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## WELCOME TO

## Rate What YOU Ate Using the MyPyramid Menu Planner

## What is the MyPyramid Menu Planner?

The Menu Planner is a useful and engaging way to show teens how to make healthier food choices. Using their own food choices, the Menu Planner lets teens:

- See if their meal and snack choices are balanced for the day or, on average, over a week.
- Tell if they are getting enough fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk or fat-free milk or milk products, and whole-grain foods.
- Discover if they are getting too many added sugars, solid fats, and calories.
- Explore ways to improve their food choices.
- Track their meal and snack choices over time.
- Involve family members in healthier eating, too.

The MyPyramid Menu Planner is based on principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPyramid Food Guidance System.

## How can you use the Menu Planner?

The Menu Planner supports you in teaching nutrition concepts to middle school and high school students. The Menu Planner is available both in computer disc format and online.

## You can use the Menu Planner as a:

- Stand-alone nutrition education activity.
- Pre- and/or post-test or a learning activity for your existing nutrition instruction in health, family, and consumer sciences, or science.
- Way to apply the ideas found in Nutrition Essentials: Teaching Tools for Healthy Choices, available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Team Nutrition. (Click on the Resource Library link on the teamnutrition.usda.gov Web site.)
- Resource for parent involvement at home.


## How does it work?

First, teens enter their age, gender, height,* weight,* and physical activity level on the opening page of the Menu Planner. Then they enter foods and amounts they might eat each day. The screen shows each food as added. Teens can see and print out (1) reports about their daily or weekly food choices, (2) "My Next Steps" suggestions for improving food choices, and (3) detailed information about the foods they chose including calories and other nutrients. By signing in at the start, the Menu Planner saves entries for later use and learning.

Using the Menu Planner allows teens to identify amounts and types of foods they need and specific changes they could make to improve their food and physical activity choices.
*Providing height and weight information is optional. Revealing this information in a school setting may be sensitive. If this information is not entered into the Menu Planner, the program will use an average height and weight for the student's age and gender to calculate the personalized amounts and types of foods.

## Materials Needed

Print out the MyPyramid mini-poster or obtain MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You poster or mini-poster.
(1) Request copies from www.mypyramid.gov/global_nav/order2.html or download at www.mypyramid.gov/professionalslindex.html.
(2) Use the posters and visuals from Nutrition Essentials to cover the MyPyramid key ideas. Go to http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/nutritionessentials.html.

## MyPyramid Menu Planner

The Menu Planner is available in two ways:
(1) Online at www.mypyramid.gov. Click on the Menu Planner link.
(2) Computer disc available upon requє from Support@cnpp.usda.gov.


## Preparing for the Sessions

Determine how you want to schedule the activities described in this guide.
Options for teaching:
(1) On Day One—Review the MyPyramid Key Ideas.
(2) On Day Two-Rate What YOU Ate-Use the Menu Planner.
(3) On Day Two or Three-Do You Get What You Need?

- If your students already know the MyPyramid key ideas, quickly review the concepts and messages.
- For longer class periods you might conduct all the sessions on Day One.
- For shorter class periods, schedule sessions over two to three class periods.

Display the MyPyramid-Steps to a Healthier You poster, or provide miniposters. Or, use posters found in Team Nutrition's Nutrition Essentials: Teaching Tools for Healthy Choices-Nutrition Education Ideas for Secondary School Teachers.

Students can use a computer disc or access the Menu Planner online at school, at home, or in a community library. Go to www.mypyramid.gov to access the Web site.

# Tips for Using the Menu Planner 

Check out the Menu Planner before introducing it to your students. (Use the computer disc for the Menu Planner or go online. Click the Menu Planner link on www.mypyramid.gov.) On the Menu Planner's home page, click on the Site Tour.

## Help students use the Menu Planner:

- Have students sign in on the home page with a user name and password. The information they enter will be saved and remain from session to session until they delete their entries.
- As students enter their food choices, encourage them to check what day (e.g., Day 1 or Day 4) they are working on. The Menu Planner allows them to enter food choices for seven days.
- Encourage students to focus on how their food choices average over several days. The Weekly Report averages meal and snack choices for the number of days recorded. Students do not need to fill out seven days to get a weekly average. To keep track of more than seven days, students can: (1) reopen the Web site and register again under another user name, or (2) create another entry for themselves as a different family member.

Use the posters to focus the students' attention as you cover each topic. Use these sheets to make overhead masters or print out and use to direct students to specific areas on a page.

## NOTE:

- Height and weight: If height and weight are not entered into the Menu Planner, the program will calculate food group goals (the recommended amounts and types of foods the user needs) based on an average height and weight for the student's age and gender.
- For teens under age 18 years: Alcoholic beverages will not appear as an option in the Menu Planner. For older students or when writing in a list of foods for parents or other adults, alcoholic beverages can appear as options.
- For female students over age 18 years: A statement "If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, click here" appears on the entry screen. This allows pregnant or breastfeeding teens using the online version to get information that meets their needs. The computer disc for the Menu Planner does not have this feature.

The Menu Planner also can be used for pregnant teens, ages 14 to 18 years, by clicking on the MyPyramid for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding link on the www.mypyramid.gov. The Menu Planner for pregnancy and breastfeeding is the same for the age groups, except that the calorie goals change based on trimester.

## SESSION 1 <br> Review the MyPyramid Key Ideas

## Overview:

Using the MyPyramid poster, review the amounts and kinds of foods and beverages needed to meet the MyPyramid recommendations at 2,000 calories a day. Discuss how amounts from the food groups differ based on age, gender, and physical activity level. Also discuss how food choices may vary within the food groups, based on personal preferences, and how to estimate amounts of foods.

Before you begin, assess your students' knowledge of the MyPyramid key ideas.

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Summarize the key ideas of MyPyramid.
- State the amounts and kinds of foods needed from each food group at 2,000 calories a day.
- Explain how MyPyramid amounts of food differ based on age, gender, and level of physical activity.
- Discuss how to estimate amounts of foods.


## Review the MyPyramid Key Ideas before introducing the Menu Planner:



| 2 cups | Fruits |
| :--- | :--- |
| $21 / 2$ cups | Vegetables |
| 3 cups | Milk |
| $51 / 2$ ounces | Meat and Beans |
| 6 ounces | Grains |

The following discussion questions cover MyPyramid key ideas, important for choosing food for a day that reflects the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

SHOW > The MyPyramid-Steps to a Healthier You poster or mini-poster.


POINT OUT $>$
MyPyramid shows a general guide for the kinds and amounts of food you need for good health. It also reminds you to be physically active every day or on most days.

ASK What information does MyPyramid provide for choosing a day's worth of food?

## SUMMARIZE:

The image of MyPyramid guides you to:

- Choose foods from every food group, plus oils, ${ }^{*}$ every day, as shown by the stripes.
- Eat more from some food groups than others, as shown by the size of each stripe.
- Choose foods from each group in "nutrient-dense" forms. Nutrient-dense forms of foods have little or no solid fats or added sugars. The stripes' wide bases stand for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. Eat these foods more often. The narrow top stands for foods with a lot of added sugars or fats. Eat them less often.
- Be physically active.
- Take one step at a time. Make small changes in what you eat and how you exercise. Start with one change and add others as often as possible.
- Make choices that are right for you. Use the MyPyramid.gov Web site to discover how to eat better and exercise more.
*Oils are liquid fats at room temperature. Oils have less saturated fat than fats that are solid at room temperature.

POINT OUT $>$ MyPyramid recommends daily amounts of foods from each food group, based on 2,000 calories a day.

ASK $>$ What are the daily food group recommendations for people who eat 2,000 calories a day?

| 2 cups | Fruits |
| :--- | :--- |
| $21 / 2$ cups | Vegetables |
| 3 cups | Milk |
| $51 / 2$ ounces | Meat and Beans |
| 6 ounces | Grains |



POINT OUT $>$ MyPyramid recommendations from each food group vary from person to person.
ASK What might affect how much you need from each food group? (age, gender, level of physical activity, body size, rate of growth)

ASK Who might need less from some food groups? (younger children, inactive adult women)
ASK Who might need more from some food groups? (teen boys, active adult men)

POINT OUT To stay healthy, teens need to develop lifelong eating habits with meals and snacks that provide the nutrients they need. They also need enough physical activity.

ASK How do you think your food choices compare with MyPyramid recommendations? (many possible answers)

ASK $>$ What kinds or amounts of foods might you need to eat more often? (for many students, fruits, vegetables, milk, whole-grain foods)

ASK What kinds or amounts of foods might you need to eat less often? (for many students, refined grain products, foods with "extra" calories from solid fats and added sugars)

ASK How could you tell if you are getting the right amount of various foods? (Be able to identify the amounts of foods you need. Estimate the amounts you usually eat by visually comparing food amounts to the size of measuring cups or other standard measures.)

ASK How can you tell if your meal and snack choices for a day meet MyPyramid recommendations? (Answers will vary and may include estimating amounts.)

ASK $>$ How can you tell how much food you are eating at any one time, or for a day, to meet MyPyramid recommendations? (Writing a list of foods and amounts eaten helps you recognize how much and what types of food you eat. Estimating amounts of foods is easier if you are familiar with using measuring cups or other items that are about equal in size to measured amounts of foods.)

## SUMMARIZE:

The MyPyramid poster shows the amounts and kinds of foods and beverages needed to meet recommendations at 2,000 calories a day. The amount you need from the food groups depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level.

## SESSION 2

## Overview:

Students use the Menu Planner on the computer-opened either online or from the computer disc. Students will fill in their age, gender, physical activity level, and (optional) height and weight. They type in amounts and kinds of foods and beverages they ate throughout one day. Graphs show how the foods they ate fit into their personal food group goals. Calorie amounts are shown under Daily Limits. Solid fats and added sugars are shown as "extras." Students will learn to locate and print their Daily Menu Report and Food Details Report.

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Open the Menu Planner, type in their personal information, and create a user name and password.
- Type in foods and amounts they ate in one day.
- Read and explain charts showing the amounts and types of foods they consumed from each food group.
- Identify the amounts of calories, solid fats, and added sugars found in their food for one day.
- Locate and read their Daily Menu Report and the Food Details Report.


It's easy to get started.
Fill out the information below to determine your personal MyPyramid goals. Then you can start planning menus by searching for foods and beverages you plan to eat. You can save your menu choices for later by registering. After you click the submit button below, you can register for free at any time by selecting the "Register" tab on the Menu Planner's main page.
Want to learn more about the Menu Planner first? Click here for a Site Tour. For a fully accessible version of a dietary assessment and planning tool, please use the MyPyramid Tracker.


By writing their own food choices in the Menu Planner, students see how their own food choices add up and how close they come to meeting MyPyramid and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

SHOW $>$ The Menu Planner on the computer—opened either online or from the computer disc.
POINT OUT $>$ The Menu Planner is an easy tool to determine if your food choices match MyPyramid recommendations.

The Menu Planner can help you identify the amounts and types of food you need. Using the computer, you type what you ate, then compare the results to what you need to eat for a day.

SHOW
To use the Menu Planner, open the program:

- Fill in your name, age, gender, (height and weight optiona**), and physical activity level.
- Fill in your user name and password so your meal and snack choices are saved to use later.
*Height and weight entry may be sensitive and is therefore optional.


POINT OUT $>$ in the "Start here" box, enter a food item and click search.
SHOW
The Menu Planner will show bar graphs of the amounts and types of food for each food group that you need. It also will show the calories and extras, or solid fats and added sugars, in the foods selected.


SHOW


- After you click on it, select an amount, any "add-ons," and a mealtime when they pop up.
- Click "ADD" to save the food to your menu and see your results start to build.


Continue with more foods to complete one day's worth of meals and snacks.


SHOW
Click on "Report" to see the Daily Menu Report.
Compare what you ate (column 2-My Menu) to what you need (column 3-Goal). 23


POINT OUT $>$ When you finish filling in the Menu Planner with all your food choices for one day:

- Select the "Daily Menu Report." Print out your report. Use it in class for discussion.
- Click onto "My Next Steps" for steps you can take for a healthier you.


If you want to know more about your food choices, click on the Menu Planner's "Food Details Report."


## SUMMARIZE:

The Menu Planner is a useful way to identify the amounts and types of food you need. Using the computer, you type in your own meal and snack foods, then compare them to what you need to eat.

## SESSION 3 <br> Did You Get What You Need?

## Overview:

Students review a printed copy of their Daily Menu Report. It shows all the food choices made for one day. They discuss how their food choices add up, along with calories and "extras" (added sugars and solid fats). Students identify what foods or amounts helped them to meet food group goals. They identify the amounts of calories in the foods they ate and the amounts of "extras." Using "My Next Steps" students explore options for improving their food choices.

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Review their Daily Menu Report.
- Compare how their food choices meet the MyPyramid recommended amounts.
- Identify amounts and types of foods needed to meet their MyPyramid food group goals.
- State specific changes they could make to get the types and amounts of foods they need, by using the "My Next Steps" pages.
- Explain how their level of physical activity affects the amounts and types of foods they eat.


Evaluation helps students interpret their personal results from the Menu Planner and identify steps they can take to reach their healthy eating goals.

## REFER TO $>$ Student's personal Menu Planner "Daily Menu Report."

The Menu Planner "Daily Menu Report" shows all your food choices for one day. It also shows how your choices match what you need to reach your day's food group goals.


ASK $>$ What surprised you the most about how your food choices added up? (Answers will vary.)
ASK $>$ Did you get the amounts of foods you need from the food groups? (Answers will vary.)
ASK Which food group amounts were easiest to meet? Why? (Answers will vary.)
ASK $>$ Which food group amounts were harder to reach (or didn't you reach)? Why? (Answers will vary.)
POINT OUT > The amounts of and types of foods you need from the food groups are based in part on your level of physical activity. As a teen, you need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day, or on most days. Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, as noted on the "Daily Menu Report."

The Menu Planner "Daily Menu Report" also shows calories, "extras," (solid fats and sugars) in your meal and snack choices for the day.

ASK How did your total calories compare to your day's calorie goal? (Answers will vary.)

ASK How might your need for calories change if you were more physically active? (Calories may increase.)


POINT OUT > The term "extras" is used for calories from solid fats and added sugars. Some solid fats and added sugars are put on foods when we eat them, and some are already in food.

ASK $>$ What types of foods might be high in "extras"—solid fats or added sugars? (Answers may include fatty meats, fried foods, some cheeses, soft drinks, desserts, and candy.)

ASK Did you stay within your limits for calories, "extras"? How did the amount of "extras" compare to your limit for "extras"? (Answers will vary.)

ASK $>$ Which of your food choices had "extras"? (Answers will vary.)

POINT OUT $>$ The Menu Planner "My Next Steps" shows steps you might take to get the types and amounts of foods you might take to get the types and amounts of foods you
need. It also gives you a place to type in your own ideas.

ASK What steps could you take to get the types and amounts of foods you need, and still stay within your limits for calories, and "extras"? (Answers will vary and may include: choose more foods that are low in calories from added sugars and solid fats; eat bigger or smaller portions. Offer specific steps.)


ASK $>$ will you make any changes now that you have used the Menu Planner?
ASK If so, what changes will you make (or steps will you take)? (Answers will vary.)
ASK Does your level of physical activity meet guidelines for teens? (Answers will vary.) How could you fit in more physical activity? (Answers will vary.)

## SUMMARIZE:

Remind students:

- The amount of food you need from each food group depends on your age, body size, gender, and physical activity level.
- You have many food choices for meals and snacks that will meet the types and amounts of foods you need.
- Choose foods from all food groups and make choices that are low in "extras" (solid fats and added sugars).
- What and how much you eat over several days, not just one day, is what matters.


## Rate What YOU Ate-Go to the Next Level!

## Additional activities can help motivate students to work towards healthful eating and physical activity choices beyond the school environment.

Check your food choices for several days. Using the Menu Planner, extend the activity so students can track their meal and snack choices for several days, review their "Weekly Menu Report," and take "My Next Steps" to healthier eating.

Plan meals for families. Encourage students to involve one or more other family members in choosing foods for healthful eating. The Menu Planner allows students to add other family members and to create a Family Menu Report, also with next steps to healthier eating.

MyPyramid Tracker. For a more in-depth assessment of their own food and nutrient intake, physical activity level, and energy balance, have students use the Tracker. It can be accessed through the www.MyPyramidTracker.gov Web site. The Tracker has a more detailed food database and allows students to track their food choices and energy balance history longer-for up to 1 year. Like the Menu Planner, Tracker translates the principles of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Ameicans and other nutrition standards developed by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.

## Sources for Nutrition Information

Information on nutrition guidance, making food choices, food labeling, and other food, nutrition, health issues, and educational resources are available from Federal Government Web sites.

## For MyPyramid information:

Web site: MyPyramid.gov

## Nutrition.gov

Easy access to nutrition and health
Web sites from across the Federal Government
Web site: www.nutrition.gov

## Food and Nutrition Information Center

USDA/National Agricultural Library
10301 Baltimore Blvd., Rm. 304
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
Tel: 301-504-5719 Fax: 301-504-6409
Educators can e-mail information and
publication requests to fnic@nal.usda.gov
Web site: http://fnic.nal.usda.gov
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion/USDA
3101 Park Center Drive, Rm. 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302
Web site: www.cnpp.usda.gov

## Food and Nutrition Service/USDA Team Nutrition

Obtain these posters from Team Nutrition.


STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

