

# Opinion: Replacing the food pyramid a good start

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No matter which food group was at the top and which at the bottom, the venerable food pyramid never did make much sense. How big were the servings supposed to be? And what were all those rainbow-colored stripes? The pyramid also lost a lot of respect over the years when the public realized that its recommendations – whether to fill up on meat, dairy or mountains of grains – were based in part on which segments of the agricultural industry wielded the most clout.

The new icon and recommendations released last week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are a lot healthier and are a more helpful contribution to public well-being. MyPlate is a large circle representing a dinner dish, divided to show that fruits and vegetables should make up half the food consumed, with protein and grains sharing the other half. A small blue circle representing low-fat or nonfat dairy rests to the side. There is no place on this plate for junk food.

The simple “plate” makes it easy for people to see what a meal should look like in terms of nutrition – and there are few plates of food served up in the country right now that resemble it. More common: a hunk of meat as the centerpiece, accompanied by a heaping helping of pasta or bread – usually from refined grains. Vegetables are an afterthought, more a colorful decoration in the corner than a significant part of the meal.

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