

Tip the Scale in Your Favor: Smart Advice for Managing Your Weight

Managing your weight can be a daily challenge. If you've tried popular diets only to find that you can't live with the rigid rules, then perhaps it's time to try a sensible eating approach to help manage your weight. Following the advice of the latest *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and updated MyPyramid may be just what you need to tip the scales in your favor.

Calorie Tally

Experts agree that when it comes to weight control, it's calories that count (although you need the nutrients supplied by a balanced diet for good health). Your weight depends on how many calories you eat and how many calories you use up during the day. Over time, this determines whether you lose, gain or maintain your weight.

To lose weight gradually, about 1 pound per week, you should take in about 500 fewer calories than you are burning on most days. The best strategy for healthy weight loss that lasts is *eating fewer* calories while *burning more* calories with physical activity (see box on page 2).

Choose Your Calories Wisely

When you're eating fewer calories, you need to pay closer attention to your food choices to be sure you're getting the nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. This means choosing meals and snacks that are high in nutrients but low-to-moderate in calories. Nutrient-rich foods give you the most nutrients for your calories, and some can help you feel fuller on fewer calories. Follow these tips for making nutrient-rich choices:

- ◆ **Grains:** Make sure that half of your grain choices are whole grains, aiming for at least 3 ounces of whole grains a day. Look for breads, cereals, grain-based side dishes and crackers made with whole grains, such as whole wheat, whole oats or whole rye.
- ◆ **Vegetables:** Choose deep-colored varieties, including dark green, orange and red vegetables. Skip high-fat sauces (e.g., creamy or buttery types) and frying.
- ◆ **Fruits:** Enjoy fresh, unsweetened canned or frozen, or dried fruit more often than fruit juices.
- ◆ **Milk Group:** Opt for fat-free or low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt.



Chicken and Vegetable Stir-Fry

- ◆ **Meat and Beans:** Choose lean cuts of meat and vary your protein routine with more fish, beans (legumes), nuts and seeds.

Steps to a Healthier You

The updated MyPyramid food guide can help you make choices that will put you on your way to a healthy weight.

- ◆ **Go for variety.** The side-by-side bands of colors on the Pyramid illustrate that eating from each of the food groups is important for good health. Within each food group, try to mix up your choices from day to day to get a variety of nutrients.

- ◆ **Choose more "power" foods.** The food groups are wider at the bottom of the

Pyramid to remind you to choose more of the nutrient-rich foods from each group. These are foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars.

- ◆ **Eat the amount that's right for you.** The varying widths of the food group bands illustrate that you should eat different amounts from each food group. For example, more than half of your daily food choices should be from the grain, vegetable and fruit groups. For specific amounts that are right for you, create a personalized MyPyramid Plan (see below).

- ◆ **Take steps to be more active.** Besides helping to make you more fit and lowering your risk for some chronic diseases, adding physical activity to your daily routine makes it easier to reach a healthy weight. Adults should aim for *at least* 30 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity on most days of the week (60 to 90 minutes daily if you're trying to lose weight or maintain weight loss).

- ◆ **Aim for gradual improvement.** Make small changes a new way of life. Positive results in how you look and feel can be great motivators to stick with your healthy lifestyle changes.

- ◆ **Create a Pyramid plan.** Log onto www.MyPyramid.gov to create a personalized eating plan based on your age, gender and activity level. This will tell you how many calories you need for your current weight, as well as the recommended daily amount of food you should eat from each food group. Remember, this plan is for when you are at your healthy weight. If you want to lose weight, follow the tips in this article and aim for a slow, steady weight loss. Use the MyPyramid Tracker to log your food choices and physical activity and follow your progress.

Calorie Power

Use calories to your advantage. Eliminating about 100 calories each day by eating less or doing more physical activity can help you lose up to 10 pounds over the course of a year. Combine calorie trimming with calorie burning, and you can lose weight even faster!

Here are examples of some ways to trim about 100 calories. Skip one of the following:

- ◆ 1 Tbsp. of butter

- ◆ 1 Tbsp. of oil
- ◆ 8 oz of a regular carbonated beverage
- ◆ 2 Tbsp. syrup (for pancakes or waffles)
- ◆ 10 potato chips
- ◆ 2 Tbsp. of jam

Add about 30 minutes of physical activity to your daily schedule to use up at least 100 extra calories per day. Adding about 2000 steps to your routine is equal to about 30 minutes of physical activity.

Here are two Healthy Living recipes that are low in calories but high in flavor. Why not give them a try?

Chicken and Vegetable Stir-Fry

Prep: 20 minutes

Total: 30 minutes

- 2 cups instant brown rice, uncooked
- 1/2 cup KRAFT FREE CATALINA Fat Free Dressing, divided
- 2 Tbsp. lite soy sauce, divided
- 1/2 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 1 medium red or yellow pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 cup each: broccoli florets, thinly sliced carrots and snow peas
- 1 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot
- 1 clove garlic, minced

COOK rice as directed on package. Meanwhile, heat 2 Tbsp. of the dressing and 1 Tbsp. of the soy sauce in large nonstick skillet on medium heat. Add chicken; cook and stir 3 min. or until cooked through. Remove from skillet; cover to keep warm.

ADD remaining dressing, remaining soy sauce, the peppers, broccoli, carrots, snow peas, garlic and gingerroot to skillet; mix well. Cook and stir 5 min. or until vegetables are crisp-tender.

RETURN chicken to skillet; cook and stir until heated through. Serve over the rice.

Makes 4 servings, 1-1/4 cups chicken mixture and 2/3 cup rice each.

Nutrition Bonus: Stir up this low-calorie, low-fat main dish. As a bonus, the carrots provide an excellent source of vitamin A and the red peppers contain vitamin C.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 330 calories, 3.5g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 35mg cholesterol, 670mg sodium, 55g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 12g sugars, 19g protein, 110%DV vitamin A, 80%DV vitamin C, 6%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

Exchange: 3 Starch, 2 Vegetable, 1 Meat (L)

Beef and Vegetable Skillet

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook: 10 minutes

- 1/2 lb. extra lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup KRAFT LIGHT DONE RIGHT! House Italian Reduced Fat Dressing
- 1 medium each: green pepper and zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 can (14-1/2 oz.) Italian-style diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen corn, thawed
- 3/4 cup water
- 1-1/4 cups instant brown rice, uncooked
- 1/2 cup KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Reduced Fat Cheddar Cheese

COOK meat and onions in dressing in large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat until meat is no longer pink and onions are tender, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to medium. Add peppers, zucchini, tomatoes and corn; mix lightly. Cover; simmer 5 min. Stir in water.

BRING to boil on medium-high heat. Stir in rice; cover. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer 5 min. Remove from heat; stir. Cover; let stand 5 min. Fluff with fork.

SPRINKLE with cheese; cover. Let stand 5 min. to melt cheese.

Makes 4 servings.

Make It Easy: Purchase cut-up vegetables from the salad bar at the supermarket.

Nutrition Bonus: This low-calorie, low-fat meal provides one cup of vegetables per person and is a good source of vitamin C from the pepper, zucchini and tomatoes.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 350 calories, 9g total fat, 3.5g saturated fat, 45mg cholesterol, 810mg sodium, 48g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 10g sugars, 21g protein, 15%DV vitamin A, 60%DV vitamin C, 25%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

Exchange: 2-1/2 Starch, 2 Vegetable, 2 Meat (L)

Dietary Exchanges based on *Exchange Lists for Meal Planning* © 2003 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association