THE SEVEN FOOD GROUPS

To follow a balanced diet, it is important to know well the foods, their nutritional characteristics, the calories they provide, the best method to consume them. Foods are divided into seven groups: to each of these belong those foods that are nutritionally equivalent. It is important to take into account all groups, so that no one is missing in our diet to take all the essential nutrients.

Group	Foods	Nutrients provided
1	meat, fish, eggs	high quality protein, iron some B vitamins
2	milk and dairy products	calcium, high quality proteins some B vitamins
3	cereals, tubers and derivatives	carbohydrates, low protein quality, B vitamins
4	legumes	medium quality protein, iron, certain vitamins of group B
5	Seasoning oils and fats	fats
6 and 7	vegetables and fruit	vitamins (especially A and C), minerals, fiber

GROUP 1
MEAT FISH, EGGS

This group includes all types of meat, offal, game, processed meats, all types of fish, including crustaceans and mollusks, and eggs.

Foods that belong to this group provide proteins of high biological value, iron and some B complex vitamins. Some also provide minerals and fat-soluble vitamins. Unique among animal products, the liver, spleen and lung also provide vitamin C.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY FOR THE INTAKE OF VARIOUS FOODS OF GROUP 1

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Chicken, turkey, chicken Beef, lean veal Lean fish such as cod, snapper, sole, tuna, etc.	Fatty beef Pork, Liver and offal Fatty fish such as eel, herring, etc. Mollusks (Clams) and crustaceans Eggs (hard-boiled or poached)	Fried meat and fish Tripe, Various delicatessen products, Fish in oil Industrially prepared and prepackaged meat or fish (such as fish fingers, Burgers with vegetables, etc.) Eggs in the form of omelette

GROUP 2
MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

Foods in this group provide protein, vitamins and minerals. Proteins are of high biological value. The main vitamins found in these foods are A and B but the most important nutrient in this group is calcium. Milk derivatives are yogurt, fresh, melted, hard and seasoned cheeses, blue cheeses, cream , butter, ricotta.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY
FOR INTAKE OF VARIOUS FOODS IN GROUP 2

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Semi- or entirely skimmed, milk, Low-fat or fruit yoghurt, Fresh cheeses (mozzarella, caciottina, etc.)	Whole milk, Whole yogurt, Hard cheeses (Gruyere, Provolone) Processed cheeses, Blue cheeses, Ricotta and robiola cheese	Cream, Mascarpone, butters Ice cream Puddings, creams and desserts, milk-based

GROUP 3
CEREALS, TUBERS AND DERIVATIVES

To this group belong foods rich in complex carbohydrates in the form of starch. The most common are wheat, rice, corn, millet, spelt, sorghum, rye, oats, barley among cereals, and potatoes among tubers. Their proteins are of poor quality but the problem can be overcome by consuming cereals together with other foods, since cereal proteins can complement each other. with those of legumes for example. The foods that belong to this group are therefore not only cereals as they are found in nature and are directly consumed but all those derived products, such as flour, semolina , polenta, puffed cereals, bread, pasta, pizza, crackers, breadsticks, biscuits, rusks.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY
FOR VINTAKE OF THE VARIOUS FOODS OF THE GROUP

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Bread (white or whole meal), Pasta and soups, Puffed cereals, Rusks and Potatoes	Bread with, oil, Rice, Egg Pasta, Pizza, Crackers and breadsticks, Biscuits	French fries, Desserts (donuts, pastries, pies, etc.)

GROUP 4
LEGUMES

Dried legumes (beans, broad beans, peas, lentils, soybeans, etc.) belong to this group.
The foods of this group are rich mainly in proteins, although not of excellent quality, carbohydrates (in the form of starch), minerals (iron and calcium) and some B vitamins. Legumes are great for their protein, caloric and mineral value, especially iron.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY FOR INTAKE OF VARIOUS FOODS IN GROUP 4

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Fresh legumes, green beans and fresh peas	Beans and broad beans, fresh Dried beans, lentils and chickpeas in soup	Dried lupins, Dried broad, beans, Beans or lentils, cooked in a manner more elaborate (with sauce) Soy products (Tofu or hamburger)

GROUP 5
SEASONING OILS AND FATS

This group includes oils, butter, margarines, other products that contain these foods in high quantities and those products of animal origin such as lard and lard. All of them contain fats and the distinction is made on the quality of lipids. Those of vegetable origin contain unsaturated fatty acids and do not contain cholesterol, while those of animal origin have saturated fatty acids, which cause some serious disorders such as heart attack and thrombosis, because they cause alterations at the level of the arteries. Separate speech for margarines, which are artificial fats, obtained industrially using low-fat but inedible oils.

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY FOR THE INTAKE OF VARIOUS FOODS OF GROUP 5

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Olive oil, Corn oil, Sunflower oil, Soybean oil, Various seed oil	Margarine, Mayonnaise Butter	Fried fats, Lard

GROUP 6 AND 7
VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

These foods are classified into two groups based on the type of vitamin they provide. Group 6 includes those who are rich mainly in vitamin A and group 7 those rich in vitamin C. Fats and proteins are scarce, but carbohydrates (especially sucrose and fructose) are present, which vary from product to product. To prevent mineral salts from being dispersed during cooking, it is preferable to consume raw fruit and vegetables.

Foods rich in vitamin C are acidic fruits (citrus fruits) and bud vegetables (cauliflower and tomatoes). Vegetables and fruits especially rich in vitamin A are those with a characteristic yellow-orange or dark green color (carrots, apricots, yellow melon, yellow pumpkin, yellow and green peppers, spinach, chard, lettuce, etc.).

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY
FOR THE INTAKE OF VARIOUS FOODS OF GROUP 6

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Apricots, persimmon, carrot, pumpkin, Vegetables to boil (spinach, chard, etc.), Tomatoes	Cooked vegetables, or sautéed fried zucchini flowers	Dried fruit, Olives Dried fruit

RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY FOR
THE USE OF VARIOUS FOODS IN GROUP 7

Daily	2/3 times a week	1 time per week
Citrus, Raspberry, Cauliflowers, Tomatoes, Strawberries, Lettuce	Pineapple, Peppers, Fruit juices with sugar Grapes, bananas, figs	Olives Dried fruit, Pickles and in oil

In the table below, the quantities of each food group that must be taken are shown as a percentage.

In general, you can follow these criteria:

reduce the consumption of foods of animal origin, choosing vegetable proteins, fish and white meats; do not exceed in the use of cheese and dairy products; reduce the consumption of fats and in principle choose condiments of vegetable origin to those of animal origin (therefore oil instead of buffo); cereals and tubers should be used as the basis of the daily diet; reduce the consumption of white sugar and sweets in general; moderate coffee and alcohol intake.

Cereals and Tubers	Vegetables and fruits	Proteins of plant and animal origin	Condiment oils
50%	30-35%	15-20%	5-10%

PORTIONS

Another way to calculate the amount to be taken daily of each food group is that of portions. According to the indications of the table, therefore, you can choose the portions of food belonging to the various food groups and alternate them in the various meals of the day.

FOOD PORTION TABLE

Food group	Number of servings per day
Cereals and tubers	2-4
Fruit and vegetables (and fresh legumes)	3-5
Milk and dairy products	1-2
Meat, fish, eggs (and dried legumes)	1-2
Seasoning fats	1-3

The following table shows the standard portions of the Italian diet expressed in grams.

TABLE OF STANDARD PORTIONS OF ITALIAN FOOD

Food group	Food	Portion (g)
Cereals and tubers	Bread	50
	Bakery products	50
	Pasta or rice*	80
	Fresh egg pasta *	120
	Potatoes	200
Fruits and vegetables	Salads	50
	Vegetables	250
	Fruit or juice	150
Milk and dairy products	Milk	125
	Yogurt	125
	Fresh cheese	100
	Aged cheese	50
Meat, fish, eggs and legumes	Fresh meat	100
	Cold cuts	50
	Fish	150
	Eggs	50 (one egg)
	Dried legumes	30
Seasoning fats	Oil	10
	Butter	10
	Margarine	10

*If prepared in the form of soup, the portion must be halve the portion.