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## health food pyramid Scientific American article on "new food pyramid"

Posted by John Long - 2008/10/24 01:50

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<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?collID=1&articleID=0007C5B6-7152-1DF6...> Not about cooking, but certainly intimately related to food and health. I thought readers of r.f.c. might be interested. J.

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Posted by Curly Sue - 2008/10/24 01:50

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Posted by Peter Aitken - 2008/10/24 01:50

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6. Same with alcohol. Alcohol does not belong in a pyramid for nutrition recommendations. Period. They might as well include idiotic food supplements or medications. If they are going to hang stuff off the pyramid that they believe are beneficial for health, they might as well put aspirin too. Oh please - alcohol (wine, primarily) has been a regular part of many people's diets for centuries and can validly be considered a food. This is not the case for supplements or aspirin. Plus, the health benefits of moderate drinking are very well established and quite striking. One study, for example, showed that for middle aged women, the increased cardiovascular risk of not drinking (as compared with 1-2 drinks/day) was the same as being morbidly obese. Leaving this information out would be a serious omission. Peter G. Aitken

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This is not the case for supplements or aspirin. Plus, the health benefits of moderate drinking are very well established and quite striking. One study, for example, showed that for middle aged women, the increased cardiovascular risk of not drinking (as compared with 1-2 drinks/day) was the same as being morbidly obese. Leaving this information out would be a serious omission. That's pharmacology, not food. It doesn't belong in a food pyramid. It will be very interesting to see how many public health professionals are going to jump on the middle-aged women should have 1-2 drinks per day bandwagon. Make mine a marguerita! Strictly speaking, exercise doesn't belong in the food pyramid either, which again points out the problem of trying to shoehorn a big foot ( things that reduce various types of risk ) into a little shoe ( food pyramid ). Perhaps what is needed is a health or lifestyle pyramid, because that's really the direction in which they're going. Then they can include exercise, alcohol, tea, whatever. At the top of the pyramid they can put watching TV with beer and pizza. Sue(tm) Lead me not into temptation... I can find it myself! sue at interport dot net

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Posted by korman - 2008/10/24 01:50

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2. Beets, er I mean vegetables, belong on the bottom. They should also break vegetables and fruits into different categories. Green leafy is a good start! Serious question: which vegetables \*are\* green leafy ? I can only ever think of spinach! Does lettuce count? Kate Orman <kor...@zip.com.au <http://www.zip.com.au/~korman/> I have no idea what that meant. - Dot Warner

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2. Beets, er I mean vegetables, belong on the bottom. They should also break vegetables and fruits into different categories. Green leafy is a good start! Serious question: which vegetables \*are\* green leafy ? I can only ever think of spinach! Does lettuce count? When I was a girl scout oh so many decades ago, one of the 7 basic food groups was green and leafy vegetables. Peas, green beans, celery, anything green and or leafy. Colorful vegetables, like carrots and beets, was a separate category. And fruits was again separate, with a whole category for citrus. Let's see, that would have left one for milk and cheese, one for meat and fish, what else? Grains? I never could remember all seven at once, not sure I got them right this time. Quasi

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2. Beets, er I mean vegetables, belong on the bottom. They should also break vegetables and fruits into different categories. Green leafy is a good start! Serious question: which vegetables \*are\* green leafy ? I can only ever think of spinach! Does lettuce count? off the top of my head... kale, cabbages, arugula, parsley, escarole, collard greens, lettuces, mustard greens. Oh here's a site from a web search: <http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/leafy.html> Sue(tm) Lead me not into temptation... I can find it myself! sue at interport dot net

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Posted by Thelma Lubkin - 2008/10/24 01:50

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: ...<snip :Serious question: which vegetables \*are\* green leafy ? I can only ever :think of spinach! Does lettuce count? ... : Malabar spinach ... What is Malabar spinach?

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<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?collID=1&articleID=0007C5B6-7152-1DF6...> Not about cooking, but certainly intimately related to food and health. I thought readers of r.f.c. might be interested. J. Thanks. It's another guess, counteracting one bit of nonsense and fuzzy advice with another. 1. Putting exercise and weight control on the bottom should read exercise and calorie control. Omitting the significance of calories is a nod to the metabolic magicians who would have people believe that calories don't count and obscures educating too many people that they are simply eating too much food. 2. Beets, er I mean vegetables, belong on the bottom. They should also break vegetables and fruits into different categories. Green leafy is a good start! 3. They shouldn't vaguely prescribe ANY food at most meals (except vegetables :). Two SERIOUS problems are that no serving number information is given for groups at the bottom and no serving sizes are evident for any category. Whole grain foods at most meals and fats at most meals means you can have 5 granola bars at most meals or 5 bags of whole grain Fritos (don't be surprised if it happens. Snackwells were invented to fit in the last pyramid). It means you can have a giant oily whole wheat bran muffin at 500 cal a pop whenever you want, because it also doesn't say what a meal is or how many meals per day. Basically, they still have not learned the lesson that calories count. 4. The recommendations should be given in servings per day and a serving should be defined. Sparingly and moderation are ridiculously vague concepts open to interpretation by all involved- the public and the people who advise them. Serving has been distorted by the ever-increasing size of servings that we get at home or in restaurants. A Texas-sized muffin is not one serving, it's more like 3 or 4. Even the necessary solution of defining a serving of bread as one slice can lead to wide variations. One slice of supermarket bread may have 100 calories but a slice of homemade bread may have almost twice as many (slice is larger, bread is denser). 5. A problem with the pyramid concept is that they are putting foods that they advise against (for whatever reason, legitimate or not) at the top. This was the problem with the old pyramid including sweets and they still have that problem. Instead of now lumping sweets in with fats and oils, as with the old one, they are now lumping it with (oh horror!) white stuff. They shouldn't be \*recommending\* desserts, period. Now, I certainly don't believe that desserts and sugar are poison, and they shouldn't be prohibited. But I don't believe that responsible health professionals should recommend them either unless someone needs to gain weight. Most people will get them in sufficient amounts \*without\* recommendation. They don't need a group and shouldn't be lumped with pasta, rice, and bread of any sort. 6. Same with alcohol. Alcohol does not belong in a pyramid for nutrition recommendations. Period. They might as well include idiotic food supplements or medications. If they are going to hang stuff off the pyramid that they believe are beneficial for health, they might as well put aspirin too. Multiple vitamins for most??? If the pyramid was constructed correctly you wouldn't need this. Now it seems that the chemical industry is affecting advice rather than the dairy or meat industry. 7. The pyramid concept should be scrapped if they can't get the recommended amount of foods to come out right. They are trying to fit a size 10 foot into an attractive size 7 shoe. Granted, the pyramid is a public education gimmick to try and simplify nutritional information for use by the public. But the tool appears to be flawed, not even as much by the data as by trying to squeeze so much information and ideology into the form, while omitting other important information (eg. calorie recommendations for various population groups). Sue(tm) Lead me not into temptation... I can find it myself! sue at interport dot net About two weeks ago, I was listening to Science Friday on NPR. Aside from the reasons why some foods are better than others, one of the panelists realized the root problem with the pyramid. While it was supposedly the best of the possible formats, it is counter intuitive. Consider this. Why is the foods that we should eat least, on top. The foods that we should eat most, on the bottom? This man, an Ad agency owner said that it violates all the criteria of good advertising. He did agree, however, that the very best one of them all, the pie chart, would be the most confusing. As an aside, one of the problems with the original pyramid is that it was reviewed by the industries that came off the worst:beef and dairy industries. They protested, and things changed.

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top of my head... kale, cabbages, arugula, parsley, escarole, collard greens, lettuces, mustard greens. Oh here's a site from a web search: <http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/leafy.html> Thankee! I'd poked around on the Web a bit, but hadn't really found a satisfactory answer. Luckily it's stuff I've been eating anyway. :-) Kate Orman <kor...@zip.com.au <http://www.zip.com.au/~korman/> I have no idea what that meant. - Dot Warner

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They are not recommending desserts. Rather they are saying that, given the fact that most people do eat desserts, here's how they should relate to your overall diet. And in fact desserts should be lumped with bread, rice, etc. because the main thing that all these foods provide is large amounts of simple carbohydrates, which an increasing amount of research shows is best avoided in large quantities. And in 10 years, the cycle will resume and it will be fats that are bad. The fact is that things should be eaten in balance, not by cutting out groups of food as bad. Regards, Rane

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I don't know if lettuce counts, but I think I'd count lettuces OTHER THAN iceberg, which isn't very green and isn't very leafy either. What the heck do you mean it isn't very leafy? It's all leaves. Just because people don't like it all that much doesn't mean it's not leafy. It is also green. Blanched leeks, asparagus, celery, etc, are not denounced for their lack of green. And what about cauliflower which has to be blanched to taste good to us? Regards, Rane

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Posted by maxine in ri - 2008/10/24 01:50

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I don't know if lettuce counts, but I think I'd count lettuces OTHER THAN iceberg, which isn't very green and isn't very leafy either. What the heck do you mean it isn't very leafy? It's all leaves. Just because people don't like it all that much doesn't mean it's not leafy. It is also green. Blanched leeks, asparagus, celery, etc, are not denounced for their lack of green. And what about cauliflower which has to be blanched to taste good to us? Regards, Rane Other than the fact that iceberg lettuce adds minute amounts of nutrients to a diet, it's best feature is that it fills you up without adding too many calories or carbs or fat. I'd rather fill up on romaine and spinach or other dark leafy greens, and get something for all that chewing<g. Oh yes, IIRC Peter Rabbit found lettuce to be soporific as well. maxine who feels like an iceberg in ri (-15C this morning)

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