

10
tips

MyPyramid

Nutrition Education Series

going green with mypyramid



10 tips for making environmentally friendly choices

Did it ever occur to you that your daily food choices can impact the environment? Food has a lot to do with the environment—probably much more than you'd think. From farm to table, there are many points where green decisions can be made.

1 buy directly from a farmer

Check out your local farmer's market or join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Look for local sources of fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, cheese, or eggs. They may have traveled fewer miles and contain less packaging, thereby saving energy.



2 buy in bulk

Shop in stores that sell foods in bulk bins to reduce solid waste and resource use. Food co-ops often offer many grains, flours, beans, nuts, dried fruit, soup mixes, and ready-to-eat cereals in bulk. Buying in bulk may be cheaper, too.

3 reduce food package waste

Buy larger sizes. Omit single serve containers and juice boxes from your grocery list. Buy milk and yogurt in the largest container you will use. **Reuse:** take your own shopping bags to the store!

4 look for the USDA Organic seal

When shopping, look for the USDA Organic seal. It assures you that the agricultural products marketed as organic meet strict standards. Organic crops are raised without using most conventional pesticides or petroleum-based fertilizer. Animals raised on an organic farm must be fed organic feed. They are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.



5 eat seasonally

Plan your meals around the vegetables and fruits that are in season in your growing area. Seasonal fruits and vegetables can be less expensive, too.

6 vary your choices in meat and beans

Sometimes use nuts or beans, such as kidney, pinto, or garbanzo beans, to vary the protein in your entrée. Less energy is used to produce them, compared to the energy used to produce meat or poultry.

7 start a vegetable garden

When you grow your own food, you control the use of pesticides and omit the need for transportation or packaging. If you have a small space, try herbs on your windowsill or other vegetables in pots.



8 think natural

Buy foods in their natural state or minimally processed, such as rolled oats instead of instant oatmeal, or fresh chicken instead of chicken nuggets. This reduces the fossil fuels needed for processing. It can lower your calories, too.

9 drink tap water

Eliminate individual water bottles from your grocery list. Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with tap water. Water from your tap is free. The processing, packaging, transportation, and storage of bottled water uses more fossil fuel and bottle disposal adds to household waste.

10 cook at home

Cook at home more often rather than getting take-out or eating out. Make a double batch—cook for more than one meal at a time to conserve energy. Consider cooking methods that use less energy, such as microwaving and steaming.

