

Focusing on:

Building Blocks



The Meat & Bean Group

All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of this group. For many Americans, meat is a big part of their diet. While many types of meat are high in fat and cholesterol, not all meats are unhealthy. Lean meats such as poultry and fish are important for protein, iron, zinc, and the B vitamins. Be sure to choose meats that are grilled, broiled, and cooked and served without the skin. Also, always trim the fat before cooking.

In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the meat and beans group. For a 2,000 calorie per day diet, you should eat 5.5 oz from the meat and bean group.

Varying choices and including fish, nuts, and seeds in meals can boost intake of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs). Most fat in the diet should come from MUFAs and PUFAs. Some of the PUFAs are essential for health—the body cannot create them from other fats.

Some fish (such as salmon, trout, and herring) are high in a type of PUFA called “omega-3 fatty acids.” The omega-3 fatty acids in fish are commonly called “EPA” and

“DHA.” There is some limited evidence that suggests eating fish rich in EPA and DHA may reduce the risk for mortality from cardiovascular disease. (EPA is eicosapentaenoic acid and DHA is docosahexaenoic acid.)

Cholesterol Clear up

So what exactly is cholesterol, and what is it for? Cholesterol is a waxy type of fat that’s found only in foods that come from animals. And yes, our bodies do actually need it! In fact, cholesterol is needed in the heart, liver, kidneys, and brain to function properly.

Moderation is Everything

Okay, so we need cholesterol. BUT, we only need a little bit. Too much cholesterol in our diet significantly raises the risk of heart disease—the number one killer in the U.S. To help control and lower cholesterol, the National Cholesterol Education Program recommends consuming no more than 200 milligrams of cholesterol per day.

Vegetarian choices in the Meat and Beans group:

Vegetarians get enough protein from this group as long as the variety and amounts of foods selected are adequate. Protein sources from the Meat and Beans group for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans, nuts, nut butters, peas, and soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers).

Recipe of the Week

Tuna-Pasta Casserole

Ingredients

- 8-ounce package linguine, vermicelli, spaghetti, or other thin pasta
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced, or ½ teaspoon bottled minced garlic
- 2 6 ½-ounce cans tuna in spring water, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup finely chopped carrot
- ⅓ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ teaspoon paprika, or to taste
- 1 cup nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese
- ½ cup nonfat or low-fat sour cream
- ½ cup plain nonfat or low-fat yogurt
- Vegetable oil spray
- ½ cup plain bread crumbs, toasted
- ¼ cup grated or shredded Parmesan cheese (about 1 ounce)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and oil. Drain. | Pour oil into a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté, stirring often, until onion is translucent, (2 to 3 minutes). Transfer onion and garlic to a large bowl. | Add tuna, carrot, bell pepper, parsley, and paprika to onion/garlic mixture and stir to combine. Set aside. | In a small bowl, blend cottage cheese, sour cream, and yogurt. Stir cottage cheese mixture and pasta into tuna mixture. | Spray a casserole dish with vegetable oil spray. Pour tuna mixture into casserole dish. | In a small bowl, combine bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle over casserole. | Bake casserole for 30 to 45 minutes, or until top is lightly browned. | Serves 6.

Calories:	332
Fat:	4 g
Saturated:	1 g
Polyunsaturated:	1 g
Sodium:	351 mg

Source: American Heart Association Low-Fat, Low-Cholesterol Cookbook, Second Edition

This Week's Challenge

If you're accustomed to eating larger portions of meat, then getting used to the smaller, recommended sizes might be a challenge. To get the most out of your meat, chew slowly and savor the flavor—try to chew each piece several times before you swallow.

Five Questions

Here are five questions for you to consider as you progress through this campaign.

1. Who is your role model when it comes to eating healthy? Why?
2. What part of the day do you feel the biggest urge to give into sweets and fattening foods? Are you able to control yourself when you have this urge?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being low and 10 being high) how would you rate your commitment to eating healthy?
4. Do you have to make a conscious effort to follow the food pyramid, or is it now just a normal part of your day?
5. What makes following the food pyramid difficult, i.e., sticking to smaller portion sizes, eating more fruits, etc?



*“Red meat is **not** bad for you.
Now blue-green meat, **that's** bad for you!”*

—TOMMY SMOTHERS