Introducing...

As you may have heard, there’s a “new and improved” food pyramid. MyPyramid can help guide you to healthy eating choices.

Scientists and educators looked at years of nutrition and health research to create the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. MyPyramid is the symbol that represents the guidelines.

What’s Different?

▲ MyPyramid has colorful, vertical bands of differing sizes. For example, the red band represents fruits and the orange band represents grain. The orange band is wider than the red band. This reminds you to eat a variety of foods in proportion to your needs.

▲ A figure is climbing the “steps” of the new pyramid. This new feature emphasizes the importance of regular physical activity.

▲ The new pyramid recommends amounts of food in cups and ounces instead of “servings.”

▲ It’s not a “one size fits all” pyramid. It’s individualized and the Web site has lots of tips and resources to help you make gradual changes.

Visit the Web site at www.mypyramid.gov and click on these sections for more information:

– MyPyramid Plan: shows the kinds and amounts of foods to eat each day. Enter your age, gender and level of physical activity for your personalized plan. You can print out a miniposter of the plan and a worksheet to track your progress.

– Inside the Pyramid: provides detailed information about each food group, discretionary calories and physical activity, including foods in each food group and a photo gallery to help identify portion sizes.

– Tips and Resources: provides ideas to help you move toward a healthier lifestyle. For example, it includes ideas on how to eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

– MyPyramid Tracker: allows you to track your food choices and physical activity and compare them to the recommendations.

What are Some Messages from MyPyramid?

Make Half Your Grains Whole
Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain crackers, bread, cereal, rice or pasta every day.

Vary Your Veggies
Eat more dark green vegetables.
Eat more orange vegetables.
Eat more dry beans and peas.

Focus on Fruit
Eat a variety of fruit. Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Go easy on fruit juices.

Know Your Fats
Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats such as butter, stick margarine, shortening and lard.

Get Your Calcium-rich Foods
Choose low-fat or fat-free milk. If you don’t or can’t consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources.

Go Lean with Protein
Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it or grill it. Vary your choices – with more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds.

Find Your Balance Between Food and Physical Activity
Be physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Children should be physically active 60 minutes every day or most days.

Your food and physical activity choices each day affect your health – how you feel today, tomorrow and in the future.
For more information about nutrition, food safety and health, visit www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/food.htm.

Julie Garden-Robinson, food and nutrition specialist