

Exploring MyPyramid



MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

Each person has a daily calorie budget. Calories are units of energy. You spend calories to maintain body functions and provide energy for physical activity. If you take in more calories than you burn, you may “bank” the extra as body fat.

You can divide a calorie budget into essential and extra calories. Essential calories are the minimum calories you need to meet your basic needs.

Extra calories are called your discretionary calories. They are the extras in your diet.

The new food pyramid at www.mypyramid.gov can help you budget your calories. It can help you devise a personalized plan based on your age, sex and activity level.

Try this question

What counts as discretionary calories?

- Foods with solid fats
- Foods with added sugars
- Alcohol
- Food that exceeds recommendations from any food group
- All of the above

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BUDGETING Total calories

The answer is “e.” All can count toward discretionary calories in your diet. The good news: The new pyramid allows some discretionary calories in your personalized eating plan. However, these amounts are small, usually 100 to 300 calories if you are physically active.

How can you use your Discretionary calories?

- ▲ Eat more foods from any food group that the MyPyramid food guide recommends.
- ▲ Eat higher-calorie forms of foods. These can be any food that contains solid fats or added sugars, such as whole milk, cheese, sausage, biscuits, sweetened cereal and sweetened yogurt.
- ▲ Add fats or sweeteners to foods in the form of sauces, salad dressings, sugar, syrup or butter.
- ▲ Eat or drink items that are mostly fat, caloric sweetener or alcohol. Candy, soda, wine, and beer are examples.

Watch out for hidden calories

Foods with fats are concentrated sources of calories. Be careful when choosing these foods because even a small amount of a food with solid fats will add up to large amounts of discretionary calories. Solid fats usually are found in foods such as:

Cheese	Well-marbled cuts of meat
Cream	Regular ground beef
Ice cream	Poultry skin
Bacon	Many baked goods (cookies, crackers, donuts, pastries, etc.)
Sausage	

Be aware of added sweeteners

Various sugars and syrups are often added to foods during processing or preparation. These add calories without many nutrients. Common foods with added sweeteners include:

- ▲ Candy
- ▲ Cakes, cookies and pies
- ▲ Fruit drinks such as fruit punch
- ▲ Regular soft drinks
- ▲ Ice cream, sweetened yogurt, sweetened milk
- ▲ Sweetened cereals, sweet rolls, cinnamon toast

To identify added sugars, look on the ingredient label for ingredients such as brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar or syrup.

Choose wisely when spending your discretionary calories:

- ▲ Select foods with less fat and less sugar.
- ▲ Watch out for “luxury” versions of foods such as fatty meats or sweetened cereals.
- ▲ Be careful when adding sauces, condiments or other “extras” to foods.

Choose discretionary calorie foods that you really enjoy, give you satisfaction and you have in a small amount.

For more information on how to figure out your calorie budget, check out [www.▲MyPyramid.▲gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov)

For more information about nutrition, food safety and health, visit www.▲ag.▲ndsu.▲nodak.▲edu/food.▲htm

Try this example

The chart gives a general guide for discretionary calories. How many calories are estimated for a physically active 32-year-old female? How many discretionary calories are allotted for her?

Gender and Age	Not physically active*		Physically active**	
	Estimated total calorie need	Estimated discretionary calorie allowance	Estimated total calorie need	Estimated discretionary calorie allowance
Children				
2-3 years	1,000	165	1,000-1,400	165-170
4-8 years	1,200-1,400	170	1,400-1,800	170-195
Girls				
9-13 years	1,600	130	1,600-2,200	130-290
14-18 years	1,800	195	2,000-2,400	265-360
Boys				
9-13 years	1,800	195	1,800-2,600	195-410
14-18 years	2,200	290	2,400-3,200	360-650
Females				
19-30 years	2,000	265	2,000-2,400	265-360
31-50 years	1,800	195	2,000-2,200	265-290
51+ years	1,600	130	1,800-2,200	195-290
Males				
19-30 years	2,400	360	2,600-3,000	410-510
31-50 years	2,200	290	2,400-3,000	360-510
51+ years	2,000	265	2,200-2,800	290-425

* These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days.

** These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get at least 30 minutes (lower calorie level) to at least 60 minutes (higher calorie level) of moderate physical activity most days.

Answer: 2,000 to 2,200 calories with 265 to 290 discretionary calories

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