

The HERS Food Pyramid

We do the USDA one better with our own food guide pyramid that applies to people who are interested in losing fat and adding muscle. It's about time.

If the last time you consulted the food guide pyramid was when you learned about food groups in the third grade, count yourself lucky. Even the newer version released in 2005 parrots mainstream nutrition advice: heavy on carbs, light on protein and ignoring [supplements](#) altogether. To remedy that, we've created our own HERS food pyramid, one that better represents what research has shown women need to eat to build and maintain a lean, HERS-worthy [physique](#).

FAST-DIGESTING CARBS (1 serving)

Fast-digesting carbs (also known as sugar) are generally a no-no, but they play a role in our post-[workout](#) diets. Eating them has an immediate effect on insulin levels, and high insulin levels force protein into muscle cells, helping promote recovery and growth.

WHOLE GRAINS (2-3 servings)

Whole-grain carbs not only keep you regular (and aid intestinal health) but also keep blood sugar steady, which, in turn, limits the amount of insulin the body needs.

SUPPLEMENTS (1-4 servings)

Whether it's your postworkout whey-and-creatine shake, your morning multivitamin, your bedtime casein shake or your daily fish-oil pills, supplements are important for keeping you healthy as well as fit and lean.

FRUITS (1-2 servings)

Full of antioxidants but also carbs (namely fructose), fruit is appropriate primarily first thing in the morning and before workouts.

HEALTHY FATS (4-5 servings)

The beneficial effects of eating [healthy fats](#) can't be overstated. We won't go into great detail, but here's a short list: increased [muscle growth](#) and strength, reduced muscle breakdown, increased [fat loss](#) and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

VEGETABLES (5-7 servings)

Veggies provide fiber to maintain the health of your gastrointestinal and cardiovascular systems, and ample vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients to take care of the rest of your body. Some vegetables such as corn and potatoes are loaded with carbs, so go easy on those.

PROTEIN (5-7, 4-6-ounce servings)

Groundbreaking research published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition in 2000 found that active individuals like HERS readers should ingest 0.7-0.8 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight per day. We recommend getting about 1 gram per pound in 5-7 servings.

<http://www.muscleandfitnesshers.com/nutrition/hers-food-pyramid>