MyPyramid Steps to a Healthier You

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MyPyramid’s slogan “Steps to a Healthier You” indicates we can benefit from taking daily small steps to improve our diet and lifestyle. Here are some steps from http://mypyramid.gov to get started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 On the Internet, go to <a href="http://mypyramid.gov">http://mypyramid.gov</a> and calculate your personalized “My Pyramid Plan.”</td>
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<td>2 Order veggie toppings for your pizza like mushrooms, green peppers and onions.</td>
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<td>3 Eat foods and beverages low in &quot;added sugars.&quot; Naturally occurring sugars such as those which are in milk and fruits do not count as added sugars.</td>
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<td>4 Vary your fruit choices. Fruits differ in nutrient content.</td>
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<td>5 Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits dietary fiber provides.</td>
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<td>6 Select vegetables with more potassium often, such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, winter squash, tomato products, beet greens, spinach, dry beans and split peas.</td>
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<td>7 Choose grain products which name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the ingredient list: brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, wild rice.</td>
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<td>8 Dried fruits make a great snack. They’re easy to carry and store well. Because they’re dried, 1/4 cup is equal to 1/2 cup of other fruits.</td>
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<td>9 Sauces or seasonings can add calories, fat and sodium to vegetables. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories and % Daily Value for fat and sodium in plain and seasoned vegetables.</td>
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<td>10 Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer or dancing are all good examples of being active. For health benefits, physical activity should add up to at least 30 minutes a day.</td>
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<td>11 Try a main dish salad for lunch. Go light on the salad dressing.</td>
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<td>12 For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.</td>
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<td>13 If you avoid milk because of lactose intolerance, try using a lactose-free milk, consuming the enzyme lactase before consuming milk or using a calcium fortified soy or rice beverage. Bioavailability of calcium from nondairy foods may vary.</td>
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<td>14 Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter.</td>
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<td>15 Do exercises or pedal a stationary bike while watching television.</td>
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<td>16 Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, cauliflower, red and green peppers or celery sticks.</td>
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<td>17 Physical activity may include short bouts of moderate-intensity activity. The accumulated total is what is important and can be accumulated through three to six 10-minute bouts over the course of a day.</td>
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<td>18 Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.</td>
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<td>19 Frozen juice bars (100% juice) make healthy alternatives to high-fat snacks.</td>
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<td>20 Park farther from your destination (work, shopping, etc.) and walk the rest of the way.</td>
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<td>21 Look for fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout and herring.</td>
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<td>22 Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.</td>
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<td>23 Substitute whole wheat for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes.</td>
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<td>24 If you drink lattes or cappuccinos — ask for them with fat-free (skim) milk.</td>
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<td>25 Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours.</td>
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<td>26 Use the Nutrition Facts label and choose grain products with a higher % Daily Value (%DV) for fiber — the %DV for fiber is a good clue to the amount of whole grain in the product.</td>
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<td>27 Select fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melon and orange juice.</td>
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<td>28 For dessert, make pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.</td>
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<td>29 Replace a coffee break with a brisk 10-minute walk. Ask a friend to go with you.</td>
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<td>30 For fresh fruit salads, mix apples, bananas or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.</td>
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