

Jess 10-14

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Some suggestions we think would make the Pyramid more user friendly: DH

- ▲ Include **actual** portion sizes- who really eats 1/2 cup of pasta?
- ▲ Make water the bottom layer (biggest) so that consumers learn how important this is.
- ▲ Include a physical activity statement near the bottom of the Pyramid- 'be physically active most days of the week.'
- ▲ Include the Pyramid image on more food packages.
- ▲ Add Pyramid portions to Nutrition Facts labels.
- ▲ Have a toll free phone number and/or web address for consumers to check out appropriate portions for **their** age, gender and activity level.

-Marilyn E. Jess, MS, RD  
Supervising Dietitian  
Residential Services

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October 5, 2003

DH  
Krista Jean Burris  
Fitness & Nutritional Consultant

Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team  
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion  
3101 Park Center Drive  
Room 1034  
Alexandria, Va 22302

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to propose some ideas for the new Food Guide Pyramid, effective 2005.

First, and foremost the guide should emphasize the sources from which Americans are consuming each macronutrient. For instance fats. Fat from flax seed and other healthy foods (ie: nuts, fish, evening primrose, etc) should be emphasized and differentiated over other fats such as dairy. The same goes for carbohydrates. Sugar from a grapefruit (low glycemic index fruit) differs significantly than the added sugar (and other artificial flavors and colors) in a Yoplait yogurt; carbohydrates from white bread are much more detrimental to our health than carbohydrates from whole grain sprouted breads. Our bodies do not recognize these highly processed foods.

Second, the quantity of each food group should be clear. Proposed servings can be done in cups instead of "servings." (I read that this is already being considered, so Kudos!)

Third, the ratio of each macronutrient should be revised. I am a firm believer in having balance in all aspects of life including nutritional habits. Proposing 6-11 servings of grains, pastas, breads, and cereals is ludicrous (If one were to follow the current pyramid, they would be consuming additional carbohydrates from other sources such as the milk group and the fruit group). Carbohydrate recommendations are out of proportion, and the obesity/overweight epidemic in our country, along with the related degenerative diseases such as NIDDM, are proof.

I would like to share another idea with the Reassessment Team. Our food manufacturers are the biggest culprit in America's battle of the bulge. Our commercialized foods have so many additives and preservatives that our bodies are barely consuming any nutrients in their natural state: sports drinks that are vitamin enhanced, breads that have to be enriched because the flour is so processed that all of the nutrition is stripped from the grain, meal replacement drinks and bars that are made in a chemistry lab, and many other foods on the market. I do believe that in moderation, these "industrialized" foods will not

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affect health to an extreme extent, however at the rate and quantities that they are currently being eaten, it is no wonder we are dealing with such an ill country. An important component to the new guide should be to emphasize that we should be eating whole foods and foods that are not processed.

Teaching that foods can fall into more than one category is essential as well. For instance, the Yoplait yogurt should fall into a few categories: milk (which has carbohydrates), if made with *real* fruit, then I guess the fruit category (another carbohydrate source and I am hesitant to even include this because it is far from a fresh serving of fruit that contains many vitamins), and also the sugars category which is said to be consumed *sparingly*.

In all, I hope that my proposal will be taken seriously and my recommendations be considered. I appreciate the opportunity to take part in this process.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Krista Jean Burris

Stirling  
10/14/03

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10-14-03  
DH

September 30, 2003

Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team,  
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion,  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034,  
Alexandria, VA 22302.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing with regard to the revisions being made on the Food Guide Pyramid. As a Nutrition student attending Syracuse University, I believe I may have some suggestions that may make the Food Guide Pyramid more parallel to our current nutrition needs in the U.S. My suggestions take into consideration the current eating habits of the public and could help curb the obesity that has doubled in the last 10 years (Boyle, 2003).

I believe that the current Food Guide Pyramid has some positive aspects to it that should not be revised in the upcoming model. The current pyramid provides a very clear, eye-catching diagram for how the average person should eat. It is very easy to look at and the simplicity makes for easy understanding of the general public who don't know very much about nutrition. If it was more complicated, then I don't think anyone would even try to understand or follow its recommendations. Therefore, I believe the simplicity should be retained while providing slightly more detail in order to be more effective in curbing obesity.

In the new model of the Food Guide Pyramid, I believe that it should suggest water intake and daily exercise. Americans today consume many of their calories from soda or juice and don't consider them in their daily intake of calories. Many people believe that food only counts toward the daily 2000 calories and therefore, beverages can add up quickly. By suggesting 64 oz. of water daily, and placing soda and juice in the top of the pyramid with the sweets and fats, the public will get a clearer picture of the effect of consuming such beverages. Many people believe juice is nutritious, when in fact it has little nutrient value and consists mainly of sugar. Water is beneficial in many different ways, and helps people feel full faster, which could also help obese people lose weight, by not eating as much (healthykhana, 2002). Also, by suggesting 30 min. of exercise daily or at least 3-4 days per week, it could help the public to realize that diet and exercise go hand in hand.

Another aspect that is not included next to the Food Guide Pyramid are serving sizes. Americans believe that one of whatever they are eating is a serving size. For example, one bowl of cereal could really be 2 or 3 servings, but because there is only one bowl of cereal, that is what is considered to be one serving size. Next to each category on the pyramid should be a guide suggesting how much one serving of each product really is. This could help prevent Americans from over-eating and consuming more than one serving when they don't even realize it.

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Nowadays, there are so many body types, exercise habits, and ages of people that the pyramid can't simply be based on a 2000- calorie diet and be expected to apply to everyone in the public. I believe that by creating 3 different pyramids, for example one based on 1600 calories for the older population who doesn't need as many calories, 2000 for semi-active young people up to their 50's, and 2800 calories for growing teenage boys and active athletes. Each of these people have different calorie intake needs and can't accurately be represented by the one 2000- calorie diet.

Lastly, another unclear portion of the current pyramid is the top section labeled, "fats, sweets and oils." This section doesn't give a clear depiction of what exactly fits into these categories. It also gives the impression that all fats are bad. Our bodies need fat to survive and burn for energy, so getting rid of all fat in our diet is just as unhealthy as having an overabundance. In the revised version, I believe that pictures of soda, candy, cookies, and alcoholic beverages should be placed in this category. The public, along with not counting soda and juice toward their daily intake, doesn't take into account alcoholic beverages. There should definitely be suggested intake for alcoholic beverages because they contribute large amounts of calories when consumed to excess. It could also be stated that one glass of wine each day could lower the rate of heart disease to show that alcohol can be consumed in moderation (Agarwal, 2002).

Thank you for taking my suggestions into consideration and good luck with your future revisions.

Sincerely,



Eileen Stirling