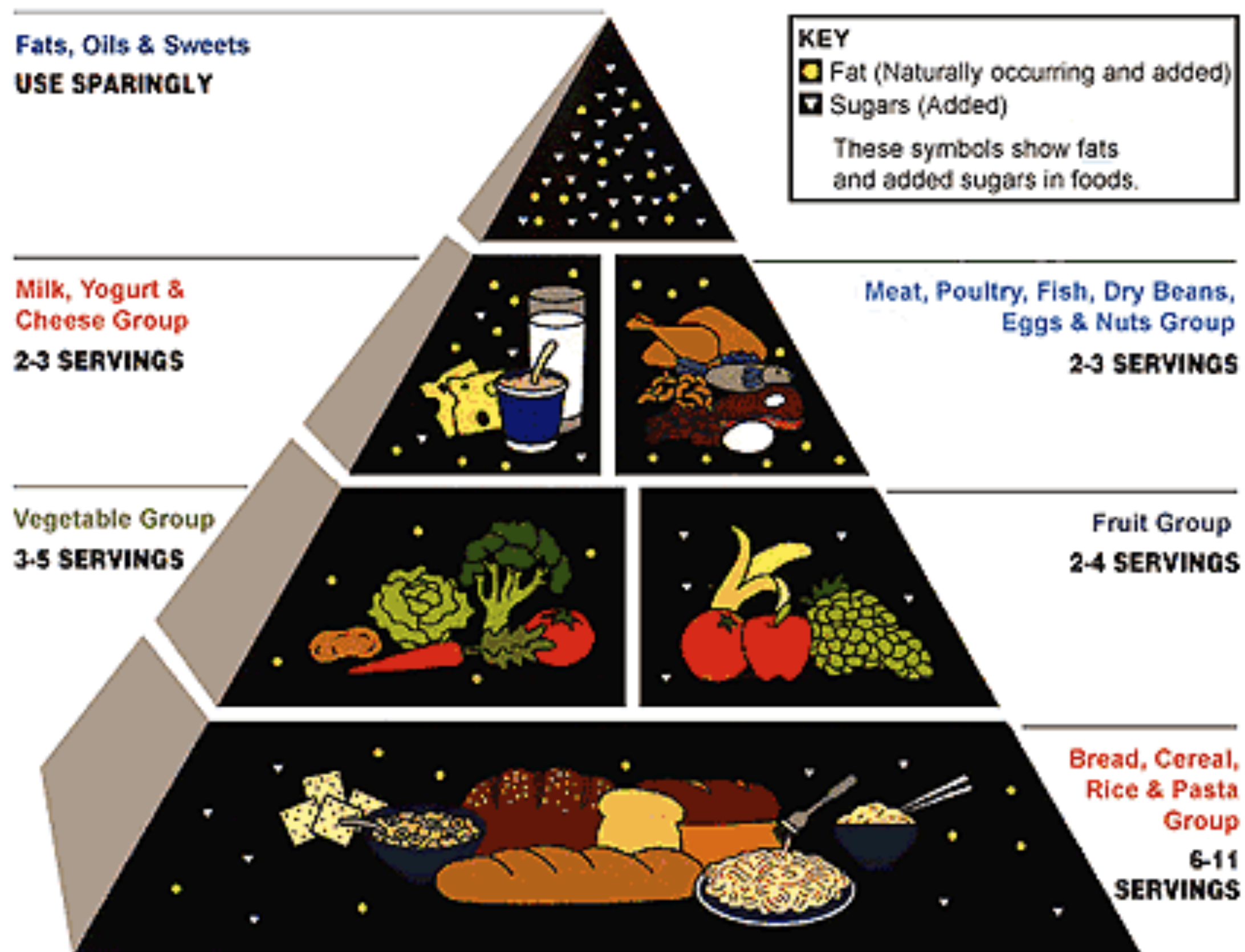


Abstract:

Beloit College students rely upon Commons as a primary source for their nutrition. However, no one has looked at what the average Beloit student eats at Commons, or how the average student could eat more healthfully at Commons. Through online searches and direct information from the Director of Commons, enough information has been collected to begin to answer these questions. Among other results, the information shows examples of a meal typical at Commons, as well as basic facts about the nutritional composition of that meal. In addition, it is shown how a Beloit student can get this information about their food choices. Awareness of what one eats at commons can act positively towards a better present and future for one's health at Beloit College.

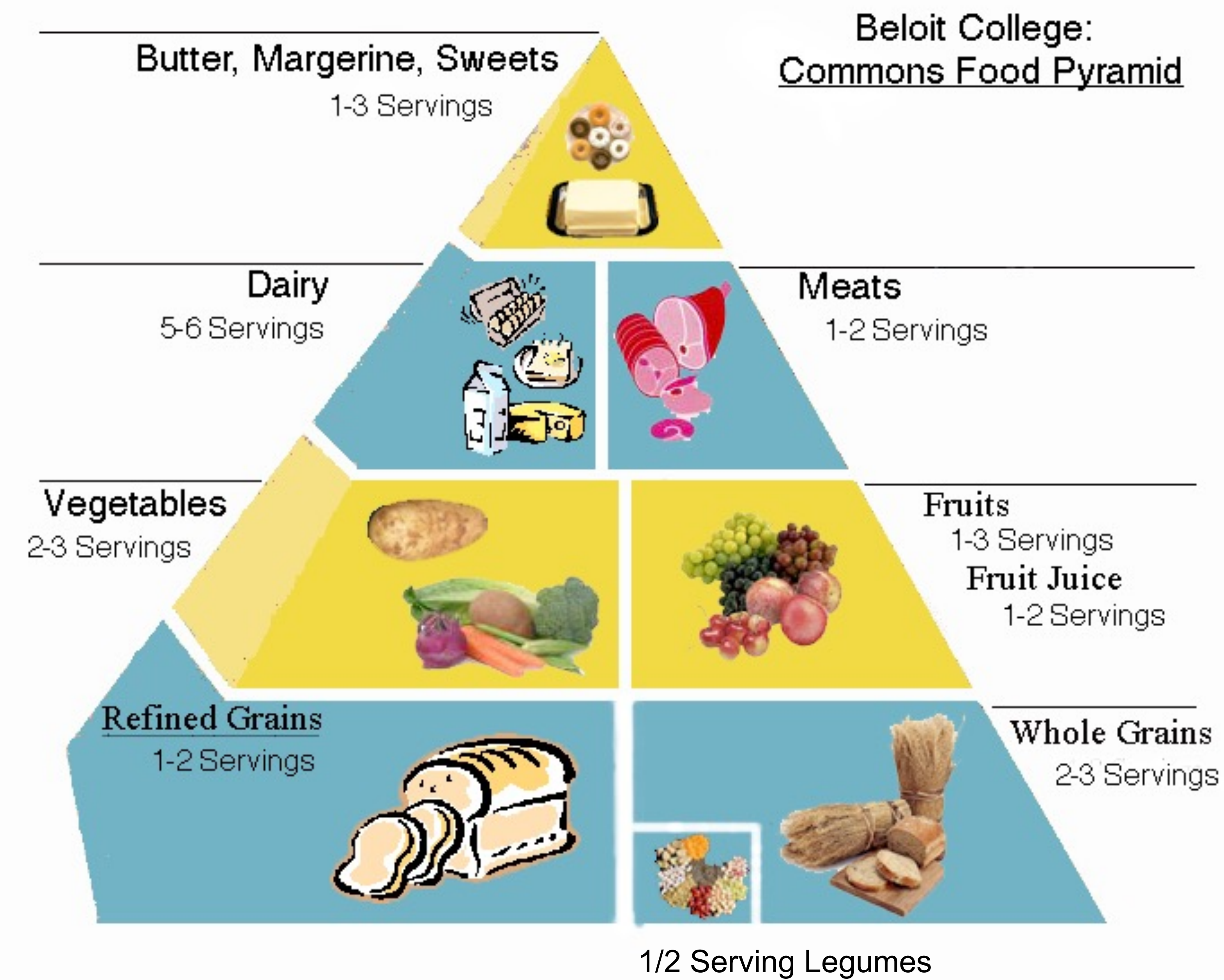


Introduction:

Students at Beloit College rely upon the Commons dining facility to provide sufficient nutrition, while Commons relies upon the traditional food pyramid as their nutritional information (1). As it happens, the traditional food pyramid has been almost entirely discounted as a healthy diet by the educated nutrition community (2). College is already a stressful time even with a healthy diet and studies have shown, for one example, that stress levels increase in adult rats with protein deficiencies (3). For this reason, among others, students need to know what they are eating. However, general statistics do not address the particular situation at Beloit College. The purpose of my research has been to determine what students actually consume in the average meal eaten at Commons.

What the Beloit Student Eats at Commons

By Max T. Kramer
Beloit College



Results:

Compared to the Willett Food Pyramid, a dietary guide that is respected among the nutrition community, the Beloit student's diet at commons is sub par. Whole grains are limited and are not eaten at every meal, sometimes because they are substituted for refined grains. At the same time, the dairy intake from commons is almost three times the amount suggested by Willett. While the fruit intake at commons is equal to that suggested by Willett, as much as 33% of it is high sugar fruit juices. The same pattern arises throughout the commons diet: the servings of healthy food (i.e. whole grains) are being partially sacrificed by the student for less healthy alternatives (i.e. refined grains).(1)

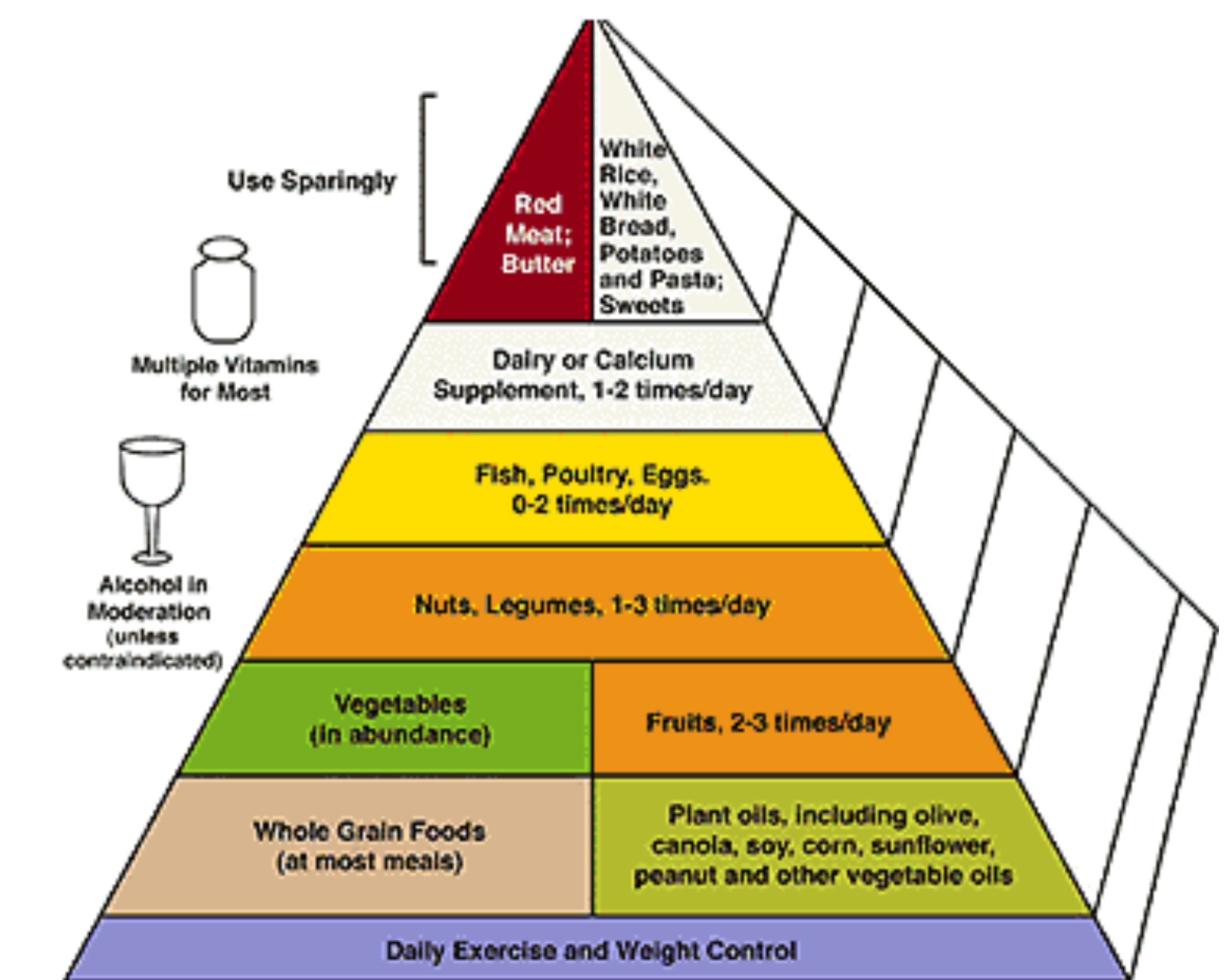
Method:

In order to get a precise and in depth look into exactly what is eating by students at commons I examined all websites related to Commons. Using the posted information and applying it to suggested serving sizes (6), peer-reviewed articles on food pyramids (2) and learned nutrition information I was able to break the data into serving sizes, and end up with a meal breakdown and the Commons food pyramid. Once the data is calculated, it is possible to make accurate and poignant statements from the information given.

Discussion:

The importance of examining and applying this data should be obvious, however, not everyone knows the power of information. For example, a study done on the relation between income and dietary quality shows that those who used food labels were over 50% less likely to have a lower Healthy Eating Index (HEI) than the reference group of lower income who did not use food labels. Interestingly enough, the same study shows that those who were wealthy but did not use food labels were just as likely to have a low HEI. (4) The HEI is a USDA measure of general dietary quality that addresses particular amounts in relation to dietary guidelines and the Food Pyramid. (5) The Willett Food Pyramid above demonstrates the weak points of the USDA food pyramid, however, the relation between the use of nutrition information and a healthy diet remains valid. As the Commons Food Pyramid shows, there are flaws in the average students diet.

Willett Food Pyramid



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