



## Steps To A Healthier ME

### Introduction

Maine and the nation are burdened with staggering financial costs, suffering and disability due to an epidemic of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, asthma and arthritis. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid Food Guidance System* provide science-based expert consensus advice to reduce the risk for major chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. However, *MyPyramid: Steps To A Healthier You* relies heavily on highly literate consumers independently accessing the internet website. The *Steps To A Healthier ME* program was developed to positively influence the dietary and physical activity behavior of ALL people in Maine.

### Issues and Needs Assessment

An issues and needs assessment revealed that although there are many organizations that have dedicated staff who provide health and nutrition education, much of the public lacks practical knowledge, skills and resources needed to lower their risk for chronic disease. Furthermore, specific audiences are not being adequately reached. These include those with low literacy skills, the medically underserved, those with mental disabilities, those who don't access the internet, those who live in isolated locations without adequate transportation, and youth who are exposed to conflicting media and health care messages pertaining to lifestyle, health and appearance.

### Goal

Residents of Maine, with emphasis on underserved groups, will practice dietary and physical activity behaviors that reduce their risk for chronic disease.

### Program Objectives

After completing the Steps to a Healthier ME program, participants will report:

- increased consumption and variety of dietary fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and non/low-fat milk.
- increased consumption of saturated and trans fats, sodium and added sugars.
- meeting the recommendations for 30 minutes per day of physical activity for adults and 60 minutes per day for youth on most days of the week.

### Program Design

- A variety of innovative teaching methods, tools and printed materials for audiences of diverse ages and abilities was developed. The visual learning style, favored by the vast majority of learners, and active engagement were maximized.
- *Steps to a Healthier ME* was delivered through schools and community-based programs for families, disabled and elderly.
- Over 140 paraprofessionals and community volunteers were trained in how to use *Steps to a Healthier ME*. Teaching tools and materials were made available throughout Maine.
- Participants were surveyed immediately after completion of programs, and again six to eight weeks later to evaluate achievement of objectives.

### Program Impacts

- Over 59% of those who answered a survey reported they made positive changes to their diets and physical activity behavior as a result of participation.
- Estimated direct and indirect cost savings of over \$6 million per year.

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## What does this picture mean?



**Get moving:** The person climbing the stairs reminds us to get some exercise on most days.

- *The "What's MyPyramid?" questionnaire and "MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels" show the relationship between physical activity and calorie requirements.*

**One step at a time:** The steps going up the side of the pyramid, and "Steps to a Healthier You", remind us that we should improve our eating and exercise habits a little at a time.

- *Physically climbing stairs while stating goal for each step demonstrates this concept.*
- *"Steps to a Healthier You" allows participants to plan a gradual behavior change strategy and provides them with a simple tracking method.*

**Variety:** Each color stands for a food group. The 6 different colors remind us we need foods from all of the food groups.

- *This concept is dramatized through use of food group shapes being hooked together to form a chain. When a food group "link" is missing, the chain will not work.*

**Within each food group there are foods to eat more often and foods to eat less often:**

The wide part of each color stands for healthy foods to eat more often. The thin top part of each color stands for foods to eat less often. Foods to eat less often have more added sugars. They also have more unhealthy kinds of fats.

- *Attaching food packages above and below each other on MyPyramid food group shapes conveys this concept of nutrient density.*

**Eat more from some food groups than others:** We should eat more from the food groups that are wide and less from the food groups that are narrow.

- *This concept is demonstrated through "weighing" of colored food group shapes.*

**Everyone is different:** That's why it's called **My** Pyramid. It's also why there is a person in the picture. People come in different ages, sizes and sexes. Some get more physical activity than others. We all need different amounts of food.

- *Participants receive their own personalized meal plan and worksheet based upon The "What's MyPyramid?" questionnaire and "MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels"*

*The "What's MyPyramid?" game reinforces all of these concepts while expanding upon other elements such as eating a variety of colors of vegetables, make half your grains whole, and the amount of physical activity needed depends on what you want it to do.*

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# What's MyPyramid?



**One size doesn't fit all.** MyPyramid Plan can help you choose the foods and amounts that are right for you. For a quick estimate of what and how much you need to eat, enter your age, sex, and activity level:

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**Sex:**

(Check one)

**Male**

**Female**

**Activity Level:**

(Check one)

**Sedentary** = less than 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity\* in addition to daily activities.

**Moderately Active** = at least 30 minutes up to 60 minutes a day of moderate physical activity\* in addition to daily activities.

**Active** = 60 or more minutes a day of moderate physical activity\* in addition to daily activities.

\*Examples of moderate physical activity include walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming, or bicycling on level terrain. A person should feel some exertion but should be able to carry on a conversation during the activity.



## MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels

MyPyramid assigns Individuals to a calorie level based on their sex, age, and activity level.

The chart below identifies the calorie levels for males and females by age and activity level. Calorie levels are provided for each year of childhood, from 2-18 years, and for adults in 5-year increments.

Activity level	MALES			Activity level	FEMALES		
	Sedentary*	Mod. active*	Active*		Sedentary*	Mod. active*	Active*
AGE				AGE			
<b>2</b>	1000	1000	1000	<b>2</b>	1000	1000	1000
<b>3</b>	1000	1400	1400	<b>3</b>	1000	1200	1400
<b>4</b>	1200	1400	1600	<b>4</b>	1200	1400	1400
<b>5</b>	1200	1400	1600	<b>5</b>	1200	1400	1600
<b>6</b>	1400	1600	1800	<b>6</b>	1200	1400	1600
<b>7</b>	1400	1600	1800	<b>7</b>	1200	1600	1800
<b>8</b>	1400	1600	2000	<b>8</b>	1400	1600	1800
<b>9</b>	1600	1800	2000	<b>9</b>	1400	1600	1800
<b>10</b>	1600	1800	2200	<b>10</b>	1400	1800	2000
<b>11</b>	1800	2000	2200	<b>11</b>	1600	1800	2000
<b>12</b>	1800	2200	2400	<b>12</b>	1600	2000	2200
<b>13</b>	2000	2200	2600	<b>13</b>	1600	2000	2200
<b>14</b>	2000	2400	2800	<b>14</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>15</b>	2200	2600	3000	<b>15</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>16</b>	2400	2800	3200	<b>16</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>17</b>	2400	2800	3200	<b>17</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>18</b>	2400	2800	3200	<b>18</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>19-20</b>	2600	2800	3000	<b>19-20</b>	2000	2200	2400
<b>21-25</b>	2400	2800	3000	<b>21-25</b>	2000	2200	2400
<b>26-30</b>	2400	2600	3000	<b>26-30</b>	1800	2000	2400
<b>31-35</b>	2400	2600	3000	<b>31-35</b>	1800	2000	2200
<b>36-40</b>	2400	2600	2800	<b>36-40</b>	1800	2000	2200
<b>41-45</b>	2200	2600	2800	<b>41-45</b>	1800	2000	2200
<b>46-50</b>	2200	2400	2800	<b>46-50</b>	1800	2000	2200
<b>51-55</b>	2200	2400	2800	<b>51-55</b>	1600	1800	2200
<b>56-60</b>	2200	2400	2600	<b>56-60</b>	1600	1800	2200
<b>61-65</b>	2000	2400	2600	<b>61-65</b>	1600	1800	2000
<b>66-70</b>	2000	2200	2600	<b>66-70</b>	1600	1800	2000
<b>71-75</b>	2000	2200	2600	<b>71-75</b>	1600	1800	2000
<b>76 and up</b>	2000	2200	2400	<b>76 and up</b>	1600	1800	2000

\*Calorie levels are based on the Estimated Energy Requirements (EER) and activity levels from the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes Macronutrients Report, 2002. SEDENTARY = less than 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities. MOD. ACTIVE = at least 30 minutes up to 60 minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities. ACTIVE = 60 or more minutes a day of moderate physical activity in addition to daily activities.



Search MyPyramid.gov

 

Subjects

- MyPyramid Basics
  - *Inside the Pyramid*
  - *Tips & Resources*
  - *Got a Question?*
- Interactive Tools
  - *MyPyramid Plan*
  - *Menu Planner*
  - *MyPyramid Tracker*
  - *Child Cost Calculator*
- Multimedia
  - *Video Podcasts*
  - *Audio Podcasts*
  - *PSAs*
  - *Animation*
- Specific Audiences
  - *Preschoolers (2-5y)*
  - *Kids (6-11y)*
  - *Pregnancy & Breastfeeding*
  - *General Population*
- For Professional Use
- Steps to a Healthier Weight
- Dietary Guidelines
- Partnering with MyPyramid
- Related Links

You are here: [Home](#) / [For Professionals](#) / [MyPyramid Results Downloads](#)

## For Professionals

### MyPyramid Results Downloads

There are 12 food intake patterns that identify how much food an individual should eat for health. Below are the downloads available for consumers via MyPyramid.

View and print by calorie level:

- 1000
- 1200
- 1400
- 1600
- 1800
- 2000
- 2200
- 2400
- 2600
- 2800
- 3000
- 3200

You will need the free [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) plug-in to view and print the above PDF files.

#### Related Topics

- [Graphics Resources](#)

## What's MyPyramid? ©

*What's MyPyramid?* is an interactive teaching tool that conveys and reinforces key concepts of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005 and MyPyramid Food Guidance System. While it may be used alone, it was developed to be used as one component of an educational program. *What's MyPyramid?* may be adapted for use with players of all ages and abilities. It has been piloted as part of educational programs with elementary, middle and high school students, young adults and senior citizens. Players of all ages were engaged and reported learning and behavioral changes. The questions on the starter set of cards were intended for youth from about 4<sup>th</sup> grade through high school. Additional packets of cards will become available. If you decide to develop your own questions and cards, it's strongly recommended that they be based upon MyPyramid Food Guidance System Educational Framework found at: [http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MyPyramid\\_education\\_framework.pdf](http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MyPyramid_education_framework.pdf)

*What's MyPyramid?* may be used with individuals or with groups of all sizes. There are many ways to use the tool depending upon the participant age, ability, group size and environment. The following description is one way of using this tool:

For groups of 6 to 30 players:

- Designate a score keeper.
- Divide the remainder of the group in half.
- Each team decides on a name for itself. (I like to use a silicon wrist band for each team with the message "Eat Smarter" on one and "Get Moving" on the other. Each team gets a band and the team is named after the band they hold)
- The team that gets to spin the wheel first is decided by which team can give the loudest cheer. On the count of three one group will shout in unison (GET MOVING!). Then ask the other group to do the same on the count of three (EAT SMARTER!). This may be repeated to build enthusiasm. Also, if you're in a building where you will be repeating the program with other groups or classes, they will hear this and anticipate that something fun is coming.
- Explain that team members will take turns as the team spokesperson. Whoever is holding the team wristband is the current spokesperson. After a player takes a turn, the wrist band is passed on to the next player in the team.
- The first spokesperson from the team that won the cheering competition comes up and spins the wheel. They then go back to their team.
- The question is read by the moderator from the card on top in the colored food group on which the pointer lands.
- Team members may discuss the answer amongst themselves; however, the only answer that counts is the one stated by the team spokesperson.
- Be sure to let the team know they may discuss the possible answer amongst themselves in case the first team gets it wrong; however, they should do so quietly so they don't give the answer away. Also tell them they should pay attention to the answer that the other team gives so they don't give the same wrong answer.
- If the team spokesperson answers the question correctly, the team gets a point, the wrist band gets passed on to the next player on the team, and the spokesperson from the other team comes up to spin the wheel. If the team answers the question incorrectly, the other team's spokesperson gets to answer the question. This continues until one of the teams gets the correct answer. Use care not to "put the participant on the spot" and make them feel bad if they get a question wrong. It's not really "wrong". There's just a "better answer".
- If the pointer lands on *physical activity*, the person who spun gets to select a physical activity and leads everyone in the activity for a couple of minutes. Then the same team spokesperson is read a question from the physical activity section. This is a good opportunity to discuss with the group how the activity made them more alert.
- Whichever team accumulates the most points in the given time wins the game. Typically token prizes like silicone wristbands with nutrition and physical activity messages are given to everyone who participates so "everyone is a winner". Wristbands are available through [www.nimcoinc.com](http://www.nimcoinc.com)

For Larger Groups an option is to have two teams on panels like many television game shows.

**CAUTION: DO NOT SUBJECT TOOL TO EXTREMELY HOT TEMPERATURES AS IT WILL WARP!!!**

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