Food Groups

There are six food groups in the USDA food pyramid. They are (listed from the bottom of the pyramid upward):

- breads, cereals, rice, and pasta
- vegetables
- fruit
- meat, poultry, and fish
- milk products
- fats, oils, and sweets

Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta

Breads, cereals, rice, and pasta form the base of the pyramid, which suggests 6 to 11 servings of these foods each day (Figure 8-11). These foods provide complex carbohydrates (starches), which are an important source of energy, especially in low-fat diets. They also provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Vegetables

Vegetables are rich in vitamins A and C, folate, and minerals such as iron and magnesium. These foods are naturally low in fat and provide

Figure 8-11 These foods provide complex carbohydrates (starches), which are an important source of energy, especially in low-fat diets. They also provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. (Courtesy of Wheat Foods Council)

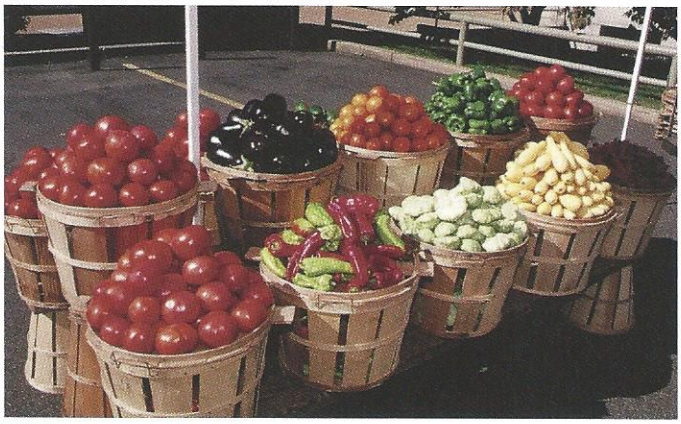

Figure 8-12 Vegetables are rich in vitamins A and C, folate, and minerals such as iron and magnesium. (Courtesy of USDA)

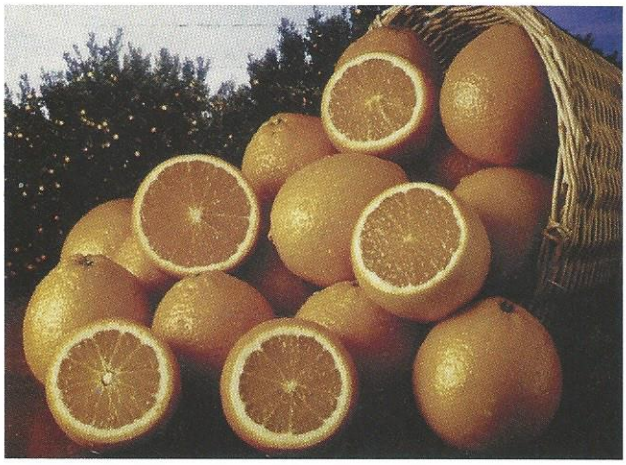

Figure 8-13 Fruits provide vitamins A and C, potassium, magnesium, iron, and carbohydrates, including dietary fiber. (Courtesy of USDA)

a good source of fiber (Figure 8-12). It is suggested that three to five servings be eaten each day.

Fruit

Fruit and fruit juices are abundant in vitamins A and C and potassium (Figure 8-13). They are low in fat and sodium. It is suggested that two to four servings of fruit be eaten each day.

Meat, Poultry, and Fish

The food group that includes meat, poultry, and fish is abundant in protein, B vitamins, iron, and zinc (Figure 8-14). Other foods in this group—dry beans, eggs, and nuts—are similar to meats in supplying protein and most vitamins and minerals. Two to three servings from this food group should be consumed each day.

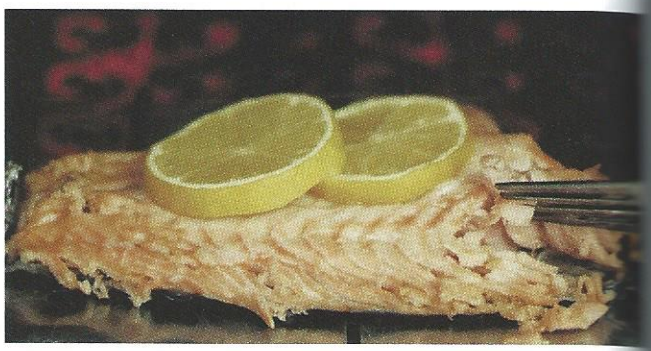

Figure 8-14 Two to three servings from the meat, poultry, and fish food group should be consumed each day. (Courtesy of USDA)

ilk Products

k products provide protein, vitamins, and ierals, and are an excellent source of calci- (Figure 8-15). The Food Guide Pyramid mmends two to three servings from this ıp each day. Women who are pregnant or stfeeding should add at least one more ing.

, Oils, and Sweets

g listed at the top of the food pyramid is an honor. Consumption of items in this group should be limited, even though nutrients found here are important to health. The USDA recommendation is to ese foods sparingly.

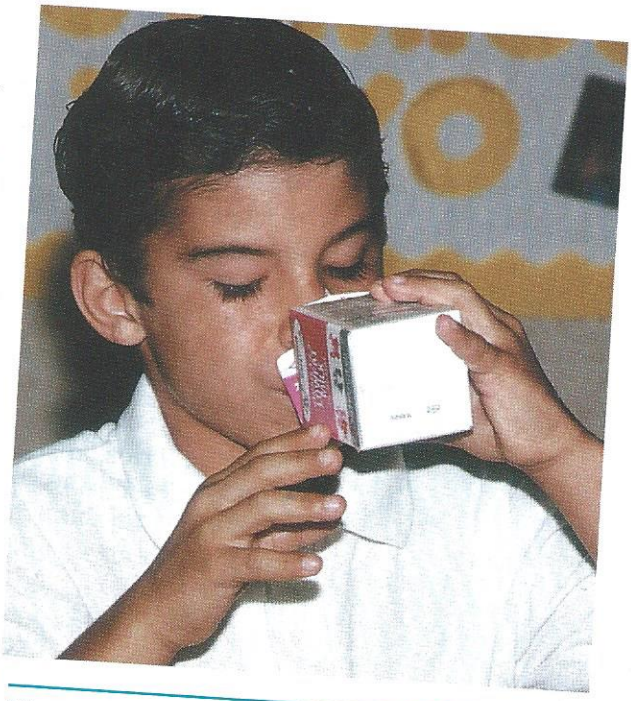

Figure 8-15 Milk continues to be an important source of nutrition for school-age children.

UTRITIONAL UACKERY

athletes seek out magic supplements ll give them an edge over their competi- s a result, these athletes become suscep- nutritional quackery. Most athletes would love an tive to hard work and training. Nutritional quack- uccessful because individuals and companies play tions and misinformation.

w dietary supplements are marketed each day. roducts are often developed and sold without any ng scientific research on benefits or harmful cts. The Food and Drug Administration treats upplements as foods. Therefore, these products valuated for safety and effectiveness.

viduals and companies promote false and/or nutritional supplements or products with f making money. They prey on the innocent, ting athlete who is eager for an edge. If ms appear too good to be true, they proba- Before taking any product, the athlete eck with someone who has nutritional r advice. It may save money, disappoint- the athlete's health. The best protection tritional quackery is to be an informed

KEY CONCEPT

The Food and Drug Administration treats dietary supplements as foods. Therefore, these products are not evaluated for safety and effectiveness. Persons or products making claims that are unproven and unrealistic are practicing nutritional quackery. If it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

MAKING THE WEIGHT

One of the most important aspects of fitness and athletic performance is controlling weight. Athletic performance and good health are enhanced by proper weight management. This goes back to the earlier discussion of nutrition. A properly conditioned athlete is also one who takes proper nutrition seriously.

One pound of fat equals 3,500 calories. Most active men and women require about 2,200 calories a day. Some active men may need 2,800 calories. High-endurance athletes will require considerably more.

Being overweight or underweight is the result of eating more or fewer calories, respectively, than the person needs. The food choices that a person makes, in addition to exercise, determine body weight.

Gaining Weight

The objective of gaining weight is to increase lean body mass. *Lean body mass* is muscle, as opposed to body fat. It takes about 2,500 calories to gain one pound of lean body mass and 3,500 calories to gain one pound of fat. Lean body mass cannot be increased by the use of special vitamins, foods, or supplements. It is possible to gain one or two pounds per week, providing that a weight training program is central to the program. Without a weight training program and increased energy expenditure, excess caloric intake will be converted to fat.

Losing Weight

There are three ways to lose weight:

- restricting caloric intake (dieting)
- exercise
- restricting caloric intake *and* exercise

Dieting alone is the most difficult means of losing weight. Long-term weight control through dieting alone is successful only 2% of the time. In dieting, 35% to 45% of the weight decrease is from lean body tissue. The minimum caloric intake for a female should not go below 1,000 to 1,200 calories per day. A male's intake should not drop below 1,200 to 1,400 calories per day.

Weight loss through exercise may result in increased cardiorespiratory endurance, as well as gains in strength and increased flexibility. These are all positive for the athlete's overall health. Using exercise as the sole means of losing weight will probably have the same limited results as dieting alone.