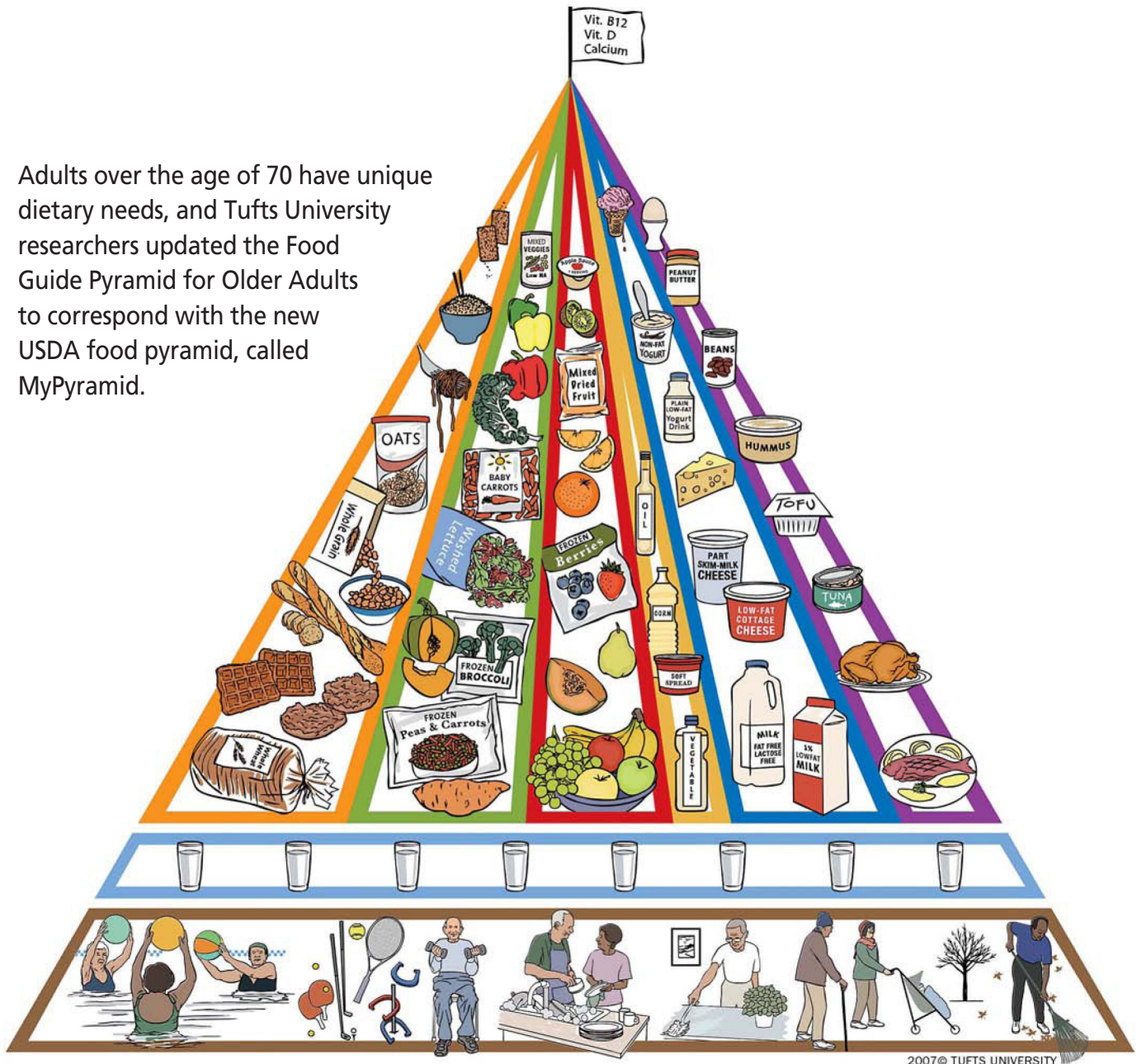


# Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults

## Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults

Adults over the age of 70 have unique dietary needs, and Tufts University researchers updated the Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults to correspond with the new USDA food pyramid, called MyPyramid.



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## Understanding the Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults

The Tufts version specifically designed for older adults:

- Continues to emphasize nutrient-dense food choices and the importance of fluid balance and
- Has added additional guidance about forms of foods that could best meet the unique needs of older adults and about the importance of regular physical activity.

Older adults tend to need fewer calories as they age because they are not as physically active as they once were and their metabolic rates slow down. However, their bodies still require the same or higher levels of nutrients for optimal health.

The pyramid uses icons representing foods in the following categories:

- Whole, enriched, and fortified grains and cereals, such as brown rice and 100% whole wheat bread.
- Brightly-colored vegetables, such as carrots and broccoli.
- Deeply-colored fruit, such as berries and melon.
- Low- and non-fat dairy products, such as yogurt and low-lactose milk.
- Dry beans and nuts, fish, poultry, lean meat and eggs.
- Liquid vegetable oils and soft spreads low in saturated and trans fat.

The foundation of the pyramid stresses the importance of:

- Increased daily fluid intake.
- Regular physical activity, such as walking, house work and yard work.

As people age, there can be a disassociation between how hydrated bodies are and how thirsty they feel; this can be of particular concern in the summer months.

Food and beverages with high water content are important contributors of fluid in an older person's diet:

- Lettuce
- Vegetable juice
- Soups

Emphasized in the Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults are icons depicting packaged fruits and vegetables in addition to fresh examples, forms that for a number of reasons may be more appropriate for older adults. These include:

- Bags of frozen pre-cut vegetables that can be resealed and
- Single-serve portions of canned fruit.

These choices can be easier to prepare and have a longer shelf life, minimizing waste.

The flag at the top of the pyramid suggests that older adults may need increased amounts of certain supplemental nutrients as they age:

- Calcium
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin B12

Although the majority, if not all, of the nutrients an older adult consumes should come from food rather than supplements, these nutrients may be difficult to obtain from food alone, especially when calorie needs go down.

Some people may need to discuss this potential need with their health care providers.

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