

New Food Pyramids are Aimed at Kids

'MyPyramid' for children helps parents expand food choices in a healthy way.



(SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, news release, Nov. 25, 2008) SATURDAY, Dec. 13 (*HealthDay News*) –

A new federal government food pyramid for preschoolers may help parents deal with picky eating problems, especially as youngsters are introduced to new kinds of foods during holiday meals.

The *MyPyramid* for Preschoolers interactive Web site (MyPyramid.gov) offers individualized nutrition guidance to meet the needs of children aged 2 to 5, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP). This is in addition to the existing interactive part of the site designed for children ages 6-11 years old

"This is a great tool for all parents but particularly those of finicky eaters. It's loaded with great ideas and suggestions for families so they can help their kids eat a more varied and nutritious diet. What I find most useful is how to talk with kids about what to eat and tips on how to have fun with food around the dinner table," CNPP executive director Brian Wansink said in an USDA news release.

Among the *MyPyramid* tips to help parents deal with finicky eaters:

- Set reasonable limits for the start and end of a meal. When you see your child is no longer interested in the meal, excuse the child from the table.
- Encourage your child to try new foods, but don't lecture or force your child to eat.
- Talk about fun and happy things as part of an overall effort to make mealtimes stress-free.
- Cook together. Encourage children to help you prepare meals and snacks.
- Other features on the *MyPyramid* Web site include:
- *MyPyramid* Plan, where users can create a customized eating plan.
- "Growth During the Preschool Years" answers parents' questions about their children's growth.
- "Developing Healthy Eating Habits" explains to parents and caregivers how to help children develop healthy eating habits.
- "Physical Activity" outlines how to encourage children to be active.
- Food Safety.
- "Sample Meal and Snack Patterns" help translate the *MyPyramid* Plan into individual meals and snacks.

In addition to the broad spectrum of topic areas covered on this site, are the interactive components, including a customized *MyPyramid* Plan that can be printed and posted on the refrigerator door.

The website can be found at www.mypyramid.gov.