



## ABCs for Good Health!

---

**Aim, Build and Choose - you could say these are the ABCs for your health!** These three action words are the building blocks of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000 key messages. Use these key messages to eat well and take action for good health.

**Aim for fitness.** Do this by combining sensible eating with regular physical activity to aim for a healthy weight. Avoid weight gain if you are already at a healthy weight, or if needed, lose weight to improve your health.

- ❖ Become physically active if you are inactive. Start by moving more and sitting less!
- ❖ Build up to moderate activities, like walking, if you are not already active.
- ❖ Find activities you enjoy - gardening, swimming, walking, sports, cycling- and do them often.
- ❖ Strive for 30 minutes or more of physical activity five or more days each week.
- ❖ If you have children, encourage them to play and be active for at least an hour each day.
- ❖ Select sensible portion sizes. Invest in a food scale if you are trying to lose weight.  
(Reading labels helps!)

**Build a healthy base.** Let the Food Guide Pyramid show you how to choose foods to get the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. Grains, vegetables and fruits make up the foundation of the Pyramid and should be the building blocks of your healthy diet.

- ❖ Eat six or more grain servings daily, choosing from different kinds of grains - from bread, cereal, pasta, rice, tortillas, to cornbread and more. Make some of your choices whole grain, such as whole wheat bread or pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, or whole grain cereal.
- ❖ Enjoy at least three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit each day. Pick different kinds of vegetables and fruits and from a variety of colors to get the most benefit. Choose any form - from fresh, frozen, dried, canned, or 100% juices - because all provide vitamins and minerals.
- ❖ Remember, it is also important to keep food safe. Always take steps to make sure the food you choose to eat is clean and safe to eat. Wash your hands and surfaces that touch food often.

**Choose sensibly.** This advice helps you add the last building blocks to your healthy foundation. It also helps fine tune your choices to help reduce your risk of diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and overweight. You can still enjoy your foods and eat what you want - just don't overdo it and go back to your healthy base. You may not choose a perfect diet all the time. But you can choose sensibly more often.

- ❖ Choose an overall diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat. Build your meals around grains, vegetables and fruits. Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy foods, beans and peas, fish and lean poultry and meat. Choose vegetable oils and soft margarine instead of solid fats, like butter, lard, hard margarine and shortening. Limit the amount used.
- ❖ Choose sensibly to limit your intake of beverages and foods that are high in added sugars. Get the most benefit from the calories you consume by not letting soft drinks and other sweets take the place of other foods that supply important nutrients.
- ❖ Choose and prepare foods with less salt. Eat more fresh food and fewer convenience foods, canned vegetables and soups, salty snacks and cured meats.
- ❖ If you choose to drink alcohol, do so responsibly and in moderation. This means no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men. Count as a drink 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1 1/2 ounce of liquor.

#### **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 foods 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.



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA AND FT. VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COUNTIES OF THE STATE COOPERATING. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ORGANIZATION.

Marilyn Wright, MS, RD, LD Family Nutrition Program Specialist  
July 2001

Publication Number: FDNS-E 57