

# MyPyramid Message: Proportionality <sup>1</sup>

Claudia Peñuela and Karla P. Shelnett<sup>2</sup>

**Proportionality** is represented in the MyPyramid symbol by the width of the bands. Proportionality is important in order to eat the right amount of food from each food group. We should generally eat more food from the food groups with wider bands and eat less food from the food groups with narrower bands. The widths are **guidelines** and **not exact proportions**. Remember that it is important to consume an adequate amount of food from each food group. No group is more important than another, and they all contain different nutrients needed for good health. In order to determine how much food from each food group is right for you, personalize an eating plan based on your age, sex, and level of daily physical activity at <http://mypyramid.gov>.



## Ways to Practice Proportionality to Balance Your Diet

According to the concept of proportionality, as a general guide, follow these tips:

- Each time you prepare breakfast, lunch, and dinner, eat more foods from the widest food group bands which are Grains (orange), Vegetables (green), Milk (blue), Fruits (red), and Meat and Beans (purple) .
- When serving meals, make sure that the smallest portion of food is from the narrower food group band, which is the Meat and Beans group (purple).
- When preparing meals, use minimal amounts of oil. The Oils (yellow) band has the smallest width in MyPyramid but is not a food group.

- Choose snacks from the food groups that come up short in your meals.

Now, if you know your recommended amounts from <http://mypyramid.gov>, follow these tips

- Try to use these recommendations to balance your meal and snack choices to get the right amount of foods for you.
- Tracking your food choices over the course of the week is a great way to measure consumption, modify when necessary, and follow MyPyramid recommendations.

Your food choices do not have to perfectly fit your personalized MyPyramid recommendations every day. If you eat more of one group one day, just eat less the next day.

1. This document is FCS8929, one of a series of the Department of Family Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published October 2010.  
2. Claudia Peñuela, EFNEP Assistant in Nutrition and Karla P. Shelnett, PhD, RD, assistant professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences; University of Florida; Gainesville, FL 32611

## Let's Try a Proportionality Test

1. What group should you eat **the most** from?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is this group represented by **the widest** band in MyPyramid?  
Circle your answer.

Yes      No

3. What group should you eat **the least** from?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this group one of **the narrowest** bands in MyPyramid? Circle your answer.

Yes      No

5. Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables each day?  
Circle the answer

Yes      No

If any of your answers were No, review the ways to practice proportionality to balance your diet.

## References

United States Department of Agriculture, MyPyramid.gov. *MyPyramid Basics* [Online]. Available at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>