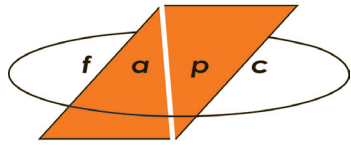


Food and Agricultural Products Center



FLASH!!

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY™

June 10, 2004

Reshaping the Food Guide Pyramid

STILLWATER, Okla. – Countries around the world have developed dietary guidelines to promote proper nutrition.

Dietary guidelines were originally introduced to deal with malnutrition, said Nurhan Dunford, oil/oilseed chemist for the Food & Agricultural Products Center.

“Today, countries develop guidelines in an effort to prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes,” Dunford said.

The U.S. dietary guidelines *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is published jointly every five years by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The guidelines provide authoritative advice for people two years and older about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. They serve as the basis for federal food and nutrition education programs.

The current dietary guidelines were published in May 2000. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, a committee of prominent experts in nutrition and health, will review the 2000 dietary guidelines and determine if revision is warranted.

If so, the committee will submit a report of its recommendations to assist the departments in preparing the 2005 edition of the dietary guidelines. Release of

revised dietary guidelines in January 2005 will follow release of the Food Guide Pyramid.

The Food Pyramid reassessment and updating process has three phases. The phases include gathering the information through technical and consumer research and professional and public input, updating the pyramid’s daily food intake patterns to meet current nutritional standards and developing new graphic and educational materials that communicate pyramid messages in ways that consumers can easily understand and put into practice.

“There is a lot of pressure on the USDA to change the Food Pyramid, which first appeared in 1992,” Dunford said. “A major problem is that the current USDA Food Pyramid does not make distinction about types of fat and carbohydrates.”

The new pyramid will include new information about vegetables, fat, nutrients and carbohydrates.

Eric Hentges, executive director of the USDA’s Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, said the proposed revisions will recommend that at least one-half of all grains eaten be whole grain.

Other proposed changes to the pyramid include:

1. Movement of fats and oils down the pyramid. Fats and oils are currently at the top with sweets suggesting that they should be consumed “sparingly.” This movement brings up the question whether to keep saturated and

trans fat at the top and shift monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats to a lower position on the pyramid.

2. Revisions regarding the ratio of solid to liquid fats and oils in the diet. The new proposed ratio is 40 percent solid to 60 percent liquid, which is the reverse of the recommendations published in 1992.
3. Emphasis on the importance of physical activity and the need to identify one's correct energy needs.

Hentges emphasized that the agency's proposed revision for the pyramid would, for the first time, help consumers tailor their diets to address their own special needs.

"It is crucial that the Food Pyramid helps the public understand what is more appropriate for them instead

of one-size-fits-all." Dunford said. "Given the fact that 64 percent of the U.S population is overweight or obese, and we are a sedentary population, nutrient adequacy levels in dietary guidelines need to be based on sedentary energy level."

Officials say the Food Pyramid also will have a new look. It will look more like a rectangle or a grouping of various shapes.

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Nurhan Dunford is an oil/oilseed chemist at the Food & Agricultural Products Center. She may be contacted at (405) 744-6071 or dunford@okstate.edu .

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Sam E. Curl, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Dean of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$32.20 for 230 copies. 0604 MHG.