

A Sermon on Food Pyramid Problems

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for January 28th, 2024 (and beyond)

These problems have been since addressed and one can get personalized information now through <https://www.myplate.gov/> that takes into consideration age, calorie needs, and more before making any recommendations. But, prior to this there were many charts including the food pyramid with general recommendations supposedly intended for all which many Americans may still use as a guideline today though should not:

The USDA's original food pyramid, from 1992 to 2005^[1]

The food pyramid, from <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.gif> Public Domain

The minimum calorie total going off of minimum servings shown above for all categories with one tablespoon of butter calculated in for the top tier is 1220 (rice alone used in bottom tier), 200 (2 servings of apple on fruit), 330 (using potatoes as the vegetable, but 60-90 for 3 servings of carrots), 140 (2 eggs, hard-boiled no oil etc), 220 cheese (2 serving=220 for parmesan or 226 for cheddar) and 100 for 1 tablespoon of oil or butter=2,210 calories minimum per day. The maximum per the pyramid is 2200 (rice alone), 400 (4 apples), 390 (3 servings of potato and 2 servings of carrot), 210 (3 eggs, hard-boiled no oil etc), 348 (3 servings of cheddar cheese) and 200 for fats/added sugar=3,748 calories maximum per day. The minimum is over my own recommended calorie budget given my activity level (exercise 4-5 times per week for at least 30 minutes). If I truly believed for optimal health I required a minimum of 2,210 calories I'd be sorely mistaken even if I figured that was the minimum recommended by the USDA per the food pyramid.

There are varying sources on the average heights of men and women, but globally at this time it appears the average men's height is 5'6" and average women's height is 5'2". My doctor told me that to figure out your optimal weight you add 100 pounds for 5 feet and 5 pounds per inch over that in height. So, a 5'6" person should maintain 130 pounds and a 5'2" person 110 pounds in terms of their body weights. For a 5'6" male who exercises 4-5 times per week, to maintain optimal the daily calorie budget is 2,223. But, if working out 3 times per week, to maintain optimal the daily calorie budget is 2,086 and that's below the minimum when going off the food pyramid. For the 5'2" female who exercises 3 times per week, to maintain optimal weight the daily calorie budget is 1,646.

If you are still using the food pyramid as your gauge for what you should at minimum be eating for optimal health each day, please stop. And, if you used it to create any dietary plans or attempt to figure out what of each nutrient (i.e. vitamin, acid, mineral, etc) each individual needs per day based on those recommendations as the basis, you are way off. The truth is all you need to do is hit all the food groups at least once and then eat what you want until you hit your daily calorie limit specific to you to maintain optimal health. This is why people used to have large breakfasts in the morning that covered all the food groups. It lets the body know what foods are available to it today so it can alert you to what it needs more of and sometimes that's just fuel because you did a good job getting all the nutrients in before lunch. If you eat a little from every food group, your body registers that it can have any nutrient it wants as all are available that day and so it can then send cravings for more of something it knows is available because you raised its awareness of that by eating a variety of food early in the day. But, if you tell it the only thing available is sugary cereal with or without milk, all the cravings may be for that because it doesn't know there are options, but does know it needs fuel and that that is the fuel available because that was communicated at breakfast.

When people tell you "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day", it is the truth. And, I recommend everyone eat at least something from all the food groups by the time lunch is over to avoid feeling hungry all the time. If after lunch your body doesn't know all the food groups are available, it is going to crave what you've told it about whether it is what is needed or not. Fuel is always needed, nutrients are secondary to fuel from the body's perspective. But, nutrients are needed and it only knows what you communicate through eating at all. So, let your body know what is possible and it will let you know how to optimize through proper cravings.

Happy Eating and Happy New Year Again!

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.