

# **Health & Wellness Clinic**

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**Clinic Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am- 12:00 pm & 2:00 pm- 6:00 pm Friday 8:30 am- 12:00 pm  
Friday 1:00 pm- 5:00 pm & Saturday 8:00 am-11:00am  
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## ***Bye Bye Food Pyramid***

### ***USDA Ditches Food Pyramid for a Healthy Plate***



A colorful four-part plate, with a side dish of dairy, has replaced the 19-year-old food pyramid as the icon of the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines.

The new icon, called "My Plate," is split into four sections -- red for fruits, green for vegetables, orange for grains, and purple for protein -- with a separate blue section for dairy on the side.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack unveiled the icon at a news conference today. He said the food pyramid was "simply too complex to serve as a quick and easy guide for American families."

At the news conference, first lady Michelle Obama praised My Plate as "a wonderful, kid-friendly tool" that's practical for busy families.

"What's more simple than a plate?" she asked. "I'm confident that families will find this useful. They can start using this today."

The Obamas are already doing so. "Trust me: We are implementing this in our household," Obama said.

The icon represents more than the currently recommended diet. It's part of a drastic change. The old plan was to provide information. The new plan is to actively change American eating behavior, using all the tools of modern persuasion.

"The centerpiece of the program is this next-generation food icon," Robert C. Post, PhD, deputy director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) center for nutrition policy and promotion, tells WebMD. "The icon is the visual cue to get to online resources, to online media, and to unified nutrition messages from public- and private-sector efforts."

Expect a barrage of messages and reminders from the food industry, nutrition gurus, chefs, schools, nonprofit agencies, and every government agency with anything at all to say about nutrition or health. Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, and blogs will trumpet the healthy diet program.

Eating is only half the picture. Michelle Obama's Let's Move program will take the lead in motivating Americans to get more exercise.

### **The New Food Plate**

It's an icon that works, says WebMD nutrition director Kathleen Zelman, RD.

"We now have an easy-to-understand layout of what constitutes a healthy meal," Zelman says. "Whether you are grocery shopping, packing lunches, or assembling a meal on a plate, the new food plate icon will serve as a constant reminder of the essential ingredients for a nutritious meal -- five easy pieces."

The icon makes it clear that fruits and veggies should make up half of your meal, while protein is the smallest part of the plate. The grain portion is a bit larger and still offers the advice to "make half your grains whole," which some nutritionists say leaves too much room for less healthy refined grains such as white rice and white bread.

Other top-line advice accompanying the icon is less controversial:

- Balance calories by enjoying food but eating less, and by avoiding oversize portions.
- Eat more good stuff: Make half the plate fruit and vegetables, switch to nonfat or low-fat milk.
- Eat less bad stuff: Look for lower-sodium soups, breads, and frozen meals; drink water instead of sugary drinks.

In the fall, the USDA will launch a suite of interactive web-based tools including:

- Daily, personalized food plans.
- Daily food plans for kids and preschoolers.
- Daily food plans for new mothers and pregnant women.
- MyFoodapedia: information on food groups, calories, and food comparisons.
- Food Tracker: feedback on your food intake and physical activity
- Food Planner: a tool to plan meals that will help you reach personal goals.

## **Food Pyramid History**

The 2010-2011 dietary guidelines are neither the first nor the last Americans will see. Federal law requires the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services to update the guidelines every five years.

But even before this mandate, the USDA has been issuing dietary advice. The first set of guidelines came in 1894, when Wilbur Olin Atwater, PhD, wrote a USDA Farmers' Bulletin suggesting that Americans should eat fewer fats and sugars, exercise more, and watch their calories.

Various USDA food guides through the 1950s stressed important foods that should serve as the foundation of a healthy diet. These guides took various approaches to make sure Americans ate enough of different kinds of foods to avoid malnutrition. By the 1970s, however, too little food was no longer a problem: Too much food was.

In 1977, a U.S. Senate committee published Dietary Goals for the United States. This revolutionary document stressed eating fewer of the foods linked to chronic diseases -- particularly fatty meats, cholesterol, fatty acids, sugars, and salt.

The USDA says it did not adopt these goals because they "were so different from usual food patterns." Others have blamed influence from the beef and dairy industries for delaying USDA action until 1979, when a watered-down version of the advice, the "Hassle-Free Guide to a Better Diet," advised more moderate intake of fats, sweets, and alcohol.

In 1980, the USDA put out its first official Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines continued to stress the foods that should form the foundation of a healthy diet. But in the early 1980s, the USDA began thinking more about the total diet, rather than nutrition basics.

By 1990, the guidelines began to promote eating patterns based on moderation and variety instead of on dietary restriction. In 1992, based on an icon already in use in Sweden, the USDA came out with its first Food Pyramid.

The base of the pyramid, suggesting the foods one should eat the most, was "bread, cereal, rice, and pasta." This changed with the 2005 "MyPyramid," which did away with the building-block approach but which many found far too busy and cluttered to be a useful tool.