

A Brief History of USDA Food Guides

1916 to 1930s: “Food for Young Children” and “How to Select Food”

- Established guidance based on food groups and household measures
- Focus was on “protective foods”

1940s: A Guide to Good Eating (Basic Seven)

- Foundation diet for nutrient adequacy
- Included daily number of servings needed from each of seven food groups
- Lacked specific serving sizes
- Considered complex



1956 to 1970s: Food for Fitness, A Daily Food Guide (Basic Four)

- Foundation diet approach—goals for nutrient adequacy
- Specified amounts from four food groups
- Did not include guidance on appropriate fats, sugars, and calorie intake



1979: Hassle-Free Daily Food Guide

- Developed after the 1977 Dietary Goals for the United States were released
- Based on the Basic Four, but also included a fifth group to highlight the need to moderate intake of fats, sweets, and alcohol



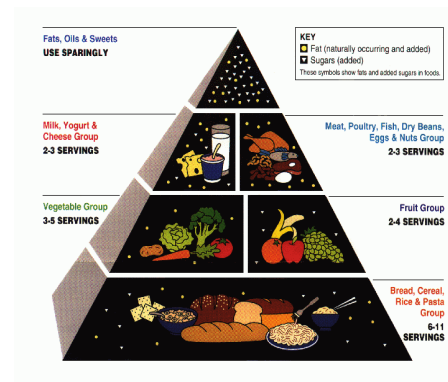
1984: Food Wheel: A Pattern for Daily Food Choices

- Total diet approach—Included goals for both nutrient adequacy and moderation
- Five food groups and amounts formed the basis for the Food Guide Pyramid
- Daily amounts of food provided at three calorie levels
- First illustrated for a Red Cross nutrition course as a food wheel



1992: Food Guide Pyramid

- Total diet approach—goals for both nutrient adequacy and moderation
- Developed using consumer research, to bring awareness to the new food patterns
- Illustration focused on concepts of variety, moderation, and proportion
- Included visualization of added fats and sugars throughout five food groups and in the tip
- Included range for daily amounts of food across three calorie levels



2005: MyPyramid Food Guidance System

- Introduced along with updating of Food Guide Pyramid food patterns for the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, including daily amounts of food at 12 calorie levels
- Continued “pyramid” concept, based on consumer research, but simplified illustration. Detailed information provided on website “MyPyramid.gov”
- Added a band for oils and the concept of physical activity
- Illustration could be used to describe concepts of variety, moderation, and proportion



2011: MyPlate

- Introduced along with updating of USDA food patterns for the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- Different shape to help grab consumers’ attention with a new visual cue
- Icon that serves as a reminder for healthy eating, not intended to provide specific messages
- Visual is linked to food and is a familiar mealtime symbol in consumers’ minds, as identified through testing
- “My” continues the personalization approach from MyPyramid



For more information:

- Welsh S, Davis C, Shaw A. A brief history of food guides in the United States. *Nutrition Today* November/December 1992:6-11.
- Welsh S, Davis C, Shaw A. Development of the Food Guide Pyramid. *Nutrition Today* November/December 1992:12-23.
- Haven J, Burns A, Britten P, Davis C. Developing the Consumer Interface for the MyPyramid Food Guidance System. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 2006, 38: S124–S135.

