

Game Guide for Teachers

Pyramid Pile Up

Health and Gameplay

Pyramid Pile Up is a puzzle game designed to teach kids and families about food groups. There are six groups of tiles in the game:

1. Grain
2. Veggie
3. Fruit
4. Milk
5. Meat
6. Extra

The player must fill the blank pyramid game board with six grain tiles, five veggie tiles, four fruit tiles, three milk tiles, two meat tiles, and one any tile (wild card). The goal is to fill the pyramid with food tiles from the correct food groups. For extra points, the player can try to build an “optimal” pyramid, one that is high in vitamins, low in fat, low in sugar, and full of variety. Players can use nutrition labels to assist them in this task.

Grains

Grains are foods made from rice, wheat, cornmeal, oats, and barley. It should be noted that grains are further categorized into refined grains and whole grains. Refined grains have been “processed.” This process, called milling, removes germ and bran from the grain product making them smoother and able to last longer on shelves. Unfortunately this also strips the grain of fiber, iron, and vitamins like vitamin B. Examples of refined grains include: spaghetti pasta, pretzels, and cornbread. Whole grains, on the other hand, contain the entire grain kernel, are not “processed” or milled, and contain their natural fiber, iron, and vitamins. Examples of whole grains include: oatmeal, whole wheat bread, wild rice, and popcorn.

Non-Grains

In this game, foods that contain a small amount of refined grains but are mostly made of sugar, additives, and fat do not count as part of the grain group. Examples include biscuits with butter, donuts, and frosted cake.

Vegetables

Vegetables are defined as an edible root, stem, or leaf. They are naturally low in fat and calories, have no cholesterol, and are a source of important nutrients including potassium, fiber, folic acid, and vitamins A, E, and C. The USDA further organizes vegetables into five subgroups based on nutrient content. In this game, vegetables can be whole, chopped, dried, frozen, or canned. Bonus points are awarded for selecting three or more vegetables that are high in vitamins and nutrients: dark green veggies or orange veggies.

Non-Vegetables

There are two types of foods that our experts at Baylor College of Medicine have labeled as non-vegetables. This includes foods that:

1. Don't contain enough vegetables to count as one serving of vegetables
2. Only taste like vegetables



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Fruits

Fruits are defined as a seed-bearing product of a plant. In this game, fruits can be whole, chopped, dried, frozen, or canned. Canned fruit must be in water, juice, or light syrup to count as a serving of fruit. Only 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group.

Non-Fruits

There are two types of foods that our experts at Baylor College of Medicine have labeled as non-fruits. This includes foods that:

1. Don't contain enough fruit to count as one serving of fruit
2. Only taste like fruit

Milk

The foods in this category are liquid milk products or foods made from milk like cheeses and yogurts. Bonus points are awarded for selecting milks that are fat free or low in fat like 1% milk.

Non-Milk

To count as a serving in the milk group, the food must retain its calcium content. Examples of non-milks include butter, cream cheese, and whipping cream.

Meat

Foods in this group include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts. It is recommended to choose lean or low-fat meats or meats with healthy oils like fish and nuts.

Non-Meat

Foods that do not count as a serving of meat are those that are full of fat, sodium, and oil. Examples include fried chicken and pork bacon.

Extra

The "Extra" group is also known as the discretionary group. This is a set amount of extra calories that is allotted for a person's daily diet. Foods with added sugars or fats will fit in this group. A player can add a nutritious, low fat food in this slot for bonus points.

Building the Optimal Food Pyramid (Bonus Points)

The player will be challenged to not only categorize tiles into the correct food groups but also make the healthiest food pyramid possible. There are several opportunities for the player to receive bonus points by filling the pyramid with "optimal" foods. These are foods that are lower in fat and higher in vitamin content.

- All Whole Grains: use 6 whole grain tiles
 - Whole grains are full of vitamin B and magnesium for energy and weight management.
- Half Whole Grains: use 3 – 5 whole grain tiles
 - Whole grains give you fiber for a healthy digestive system and metabolism.
- Orange Veggies: use 3+ orange veggie tiles
 - Orange veggies are full of antioxidants, vitamin A, and fiber which may prevent cancer.



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- Dark Green Veggies: use 3+ dark green veggie tiles
 - Dark green veggies are full of iron, folate, and vitamin A for a healthy heart.
- Fruit: use a variety of fruit tiles (all tiles must be different)
 - A variety of fruits gives your body a variety of nutrients like potassium and vitamin C for faster healing.
- Fat Free Milk: use all fat free tiles
 - Fat free dairy gives you potassium for healthy blood pressure.
- Low Fat Milk: use all low fat tiles
 - Low fat dairy gives you calcium for strong bones and teeth with little saturated fat.
- Lean Meat: use all lean meat tiles like eggs, nuts, and baked chicken
 - Lean meats are full of protein for strong muscles without the extra fat and calories.
- Fish: use all fish tiles
 - Fish is rich in omega-3 fatty acids for a healthy brain and heart.
- Any: use a healthy food tile instead of one high in fat and calories
 - Spending your daily "extra" calories on foods low in fat and sugar can help prevent type 2 diabetes and obesity.



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Teacher Resources

In 2005, the Food Pyramid was dramatically changed by the United States Department of Agriculture. This new pyramid emphasizes personalized eating plans, not a one-size-fits-all. A balance between nutrition and physical activity is also a part of the new pyramid. Visit the USDA's MyPyramid website for everything you need to know about the Food Pyramid: <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.

For additional information about each section of the food pyramid and the benefits of foods within each food group, visit the "Inside the Pyramid" section of the USDA MyPyramid website: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>.

