

Answers to “A Moving Nutrition Lesson”

1. The current food guide is called “The Food Pyramid”.

False: The correct name is “MyPyramid”. The previous guide was the “Food Guide Pyramid”. There are two versions of MyPyramid, one for adults (middle school age and higher) and one for children called “MyPyramid for Kids”. The major difference between MyPyramid and previous guides is that the recommendations differ based on age, gender and activity level. And there are no “servings” in MyPyramid; recommendations are in amounts e.g., 2 cups fruit rather than two to four servings.

2. The width of the band suggests the amount of food needed from each group.

True: The widest band is for grains, which has the highest recommendation. The thinnest band is “oils” which is not really a food group, but some oils are needed daily or symptoms of deficiency will result.

3. Veggie recommendation per day equals 1½ cups.

False: The actual recommendation is 2½ cups! Dark green and orange vegetables should be included. Frozen vegetables are very close in nutritional value to fresh vegetables and can be less expensive (and easier to keep for long periods). Canned vegetables are an economical choice. If sodium is a concern (since canned vegetables usually have added salt), you can put the canned veggies in a strainer and rinse them to lesson the sodium.

4. Fruit recommendation equals 1½ cups per day.

False: The recommendation is two cups per day. So 4½ cups of fruits and veggies are needed per day which is very difficult for most teens (and adults) to achieve. Fruit juice (100%) can count toward the recommendation but since it does provide simple sugars, actual fruits are the better way to get your two cups per day. MyPyramid recommends to “go easy on juices”. Having fruits for snacks and desserts can help you get more into your daily diet.

5. Fruit drinks count in the fruit group.

False: They do not have enough actual fruit in them to count and they have added sugars. Most fruit drinks have lots of calories for the amount of nutrients they provide.

6. Half your grains should be whole grains.

True: Six ounces per day are recommended and three should be from whole grains. One piece of bread or half of a bagel or a small muffin = one ounce. To find out if a food has whole grains, check the label for fiber. The more whole grain the product has, the higher fiber. You can also check the list of ingredients for the word “whole”. Ingredients are listed in order of predominance by weight so whole wheat flour as a first ingredient would have more than if it were at the end of the list. Any of these can be whole grain if they are made with whole wheat flour: buns, rolls, bread, muffins, tortilla, crackers or pasta. Brown rice is a good source as is whole oats. Cereals vary, so check the number of grams of fiber.

7. Popcorn is a whole grain.

True: Of course it becomes less healthy if you add lots of butter and salt to it. Read the label for fat grams; you will be surprised at the range among different products. Of course, popcorn has no fat (most grains don't) but packaged popcorn to microwave has other ingredients (butter, salt) added.

8. You need two cups of milk (or cheese/yogurt equivalents).

False: You need three cups (children under eight years old need two cups). If you don't like milk you can meet this requirement from eating cheese (choose low-fat) or yogurt.

9. Whole milk has eight grams fat per cup and fat-free milk has zero.

True: Both types of milk have the same amount of nutrients, except the fat in whole/regular milk adds 72 calories (8 grams fat x 9 calories per gram = 72 calories).

10. Skim milk has the same amount of calcium as 2% or whole milk.

True: Any type of milk will have similar amounts of calcium. It is the fat (and therefore the calories) that varies. Chocolate or strawberry milk often has added sugar so that will increase the calories too. If you drink flavored milk, low-fat offers the best nutritional value.

11. People that are lactose intolerant should not eat yogurt.

False. If you are lactose intolerant, you have trouble digesting the milk sugar--lactose. The lactose in yogurt has been broken down by bacteria therefore your system does not have to. The same is true for aged cheeses like Swiss or cheddar--the bacteria in them have broken down the milk sugar (lactose). Another option is to select lactose-free milk to drink. If you have an allergy to the protein in milk, yogurt will still cause problems (as will cheese or any dairy product since they all have milk protein). You might need calcium supplements if you have an allergy to the protein in milk.

12. Since cream cheese is made form milk, it counts in the milk group.

False: Cream cheese, butter, sour cream, whipping cream and cream are all products that have too little calcium to count towards the milk/dairy requirement of three cups per day.

13. Eggs are in the milk/dairy group.

False. They are in the meat and beans group since their nutrient content is more like meat than it is like milk. Eggs do not have calcium. Eggs are an economical source of protein (which is in the white). The fat and cholesterol are in the yolk.

14. You can find protein in the meat & beans group AND the milk group.

True: Meat, beans and milk/dairy foods all are good sources of protein. Milk provides one gram protein per ounce, so two eight-ounce glasses of milk provides 16 grams of protein. The average protein need ranges from 44 for females to 56 for males (and the average intake in the U.S. is 115 grams!). You can see that milk and dairy foods can contribute substantially to your protein needs. Vegetables and grain foods also have protein, just not as much as meat, beans and milk.

15. Dried beans are in the vegetable AND the meat & beans group.

True: If you are doing a diet analysis you need to count them in one group or the other, not both. This is a change from the previous food guidance system where they were only classified into the meat/beans group.

16. Pop is high in sodium.

False: It has very little sodium, usually about 50 mg per 12-ounce serving. Compare that to a cup of "regular" (not low-sodium) soup that is xxxxxx and xxxx which has xxx mg of salt. However, this does not mean pop is nutritious, just that it does not have much salt.

17. Fifty-seven percent of a teen's fluid intake is from sugar-sweetened beverages.

True:

18. Children/teens need to be active 30 minutes per day.

False: They need 60 minutes of activity per day. Offering them physical activity breaks in the classroom can help contribute to that amount in addition to physical education and recess.

19. 200 calories per day, beyond what you burn, adds 21 pounds of fat per year.

True: So you can see how making little changes will result in weight gain or loss.

20. The website for MyPyramid is MyPyramid.org.

False: It is MyPyramid.gov (gov, not org). There are many helpful resources at this site for educators. If computers are available and internet access, students can use the Pyramid Tracker to analyze their diet.