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New Food Pyramid - Your Choice!

The USDA has introduced the new version of the Food Guide Pyramid. It's not as simple or clear as the old version. That can be good or bad. One complaint about the old one was that it seemed to be 'one size fits all', which obviously didn't work in our diverse society. If you go to the website, <www.mypyramid.gov>, you will find that the new pyramid offers dozens of options.

You can ask for recommendations tailored to your age, your sex, and your level of activity. You can get recommended calories, or foods in a food group. But unless you have access to the computer and website, you'll need to depend on someone else to find those for you. You can ask your local Extension office for more information.

If you just look at the new design however, it does give you some very important advice. The basic Pyramid shape is there, wider at the bottom, small at the top. Instead of the six block shapes of the previous version, this one has colored stripes from top to bottom. Each stripe represents a different food group. Orange is for grains, green for vegetables, red for fruits, blue for milk and dairy, purple for protein foods, and a tiny little yellow ribbon represents the fats, oils and sweets, the same groups the old one had. We are still encouraged to eat some from every food group.

The exciting new addition is the figure climbing a set of steps up the side of the pyramid. This reminds us of a very important, very basic principle: The more exercise we do, the more we get to eat! If you only want to climb 2 steps a day, you need to eat from the narrow part of the pyramid, just a little from each group. But if you are willing to climb six steps a day, you get to eat from a much wider part, more from each group.

In this personalized pyramid, you decide how much you want to eat, and exercise accordingly. Or, decide how much you're willing to exercise, and eat accordingly. It's your choice!