

Dinner Plate Replaces Food Pyramid



On June 2, 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin revealed the USDA's new food icon. My Pyramid has been replaced by My Plate, with the intention to make it easier on individuals and families to incorporate recommendations from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for America into their eating plan.

Visually, the new icon provides a more simplistic way of "seeing" how much of each food group is suggested to achieve a healthier diet. Instead of having to figure out serving sizes by ounces, My Plate, which looks like a dinner plate, makes it easier to visualize correct portion sizes. The concept is not new, according to Dr. Adrienne Youdim, medical director of the Cedars-Sinai Center for Weight Loss in Los Angeles. Registered dietitians use the plate model to help educate individuals on how they can improve their eating habits through portion control.

My Plate illustrates that half of our plate should contain fruits and vegetables, while the other half has grains and protein. Off to the side is a small circular container labeled as "dairy." Investigation of the website provides tips on what types of food constitute each food group. The overall emphasis is on choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and fat free or low fat dairy products to form the basis of people's everyday eating plan.

Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> to see how you can make healthy changes to your way of life. There are several interactive tools available to help you and your family improve upon your eating habits including:

- 10 Tips Nutrition Series: Easy and simple tips that can be printed out for use at home or work.
- Look up a food: Search for foods and see how it fits into the daily food guide recommendations.
- Daily Food Plan: Daily diet log shows how consumption matches up with individual needs.
- Analyze my Diet: This tracker can actually assess your daily diet and physical activity.

Citations

Khan, A (2011). Farewell, Food Pyramid-USDA is now Serving Up Nutritional Advice on My Plate.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/boostershots/la-heb-food-pyramid-my-plate-20110602,0,4751940.story>

Vilsack, Tom (2011). USDA Unveils New, Simple Tips to Stay Healthy, Active and Fit.

<http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2011/06/02/usda-unveils-new-simple-tips-stay-healthy-active-and-fit>