

Foods 'R Us

I've always had an interest in nutrition. (From infancy I've enjoyed eating! Ha.) I may have been the only eight year old who, just for fun on summer vacation, memorized the Seven Basic Food groups including what was in each group and how many servings I was supposed to eat!

I also like history so here is some nutrition history. The first USDA nutrition guideline was written by Dr. William Atwater in 1894. Ten years later his publication recommended variety and watching portion sizes in addition to eating less fat, sugar, and starch. That 1904 advice sounds kind of modern, doesn't it?

- 1910 scientists discovered vitamins
- 1916 Caroline Hunt wrote, "Food for Young Children" categorizing food into five groups: milk & meat, cereals, vegetables and fruits, fats and fatty foods and sugars and sugary foods
- 1917 "How to Select Foods" was published using the same categories for adults
- 1933 USDA introduces food plans for four different cost levels in response to the Great Depression (I was impressed by that.)
- 1943 USDA introduces "The Basic Seven" to promote good nutrition despite wartime rationing
- 1956-1992 The Basic Four : meat, milk, fruits & veggies, bread & cereals
- 1992 the first "Food Pyramid" attempted to express the recommended daily number of servings for each food group
- 2005 the pyramid was updated to a vertical pyramid with decreased grains and with a diagram of a man climbing stairs on the left of the pyramid to encourage exercise
- 2011-2025 "My Plate" showed a plate with four sections for the solid food and a circle to represent milk and dairy
- 2026 -2030 We now have a pyramid turned on it's head. It encourages us to eat more animal proteins and fats and avoid highly processed foods, while putting a clear focus on eating real, whole foods. The guidelines also recommend:
 - **a 60-120% increase in recommended daily protein intake;** there is NO upper limit now, gentlemen!
 - 3 servings of dairy/day
 - 3 servings of vegetables per day
 - 2 servings of fruit per day
 - 4 servings of grain per day (NOT heavily processed-- no donuts,, cake etc.)
 - we are to avoid highly processed, packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat or other foods that are salty or sweet such as chips, cookies and candy and foods that have added sugars and sodium.

My brain and my heart know these are healthy suggestions and both of those organs will benefit if I can follow them. We are what we eat. Foods 'R Us. But I have to say that I am glad this new guidance was not published until AFTER Christmas!! I am gonna struggle with the chips, cookies, candy ban!!

I think this is a case of trying to do our best, but not flogging ourselves when we don't quite measure up. Or as that famous philosopher Julia Child said,

"Moderation. Small helpings. Sample a little bit of everything. These are the secrets of happiness and good health."

