

Nutrition scientists provide updated MyPlate for older adults

March 7 2016

MyPlate for Older Adults



Fruits & Vegetables
Whole fruits and vegetables are rich in important nutrients and fiber. Choose fruits and vegetables with deeply colored flesh. Choose canned varieties that are packed in their own juices or low-sodium.

Healthy Oils
Liquid vegetable oils and soft margarines provide important fatty acids and some fat-soluble vitamins.

Herbs & Spices
Use a variety of herbs and spices to enhance flavor of foods and reduce the need to add salt.

Fluids
Drink plenty of fluids. Fluids can come from water, tea, coffee, soups, and fruits and vegetables.

Grains
Whole grain and fortified foods are good sources of fiber and B vitamins.

Dairy
Fat-free and low-fat milk, cheeses and yogurts provide protein, calcium and other important nutrients.

Protein
Protein rich foods provide many important nutrients. Choose a variety including nuts, beans, fish, lean meat and poultry.

Remember to Stay Active!

Tufts UNIVERSITY | JEAN MAYER USDA HUMAN NUTRITION RESEARCH CENTER ON AGING | HRCA | AARP Foundation

The new MyPlate for Older Adults graphic from nutrition scientists at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston with support from AARP Foundation. Credit: Tufts University

Nutrition scientists at the Jean Mayer U. S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (USDA HNRCA) at Tufts University with support from AARP Foundation are introducing an updated MyPlate for Older Adults icon today. The updated icon emphasizes the nutritional needs of older adults in a framework of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The icon and an accompanying website can be viewed at hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate.

"It is never too late to make smart changes in your diet. Shifting towards healthier food choices can improve symptoms or decrease risk for developing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension and heart disease - all of which are more common in older than younger adults," said Alice H. Lichtenstein, D.Sc., senior scientist and director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the USDA HNRCA. Lichtenstein served as vice chair on the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

The new MyPlate for Older Adults icon depicts a colorful plate with images to encourage older Americans to follow a healthy eating pattern bolstered by [physical activity](#). The plate is composed of approximately:

- 50 percent fruits and vegetables;
- 25 percent grains, many of which are whole grains; and
- 25 percent protein-rich foods such as nuts, beans, fish, lean meat, poultry, and fat-free and low-fat dairy products such as milk, cheeses, and yogurts.

The new MyPlate for Older Adults icon also includes images of good sources of fluid, such as water, milk, tea, soup, and coffee; heart-healthy fats such as vegetable oils and soft margarines; and herbs and spices to be used in place of salt to lower sodium intake.

"We are so proud to collaborate with the USDA HNRCA at Tufts on the MyPlate for Older Adults icon to create practical nutritional guidance and awareness of the need for accessible meals," said Jim Lutzweiler, vice president, hunger impact area, AARP Foundation. "We believe at AARP Foundation in the importance of encouraging vulnerable and low-income older adults to develop healthy eating and physical activity patterns to maintain quality of life as they age."

The MyPlate for Older Adults icon also reminds older Americans to stay active by walking, riding a bicycle, swimming, or engaging in another activity. The Dietary Guidelines offers suggestions for older adults who are interested in improving their lifestyle and reducing their risk of disease and disability with regular exercise.

"Older adults who want to improve their overall health will benefit from using MyPlate for Older Adults. Many people are not aware of the key role that healthy eating patterns play in improving their bodily function such as that of brain, eye and the immune system," said Simin Nikbin Meydani, D.V.M., Ph.D., director of the Jean Mayer USDA HNRCA at Tufts University in Boston, and senior scientist and director of its Nutritional Immunology Laboratory. "Our collaboration with AARP Foundation will help us empower a larger group of older Americans to act on the Dietary Guidelines by making our new MyPlate for Older Adults icon more widely available."

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines recommend that Americans:

- Follow a healthy eating pattern across their lifespan;
- Focus on the variety and amount of nutrient-dense food they consume;
- Reduce their intake of added sugars, saturated fats and sodium to allowed limits;
- Shift toward healthier food and beverage choices; and,

- Support [healthy eating](#) patterns for all.

Lichtenstein advises older adults to begin by making small shifts in food and beverage choices to improve their overall eating pattern, and then continue to build on them. Making small changes, she says, and sticking with them is the best approach to long term improvements in eating habits. If someone plans on making major changes in their diet they are advised to talk with their primary healthcare provider.

The website that accompanies the updated MyPlate for Older Americans icon offers information about physical activity, using spices to reduce sodium, shopping tips, and recipes. Additionally, the MyPlate for Older Adults emphasizes all forms of food - fresh, frozen, dried and canned - to ensure the icon is relevant across personal preferences, availability, and cultural backgrounds. The website also offers helpful links to studies from researchers at the USDA HNRCA that are especially relevant for older adults. Both can be found online at hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate.

The updated MyPlate for Older Adults is the fourth such icon created by Lichtenstein and USDA HNRCA researchers specifically for [older adults](#). AARP Foundation provided funding and creative input for the newest icon of MyPlate for Older Adults and the related website.

Provided by Tufts University

Citation: Nutrition scientists provide updated MyPlate for older adults (2016, March 7) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-03-nutrition-scientists-myplate-older-adults.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.