### Key Teaching Points:

- The Food Guide Pyramid has six food groups.
- The foods you should eat the most are at the bottom of the pyramid and the foods you should eat the least are at the top.
- Measure serving sizes for a few days to see what they look like.
- Eat less foods high in fats, oils, and sugars.
- Children 2 years old or younger should drink whole milk unless otherwise instructed by your health care provider.

### Activity:

- Have participants make a list of foods they like using the FGP. The number of foods listed from each group should be the same number of servings they should have each day. For example, they should list 11 food items for the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group. Next, they need to pick foods from their list of items for each group to meet the number of servings they need to meet their calorie goal each day. For example, using the calorie goal from the “Counting Calories” lesson example, they would create menus for one day using the food servings for 1872 calories. The servings would include the ones under the 1600 plus servings that equal about 272 calories. They should plan 3 meals plus snacks.

### Evaluation

- Yes  No      1. The Food Guide Pyramid has 4 food groups.
- Yes  No      2. The foods you should eat the most are at the top of the pyramid.
- Yes  No      3. Measure food portions for a few days to see what they look like.
- Yes  No      4. Eat fats, oils, and sugar sparingly.
- Yes  No      5. Children under 2 years old should drink whole milk.

Answers: 1. No; 2. No; 3. Yes; 4. Yes; 5. Yes

## Understanding the Food Guide Pyramid

The Food Guide Pyramid (FGP) is divided into six sections. Each section shows a food group and how many servings from that food group is needed to maintain health. When looking at the FGP, start at the bottom and go up. Foods you should eat the most are on the bottom and foods that you need the least are at the top.

Let's look at what is in each section starting at the bottom (see Food Guide Pyramid on next page):

- **Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group.** You should eat 6 to 11 servings of foods from this group each day. Try selecting lower calorie foods from this group to maintain a healthy calorie intake.
- **Vegetable Group.** You should eat 3 to 5 servings of vegetables each day. The vegetable and fruit groups are full of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and fiber.
- **Fruit Group.** You should eat 2 to 4 servings of fruit each day. Our bodies use the vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables more efficiently than the vitamins and minerals from supplements.
- **Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group.** You should eat 2 to 3 servings of milk products each day to maintain healthy bones and teeth. Skim milk has the same amount of calcium as whole milk, but with less calories. Remember, children age 2 and younger should drink whole milk.
- **Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts Group.** You should eat 2 to 3 servings of protein each day. Besides getting needed protein from this group, you also get zinc and iron.
- **Fats, Oils, and Sweets.** Use this group sparingly each day. In moderation, sugars and fat can fit into your healthy eating plan.

All the food groups have calories. The chart below shows how many servings you may want to eat each day for a particular calorie level.

	Calorie Level ...		
	About 1600	About 2200	About 2800
Bread & Cereal Group Servings	6	9	11
Vegetable Group Servings	3	4	5
Fruit Group Servings	2	3	4
Milk Group Servings	2	2	3
Meat Group Servings	2	2	3

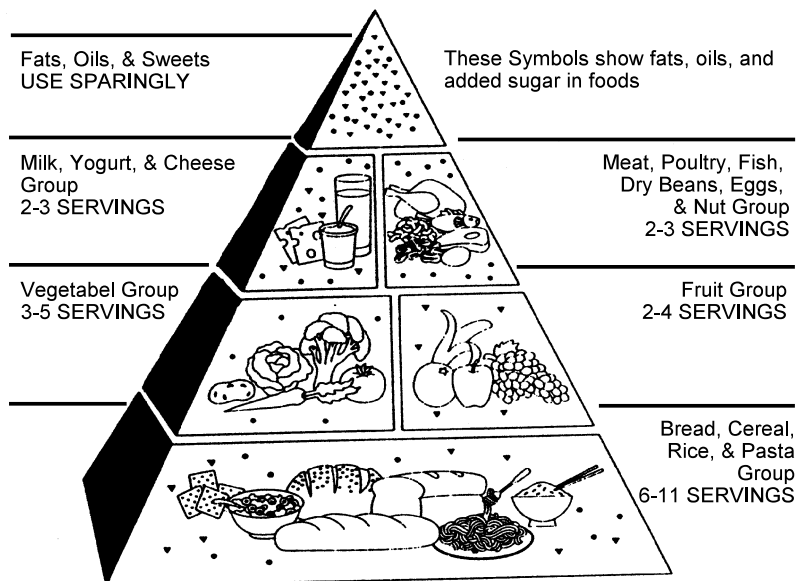
## What is a Serving?

Most of the time what we consider a serving is much more food than we should be eating. Try measuring your food portions for a few days to see what a serving size looks like. Once you become familiar with the portion sizes, you will be able to judge a serving size without measuring.

To help you know the serving size of some of the foods from the Food Guide Pyramid, a chart is provided. Some foods from each food group are given as examples. You decide the number of servings you will need to meet your calorie intake for each day.

Examples of Serving Sizes	
<p><b>Bread and Cereal Group</b></p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 slice bread</li> <li>1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal (about 1 cup)</li> <li>½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta</li> <li>3 to 4 small crackers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Milk and Milk Products Group</b></p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup skim milk or 2% milk</li> <li>1 cup yogurt</li> <li>2 cups cottage cheese (low fat)</li> <li>1½ ounces cheddar cheese</li> <li>2 ounces processed cheese food</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruit Group</b></p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>¾ cup fruit juice</li> <li>¼ cup dried fruit</li> <li>½ cup chopped, cooked, or canned “lite” fruit</li> <li>1 medium sized piece of fresh fruit</li> <li>¼ cantaloupe</li> <li>½ grapefruit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Meat and Protein Group</b></p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 ounces cooked meat, poultry, or fish</li> <li>2 eggs</li> <li>1½ cups cooked dry beans, peas, lentils, or soybeans</li> <li>4 tablespoons peanut butter</li> <li>¾ cup of nuts or seeds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vegetable Group</b></p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup raw leafy vegetables</li> <li>½ cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw</li> <li>¾ cup vegetable juice</li> </ul>	

## Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices



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