WHAT! NO FOOD PYRAMID? How am I going to provide nutrition education to athletes? These were typical comments by many athletic trainers when the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the retirement of the Food Pyramid, a nutrition icon that has been the basis of nutritional advice since 1992. In its place is a new interactive food-guidance system, MyPyramid (http://mypyramid.gov).

The main theme of this new guidance system, “Steps to a Healthier You,” has incorporated the importance of physical activity and energy balance along with making healthier food choices. In addition, MyPyramid promotes the following:

- **Personalization:** Anyone can visit the MyPyramid.gov Web site to determine his or her specific nutritional needs.
- **Gradual improvement:** The main theme, “Steps to a Healthier You,” suggests that small steps are effective in improving diet and lifestyle.
- **Variety:** There are six color bands in the pyramid that represent the five food groups and oils that are essential in diets today.
- **Moderation:** Each food group narrows from the bottom to the top of the pyramid. The wider base stands for nutrient-dense foods with little or no fat or added sugars.
- **Proportionality:** The different widths of the color bands suggest how much food should be eaten from each food group.

Check out the following areas on the site.

**MyPyramid Plan.** After you enter age, gender, and physical activity, a calorie plan will be provided that estimates what and how much food you should eat from the different groups. For college-age athletes with more than 60 min of physical activity on most days, this is 3,000 calories for men and 2,400 calories for women (Figure 1). In addition to individualized caloric levels, serving sizes for each food group are provided. Here is where athletic trainers will need to do their homework—the serving-size amounts have been revised from numbers of servings to actual amounts in ounces (grains and meat and beans) or cups (vegetables, fruits, and milk).

**Inside MyPyramid.** This section offers information on each food group, including detailed lists of foods, daily amounts in common household measures, and health benefits and key nutrients (Table 1). A food gallery provides pictures of serving sizes.

**MyPyramid Tracker.** This online dietary analysis and physical activity assessment tool provides information on energy balance and nutrient intake and summarizes food intake in relation to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The main feature of this link allows athletes to track dietary intake and physical activity for up to 1 year. It requires an athlete to register in order to create a MyPyramid Tracker account. Once this is done, the athlete can log in and enter food and activity records to monitor progress over time.

The new MyPyramid Web site is not a substitute for professional advice and counseling from a sports dietitian, but it does provide athletic trainers accurate nutrition information for athletes of all ages.
Figure 1  2,400-calorie My Pyramid Plan.

Based on the information you provided, this is your daily recommended amount from each food group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAINS</th>
<th>VEGETABLES</th>
<th>FRUITS</th>
<th>MILK</th>
<th>MEAT &amp; BEANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 ounces</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>6 ounces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Make half your grains whole**
  - Aim for at least 3 1/2 ounces of whole grains a day

- **Vary your veggies**
  - Aim for these amounts each week:
    - Dark green veggies = 3 cups
    - Orange veggies = 2 cups
    - Dry beans & peas = 3 cups
    - Starchy veggies = 6 cups
    - Other veggies = 7 cups
  - Focus on fruits
    - Eat a variety of fruit
    - Go easy on fruit juices

- **Get your calcium-rich foods**
  - Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, or cheese

- **Go lean with protein**
  - Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry
  - Vary your protein routine—choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds

**Find your balance between food and physical activity**
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

**Know your limits on fats, sugars, and sodium**
- Your allowance for oils is 6 teaspoons a day.
- Limit extras—solid fats and sugars—to 290 calories a day.

**Your results are based on a 2200 calorie pattern.**

This calorie level is only an estimate of your needs. Monitor your body weight to see if you need to adjust your calorie intake.

Name: ______________________