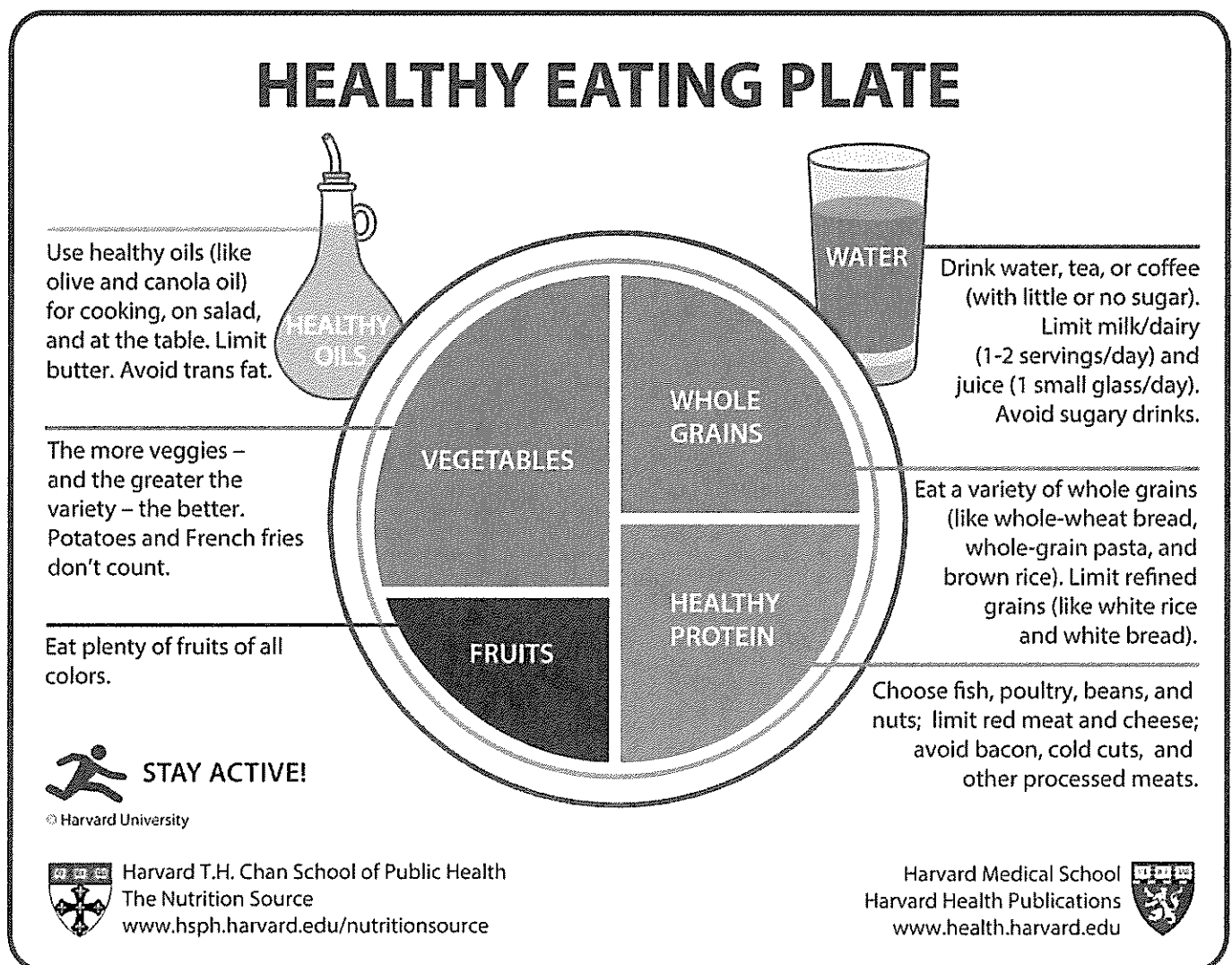




The Nutrition Source

Healthy Eating Plate & Healthy Eating Pyramid

The Healthy Eating Plate, created by nutrition experts at Harvard School of Public Health and editors at Harvard Health Publications, was designed to address deficiencies in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s MyPlate. The Healthy Eating Plate provides detailed guidance, in a simple format, to help people make the best eating choices.



Use The Healthy Eating Plate as a guide for creating healthy, balanced meals—whether served on a plate or packed in a lunch box. Put a copy on the refrigerator as a daily reminder to create healthy, balanced meals!

- **Make most of your meal vegetables and fruits – 1/2 of your plate:**

Aim for color and variety, and remember that potatoes don't count as vegetables on the Healthy Eating Plate because of their negative impact on blood sugar.

- **Go for whole grains – 1/4 of your plate:**

Whole and intact grains—whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, quinoa, oats, brown rice, and foods made with them, such as whole wheat pasta—have a milder effect on blood sugar and insulin than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains.

- **Protein power – 1/4 of your plate:**

Fish, chicken, beans, and nuts are all healthy, versatile protein sources—they can be mixed into salads, and pair well with vegetables on a plate. Limit red meat, and avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.

- **Healthy plant oils – in moderation:**

Choose healthy vegetable oils like olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and others, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unhealthy trans fats. Remember that low-fat does not mean “healthy.”

- **Drink water, coffee, or tea:**

Skip sugary drinks, limit milk and dairy products to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day.

- **Stay active:**

The red figure running across the Healthy Eating Plate's placemat is a reminder that staying active is also important in weight control.

The main message of the Healthy Eating Plate is to focus on diet quality.

- The *type of carbohydrate* in the diet is more important than the *amount of carbohydrate* in the diet, because some sources of carbohydrate—like vegetables (other than potatoes), fruits, whole grains, and beans—are healthier than others.
- The Healthy Eating Plate also advises consumers to avoid sugary beverages, a major source of calories—usually with little nutritional value—in the American diet.
- The Healthy Eating Plate encourages consumers to use healthy oils, and it does not set a maximum on the percentage of calories people should get each day from healthy sources of fat. In this way, the Healthy Eating Plate recommends the opposite of the low-fat message promoted for decades by the USDA.

Your Questions Answered

Are the relative sizes of the Healthy Eating Plate sections based on calories or volume?

The Healthy Eating Plate does not define a certain number of calories or servings per day from each food group. The relative section sizes suggest approximate relative proportions of each of the food groups to include on a healthy plate. They are not based on specific calorie amounts, and they are not meant to prescribe a certain number of calories or servings per day, since individuals' calorie and nutrient needs vary based on age, gender, body size, and level of activity.

What about alcohol? Isn't alcohol supposed to be good for you in small amounts?

Alcohol in moderation is beneficial, and it's illustrated in Harvard's Healthy Eating Pyramid from 2005. But it's not for everyone, which is why it is not included in the Healthy Eating Plate.

Will the Healthy Eating Pyramid be going away?

Generations of Americans are accustomed to the food pyramid design, and it's not going away. In fact, the Healthy Eating Pyramid and the Healthy Eating Plate complement each

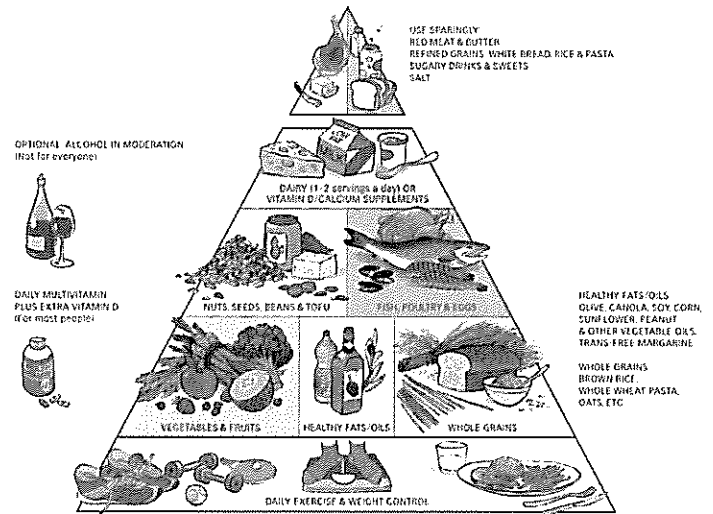
other.

Consumers can think of the Healthy Eating Pyramid as a grocery list:

- Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy oils, and healthy proteins like nuts, beans, fish, and chicken should make it into the shopping cart every week, along with a little yogurt or milk if desired.
- The Healthy Eating Pyramid also addresses other aspects of a healthy lifestyle—exercise, weight control, vitamin D, and multivitamin supplements, and moderation in alcohol for people who drink—so it's a useful tool for health professionals and health educators.
- The Healthy Eating Plate and the companion Healthy Eating Pyramid summarize the best dietary information available today. They aren't set in stone, though, because nutrition researchers will undoubtedly turn up new information in the years ahead. The Healthy Eating Pyramid and the Healthy Eating Plate will change to reflect important new evidence.

THE HEALTHY EATING PYRAMID

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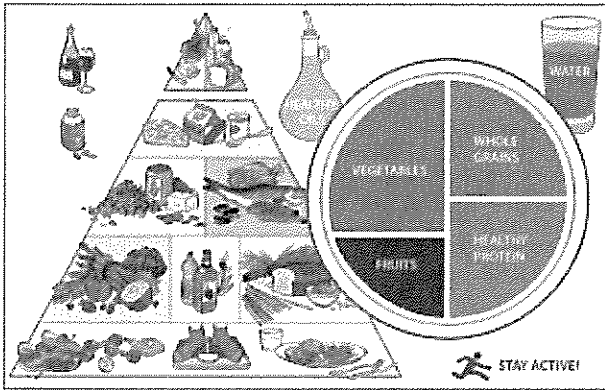
When was the USDA Food Guide Pyramid first created?

In 1992, the USDA created a powerful icon: the Food Guide Pyramid. This simple illustration conveyed what the USDA said were the elements of a healthy diet. The Pyramid was taught in schools, appeared in countless media articles and brochures, and was plastered on cereal boxes and food labels.

However, the information embodied in this pyramid was based on shaky scientific evidence, and it was seldom updated to reflect major advances in our understanding of the connection between diet and health.

The USDA retired the Food Guide Pyramid in 2005 and replaced it with MyPyramid. Critics complained that the symbol was vague and confusing, so in June 2011 the USDA replaced MyPyramid with a new and simpler icon, MyPlate.

The USDA's pyramids and MyPlate had many contributors. Some are obvious—USDA scientists, nutrition experts, staff members, and consultants. Others aren't. Intense lobbying efforts from a variety of food industries also helped shape the pyramid and the plate.



As an alternative to the USDA's nutrition advice, faculty members at the Harvard School of Public Health created first the Healthy Eating Pyramid and more recently the Healthy Eating Plate. Just as the Healthy Eating Pyramid rectifies the mistakes of the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid, the Healthy Eating Plate addresses flaws in the USDA's MyPlate. Both the Healthy Eating Pyramid and the Healthy Eating Plate are based

on the latest science about how our food, drink, and activity choices affect our health.

Will following the Healthy Eating Pyramid and Healthy Eating Plate guidelines really make me healthier?

According to research done at Harvard School of Public Health and elsewhere (1-3), following the Healthy Eating Pyramid and Healthy Eating Plate guidelines can lead to a lower risk of heart disease and premature death:

- In the 1990s, the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion created the Healthy Eating Index "to measure how well American diets conform to recommended healthy eating patterns." (4) A score of 100 meant following the federal recommendations to the letter while a score of 0 meant totally ignoring them.
- To see how well the principles embodied in the Healthy Eating Pyramid stacked up against the government's advice, Harvard School of Public Health researchers created an Alternate Healthy Eating Index with a scoring system similar to the USDA's index. They then compared the two indexes, using information about daily diets collected from more

than 100,000 female nurses and male health professionals taking part in two long-term studies.

- The eleven components assessed by the Alternate Healthy Eating Index were dairy products; vegetables; fruit; nuts & seeds; bread/grains; meat, poultry & fish; cholesterol; fat; sodium; alcohol; and multivitamins.
- Men who scored highest on the USDA's original Healthy Eating Index (meaning their diets most closely followed federal recommendations) reduced their overall risk of developing heart disease, cancer, or other chronic disease by 11 percent over 8 to 12 years of follow-up compared to those who scored lowest. Women who most closely followed the government's recommendations were only 3 percent less likely to have developed a chronic disease. (5)
- In comparison, scores on the Alternate Healthy Eating Index created at the Harvard School of Public Health did appear to correlate more closely with better health in both sexes. Men with high scores (those whose diets most closely followed the Healthy Eating Pyramid guidelines) were 20 percent less likely to have developed a major chronic disease than those with low scores. Women with high scores lowered their overall risk by 11 percent. Men whose diets most closely followed the Healthy Eating Pyramid lowered their risk of cardiovascular disease by almost 40 percent; women with high scores lowered their risk by almost 30 percent.
- In a 2014 study looking at trends in diet quality among adults in the US, researchers using The Alternate Healthy Eating Index found that there was steady improvement from 1999 to 2010, but that overall dietary quality remains poor. (6)

Two studies offer further evidence of the disease prevention benefits that accrue from following a diet similar to one based on the Healthy Eating Pyramid:

- A study that tracked 7,319 British civil servants for 18 years found that men and women with the highest scores on the Alternate Healthy Eating Index had a 25 percent lower risk of dying from any cause, and a 42 percent lower risk of dying from heart disease, than people with the lowest scores. (3)
- Another observational study in 93,676 post-menopausal women found that following a Healthy Eating Pyramid-style diet (as measured by adherence to the Alternative Healthy Eating Index) was superior to following a low-fat diet at lowering cardiovascular disease and heart failure risk. (1)

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