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Perspective in practice

How to put the food guide pyramid into practice

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Abstract

The Food Guide Pyramid represents changes and challenges for nutrition educators. Nutrition educators will have to change the focus, content, and teaching expectations for lessons. Use of the Pyramid will also require changes in the way the concepts of good nutrition are related to different audiences. In contrast to previous food guides, which represented a foundation diet, the Food Guide Pyramid represents the total diet, addressing overnutrition as well as undernutrition. The Food Guide Pyramid is a graphic representation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and illustrates the key concepts of variety, moderation, and proportionality. For practitioners, one challenge is to find ways to effectively use the Food Guide Pyramid to teach clients how to put the Dietary Guidelines into action. Another challenge involves designing materials that adapt the messages of the Food Guide Pyramid to a variety of audiences. Teaching materials and instructions should emphasize the key concepts of the Food Guide Pyramid and should be clear, consistent, motivational, and culturally sensitive. Few educational materials are

be clear, consistent, motivational, and culturally sensitive. Few educational materials are available to help practitioners with these challenges. In this article we outline the key changes that the Food Guide Pyramid embodies, and provide ideas and suggestions for using the Pyramid in a practice setting.



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