

## **INTRODUCING THE NEW MYPLATE AND SAYING GOODBYE TO MYPYRAMID**

In the summer of 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) introduced the public to the new MyPlate concept, which would be replacing MyPyramid. MyPyramid, which was developed in 2005, was a modern graphic, but many people found it to be confusing and a more difficult teaching tool than the old food pyramid. The new graphic keeps the familiar food groups, but instead of finding them on a pyramid, they are arranged on a place setting complete with a fork, plate, and a cup. USDA has been making nutrition recommendations to the American public for over 100 years. The following is a summary of some of that history:

### **History of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Development**

**1894:** USDA developed the first food composition tables and nutrition standards for Americans.

**1916:** USDA published the first daily food guides with 5 food groups.

**1917:** Government publication showing how to use these food groups was published, entitled “How to Select Foods”.

**1933:** Family food plans were published weekly, specifying how to meet nutrient needs at varying cost levels using 12 major food groups.

**1941:** The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released the first “Recommended Dietary Allowances” (RDAs) which included amounts for energy (calories) and 9 nutrients. The RDAs were expanded and updated every 5-10 years through 1968.

**1942:** USDA released the “Basic Seven” food guide ([www.pcrm.org](http://www.pcrm.org); “The Origin of U.S. Dietary Guidelines”). This guide included alternate choices in case of wartime shortages.

**1956:** The “Basic Seven” was reduced to the “Basic Four” food groups and established “minimums” for adequate diets. They were: 4 or more servings each of the Breads and Cereals and the Fruits and Vegetables groups; 2 or more servings each of the Milk and Dairy Products and the Meats and High Protein Alternatives.

**1977:** The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs issued the *Dietary Goals for the United States*. Recommendations included percentages by which nutrients such as protein, fats and carbohydrates should be consumed.

**1980:** The first *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* publication by the USDA and Dept. of Health and Human Services was jointly published and revised every 5 years since then, with the 2010 *Guidelines* being the most recent.

**1992:** The initial Food Guide Pyramid was introduced to encourage the consumption of more grains, vegetables and fruits and illustrate the need to eat smaller amounts of other foods (especially fats and sweets).

**1997:** The U.S. RDAs became part of a broader set of dietary guidelines called the Dietary Reference Intake, or RDIs used by the U.S. and Canada. These reference intakes for nutrients are considered to be sufficient to meet requirements for 97+% of healthy individuals within each life-stage and gender group. The RDI is used to determine the Daily Value (DV) printed on food labels.

**2005:** The original Food Guide Pyramid was replaced by the USDA's "MyPyramid" which included the critical aspect of physical exercise and was accompanied by a website which allows, free of charge, any individual to develop a personal dietary plan. This site allowed you to obtain an in-depth assessment of both physical activity needs and quality of diet.

**2011:** MyPyramid is replaced with MyPlate. The ChooseMyPlate.gov website has the overall look of the MyPyramid website, with some changes, but still allows you to assess your diet in the same manner as the "old" website. Consumers will be automatically redirected to the new website whenever trying to access the old web address.

## Understanding "MyPlate"



Most people have heard that our portion sizes are getting out of control. The MyPlate concept is about reminding Americans to place healthy and delicious foods on their plates in the recommended proportions.

The basic components of MyPlate are a fork, plate, and cup on a placemat. On the plate, you'll find four of the major food groups on the plate that represent recommendations that have been around for years: make half of your plate fruits and vegetables and the other half grains and protein foods (meats, eggs, fish, beans, etc.). To the side is a small cup of milk. The only food group that is missing is the fats, oils and sweets, which some may not consider an actual "food group," but was found on the previous food pyramids of the past. Just as before, foods from this "group" are meant to be consumed in limited quantities and therefore are not represented on the plate.

To learn more about MyPlate, go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov).

### **Eat More Fruits and Vegetables**

The [Produce for Better Health Foundation](#) has an informative website that appeals to kids and adults alike. And while you might be inclined to dismiss their site as self-serving for the produce industry, the "more matters" health initiative tagline seems to effectively cover the "bottom line". From a nutritionist's perspective, there is seldom a situation where encouraging an individual to eat more fruits and vegetables is not advisable.

**Need to lose weight?** Eat more fruits and vegetables.

**Need a better functioning digestive system?** Eat more fruits and vegetables.

**Needing to control blood sugar better?** Eat more fruits and vegetables, with emphasis on the non starchy vegetables.

**Needing to lower blood pressure some or manage blood lipids better?** Yep, consume more fruits and vegetables.

**Want to reduce your risk of developing many kinds of cancers?** Eating more fruits and vegetables is up there in the top 5 guidelines from both The American Cancer Society and The American Institute for Cancer Research.

### Planning Your Daily Meals

- **Eat a variety of grains and cereals, and make at least half of your grains whole** or minimally processed. If you need approximately 2600 calories daily, you should be including about 9 ounces, or the equivalent, of grains and cereals, such as 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of dry cereal or ½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cereal.
- **Plan meals to include a variety of vegetables.** Focus on color variation in selections and include about 3 ½ cups of raw and lightly cooked vegetables. Raw carrots, slices of fresh tomato, romaine or fresh spinach salad, and grilled zucchini slices are just a few examples of options.
- **Include fruits for energy and nutrients.** Choose fruit over juice when possible. Two cups of fruit are advised for a 2600 daily calorie intake plan.
- **Select low fat milk, yogurt, and cheeses to include in snack and meal times.** Yogurts that aren't loaded with additional sugars can be great breakfast and snack choices and can benefit the digestive system. When choosing cheeses, try some low fat varieties such as Parmesan and Mozzarella cheese. Three (3) cups daily should meet most needs.
- **Include a variety of lean protein sources with meals.** Main entrees should include more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds, in addition to lean poultry and limited, lean and fresh beef, pork, lamb and other meats. A 2600 calorie plan includes 6 ½ oz. of meat or equivalent.
- **Add heart-friendly fats to meals that are low in saturated and *trans* fats.** One tablespoon daily of mono or polyunsaturated vegetable fats can provide most of the essential fatty acids needed by the body each day.
- **Exercise some restraint when it comes to sweets and candies,** knowing that they contribute taste and energy but may provide little else to meet your body's health needs. There's a reason that desserts come after a healthy, balanced meal has been eaten.
- **Include physical movement daily to your life.** Do your body and mind a great favor by maintaining strength, balance and cardio-fitness.

### References & Additional Resources

- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>
- <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf>
- <http://www.pbhfoundation.org>

- <http://www.oldwayspt.org/mediterranean-diet-pyramid>
- [http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=4&tax\\_level=1&tax\\_subject=256](http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=256)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food\\_guide\\_pyramid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_guide_pyramid)
- <http://www.oldwayspt.org/eating-well/introduction-traditional-diet-pyramids>
- <http://www.pcrm.org/magazine/GM97Autumn/GM97Autumn2.html>
- [http://www.aicr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=recommendations\\_home](http://www.aicr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=recommendations_home)
- <http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/EatHealthyGetActive/ACSGuidelinesonNutritionPhysicalActivityforCancerPrevention/acs-guidelines-on-nutrition-and-physical-activity-for-cancer-prevention-intro>