Eat this……it's good for you!

An overview of the Dietary Guidelines and Food Guide Pyramid

LESSON Content

- Introduction to the A-B-C's of the Dietary Guidelines
- Review of the Food Guide Pyramid
- Translation of these recommendations into meal patterns for children

LEARNING Objectives

- Participants will understand the Dietary Guidelines
- Participants will be able to recognize the components of the Food Guide Pyramid
- Participants will be able to identify Pyramid components of the school lunch meal

Lesson TIME: 10-15 minutes
Preparation TIME: 30 minutes to review the script and make copies of handouts

MATERIALS Needed

- Handouts

SCRIPT

The script on the following pages is provided for your use. Notes to you are in ***bold italics*** – they are not part of the script. Handouts can be made into transparencies or copied and distributed along with your talk.

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines are designed to promote your health and reduce your risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes, stroke and osteoporosis. These diseases are the leading causes of death and disability among Americans. Good diets can also reduce your risk of obesity, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

Our health habits – including our food preferences - start in childhood. Sadly, evidence today suggests that kids are not doing a great job. The rate of obesity among children has doubled in the past decade and the incidence of Type II Diabetes has increased drastically. Following the Guidelines can help turn this tide. **(use the Guidelines handout)**

The new guidelines are as simple as A-B-C. They are

- Aim for fitness
- Build a healthy base
- Choose sensibly

Aim for fitness has two parts –

- Aim for a healthy weight
- Be physically active each day.

Following these guidelines will help you keep healthy and fit. They will also help children grow, develop and do well in school.

Build a healthy base has four parts –

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily
- Keep food safe to eat.

We will talk about the Food Guide Pyramid in just a moment. The important thing here is to be flexible and adventurous – try new whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables in place of less nutritious and higher calorie foods that you usually eat.

Choose sensibly also has four parts –

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Building a healthy base and choosing sensibly are where we as food service people can have a powerful impact on children. Let's brainstorm for a moment about things we currently do that promote these guidelines and also things that we could do.

(Ask employees to brainstorm about current practices that meet the Guidelines. For example, "We serve two fruit and vegetable selections on the cafeteria line." Use a flip chart or have one of the participants list ideas on paper as you lead the discussion.)

The Food Guide Pyramid is based on research that tells us what nutrients are in foods and how to make the best food choices for good health. The Pyramid tells us what to eat and how much to eat to get the nutrients we need without getting too many calories or too much fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, sodium or alcohol.

Let's look at the Pyramid. There are four levels. The top level includes those items that we should use sparingly. These are the fats, oils and sweets that add flavor to our food but provide little in the way of other nutrients. They are high in calories.

The next level contains foods that are rich in "building blocks" that is the protein, calcium, iron and zinc that are important for growth, development, healing and immunity. When choosing foods from this group, we want to select lean or low-fat items to help keep calories in control.

The third level contains our primary source of key vitamins and minerals. These brightly colored and delicious foods add flavor, flare and variety to our meals. And they supply essential nutrients and fiber that are not found in other foods.

Think about our current menus. What are some of the things we are already doing that meet the Dietary Guidelines recommendations and the Food Guide Pyramid plan? Let's start with "Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains," and "Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily." What are we currently doing to meet these guidelines?

(You can get them started with ideas like, "We put broccoli in our macaroni and cheese" or "We use oatmeal to make cookies," etc. Use a flip chart or have one of the participants list ideas on paper as you lead the discussion.)

Two important goals of the Guidelines are to limit sugar and fats in our diets. What are we currently doing and what else could we do to meet this Guideline?

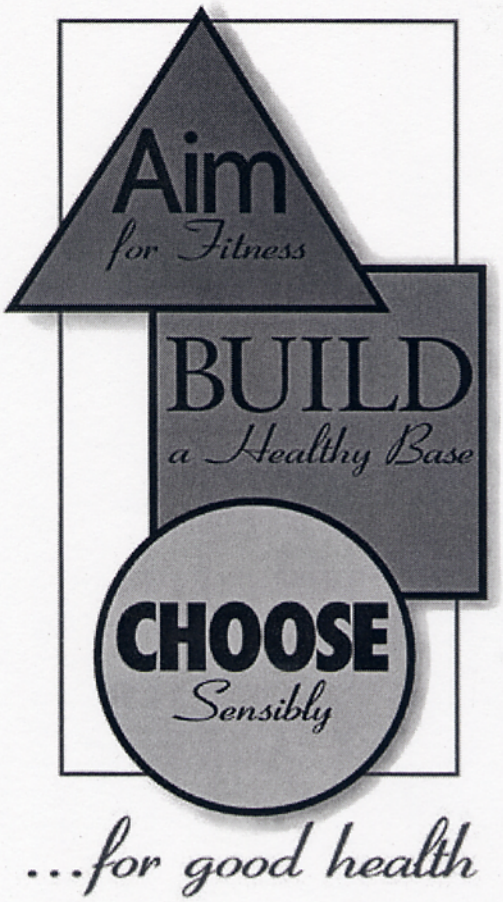
(You can start them with ideas like, "We serve low-fat yogurt," "We offer low-fat or fat-free salad dressing," " We could use apple sauce instead of sugar as sweetener in baked goods." Use a flip chart or have one of the participants list ideas on paper as you lead the discussion.)

Now, let's look at ways we can encourage children to choose all of the five components of the school lunch.

(You can get them started with ideas like "We can say 'try some whole wheat bread, it is high in fiber," or "Drink your milk today, it will help you build strong bones," etc. Again, use a flip chart or have one of the participants list ideas on paper as you lead the discussion.)

Nutrition and Your Health:

Dietary Guidelines for Americans



Dietary Guidelines for Americans

AIM FOR FITNESS . . .

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

BUILD A HEALTHY BASE . . .

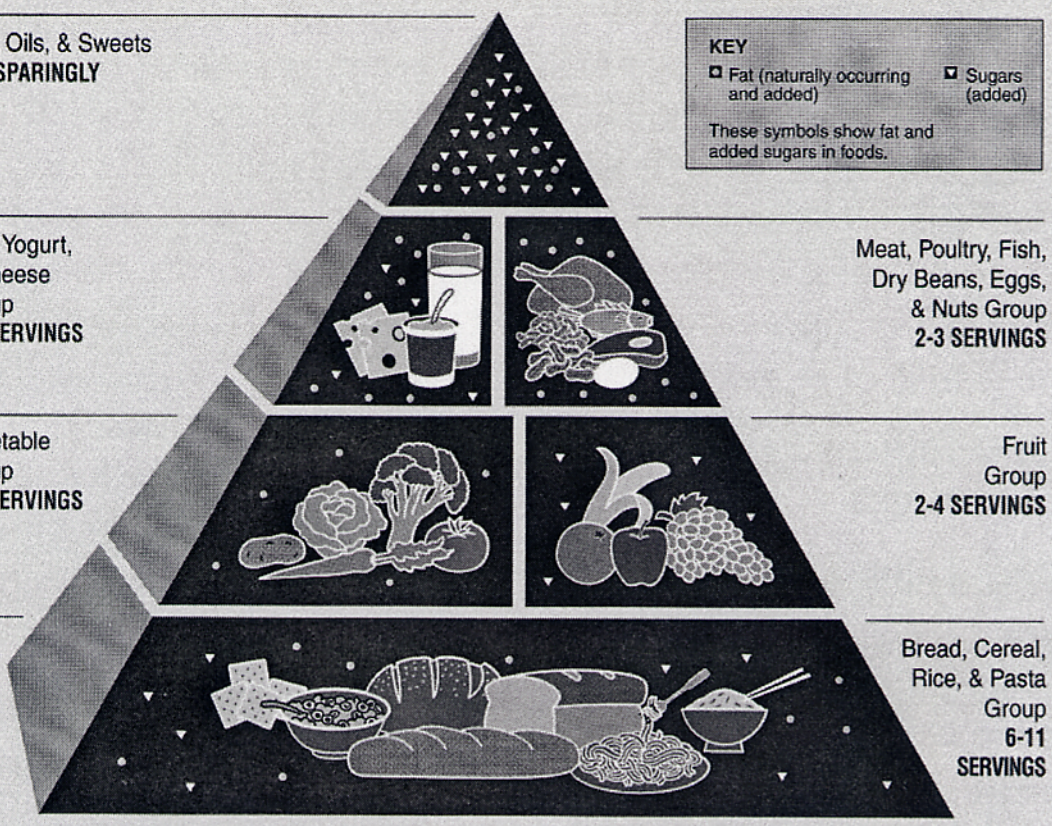
- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

CHOOSE SENSIBLY . . .

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

. . . for good health

Food Guide Pyramid
A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services