

'MyPlate' Isn't Really Yours



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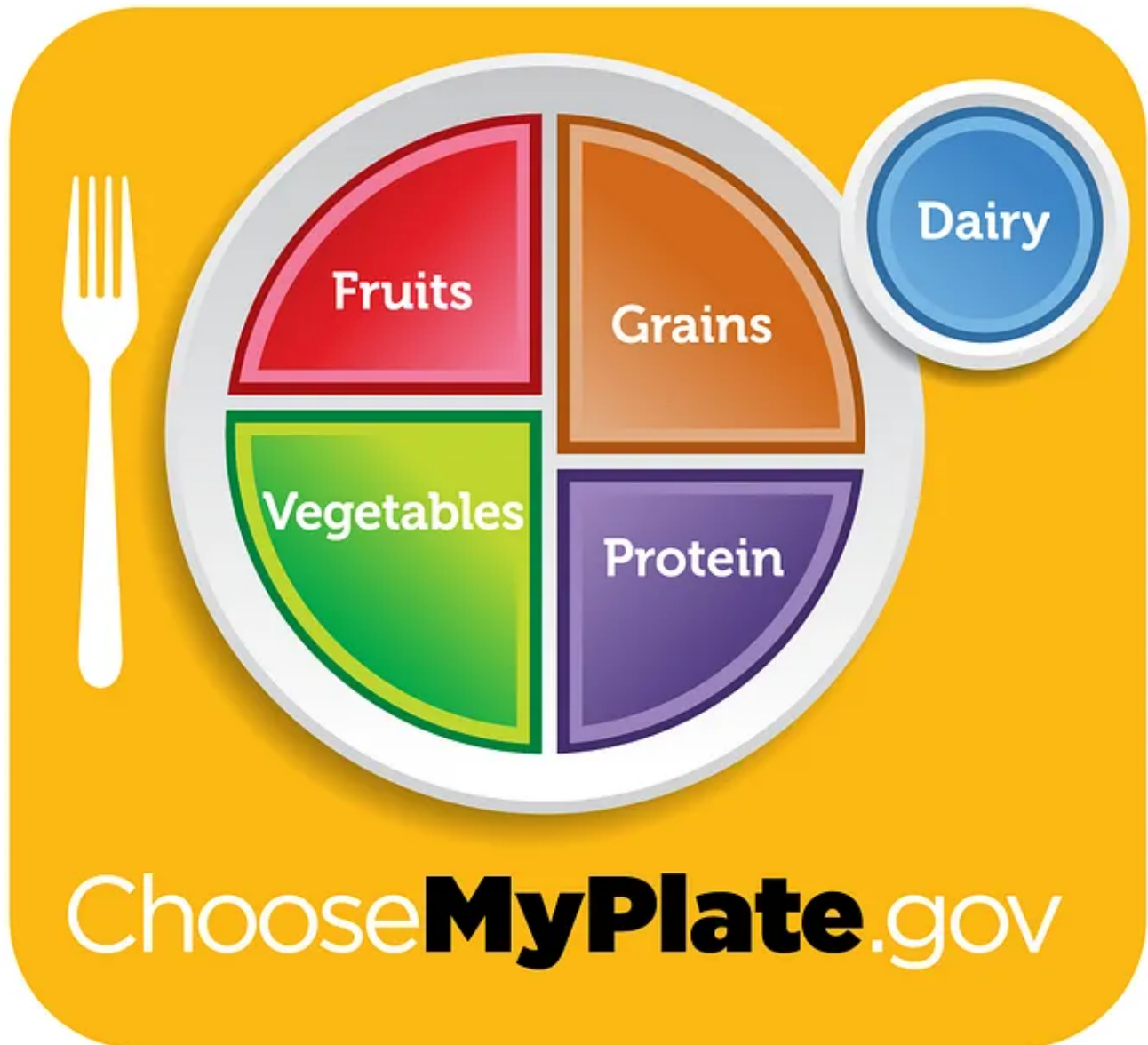
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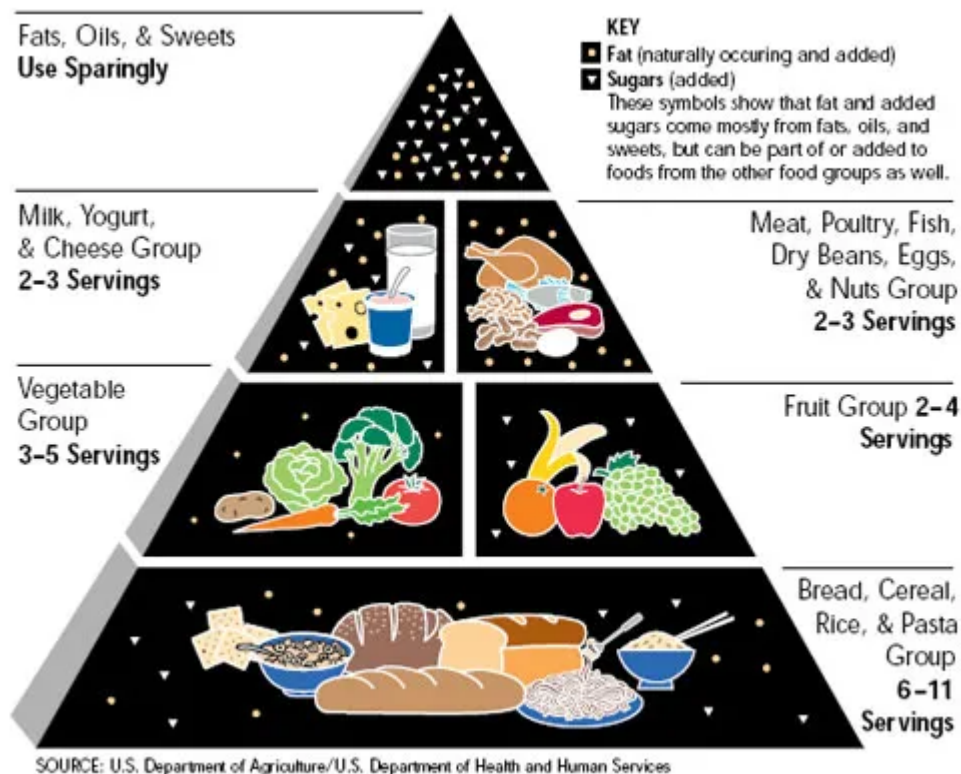
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We all know the famous USDA food pyramid: grains make up the basis of our diet, then fruits and vegetables, then meat protein, followed by dairy, and lastly the least amount being fats and oils. It's not only in our childhood textbooks and on the back of our cereal boxes, it's embedded in our heads, whether we believe it or not. But where did it come from? It must have come from science, we believe, but the truth is — it is all a lie. In fact, this very United States government issued document is responsible for the rise of obesity and the many subsequent health complications in this country.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the nation shifted to a new “eat less to drop a clothing size” mentality. A society that previously shamed skinny bodies now yearned for them, as well as unclogged arteries, a cure for cancer, and solutions to countless other new diseases. The government knew it was time for a change so it was out with the old, the 1950's Basic Four food guide, and in with a new appealing image. Millions of copies of the simple USDA food pyramid, which told Americans to limit fat and indulge in grains, were distributed, and the low-fat movement of the 1970s was born.

Investigate further back in time to when the government first put forth food recommendations during WWII. Why did they do this? Not to ensure that Americans were healthy, but to get people to buy more readily available foods during the rationing times. It all comes down to money — carbs make up a large portion of our recommended diet because grains are the easiest and cheapest to produce with modern agriculture practices. Consequently, after the war there was an excess of wheat filling America's shelves during a time when we no longer required the intense overproduction. What did the government agency do when the rest of the world no longer needed US grain? They marketed the grain to the people of the United States. Voila — the food pyramid was born. The food industry manufactures an abundance of grains and the entire country is tricked into buying them based on false health advice, resulting in more money to the grain companies.



The infamous food pyramid did have hopeful beginnings as it was originally designed by a nutrition scientist who, with a goal of reducing disease, advocated for the majority of one's diet to consist of fruits and vegetables, followed by non-meat sources of protein, and a whopping amount of natural fats (which are now shunned by the nation-wide fat-phobia for no good reason). Before the pyramid was published by the 1991 Secretary of Agriculture, the original proposed four-tiered triangle placed meat and dairy right below the "use sparingly" tip, which worried the Cattlemen's Association that it would reduce their sales, followed by similar complaints from the milk industry. Similarly, each food industry was dissatisfied with the way the pyramid made their food groups look to the public and intervened with competing interests prior to the publication of the official document.

The United States Department of Agriculture, which is fueled by our own tax dollars, pretends to pass as a health organization when in reality its role in the government is to promote and sell the United States' agricultural products to the people of the US and the rest of the world (usda.gov). Their job is to get us to buy the products produced by US farmers, not to tell us what a healthy diet is. So although scientific evidence proves that we should eat less meat and dairy, delivering this truth to society would not go over well with those food manufacturers and the nation's Big Mac loving consumers. It

is evident that our nation will attempt to achieve the world's greatest wealth at all costs, including the health and lives of its own citizens.



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It didn't take long for the USDA food pyramid to become engrained in the American public and we now have an entire country convinced that grains should be the staple of our diet, making our bellies grow into the next century. The generations of the phenomenon grew up being spoon-fed the advice we continue to hear, perpetuating a national belief that one specific diet works for every single person in the entire country, without ever daring to examine it. Until now.

The top nutrition lies conveyed to us by our government that have made us sick and fat are as follows:

1. **Fat is unhealthy and makes you fat-** We were told that saturated fats cause heart disease. The stereotype of fat as an evil is the opposite of all scientific evidence. In reality, nutritionists highly recommend that you include more saturated fats in your diet because fats are actually really healthy and ironically essential to losing fat.
2. **Eating a lot of protein is bad for your health-** People are convinced that consuming a lot of protein can damage your bones and cause kidney failure, but the truth is eating more protein improves bone density and reduces the risk of diabetes and high blood pressure, both of which cause kidney disease (a perfect example of how blindly following conventional nutrition advice will lead to the exact opposite results). Another pyramid myth is that the healthiest protein options are red meat or poultry, when evidence proves that eating more plant-based protein sources, which aren't even included on the pyramid, lead to many other health benefits including muscle gains and reduced body fat.
3. **Everyone should be eating whole wheat grains-** "Whole Wheat" is the most commonly mistaken "health" food, when in reality it causes various health problems. Ever wonder why a significant amount of the population is becoming increasingly intolerant to gluten? That's because upon the pyramid's publication, highly processed wheat was suddenly introduced into the diet in large quantities and our bodies aren't made for or used to digesting it.
4. **The healthiest diet is a high-carb diet-** The belief that low-carb diets are ineffective and harmful is magnified and supported by the media. However, studies show that low-carb diets decrease blood pressure, promote weight loss, balance cholesterol, lower blood sugar and more.
5. **Sugar is bad-** Yes, it is true that fructose contains no nutrients and leads to weight gain and metabolic disease, but this is true for *added* sugars, not natural sugar which our brain actually needs to function and survive. Added sugar has many harmful effects, but sugar itself isn't toxic; it's getting too much of it from cookies and cake that is harmful to our health.

In 1977, the USDA finalized the pyramid that planted all of these myths in our minds. For the last twenty-five years authorities have told everyone to follow this low-fat, high-carb diet, and for the last twenty-five years the health of the United States has declined

and the majority of Americans are sick (cdc.gov). Is it a coincidence that the obesity epidemic started at the exact same time as the low-fat guidelines came out? Nowadays, the average American is allergic or intolerant to more than half of the tiers on the food pyramid (cdc.gov). And despite the USDA's advice to eat 11 servings of grains each day, many raw vegans and gluten-intolerant people are still alive.

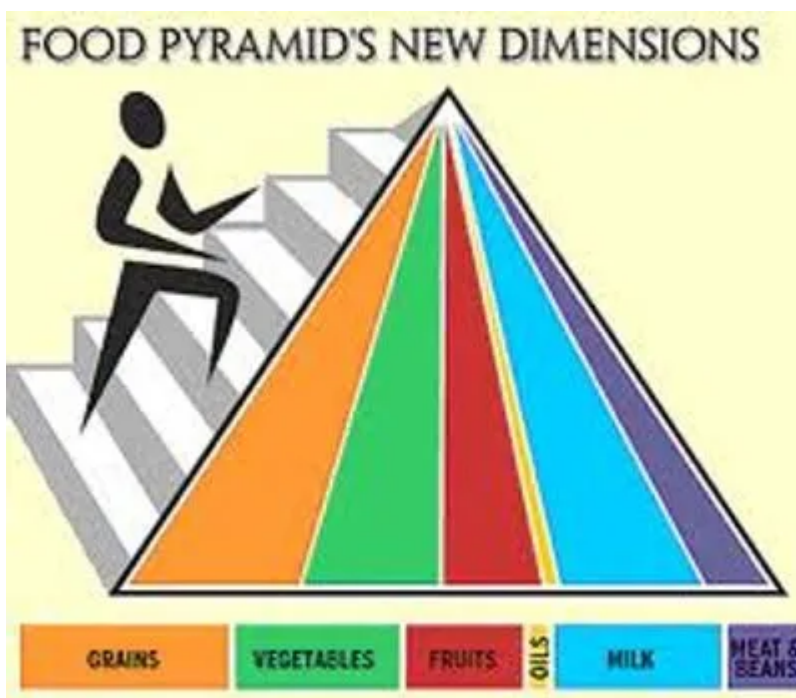
All of the problems we often don't even realize we are having would disappear if we just ate more plants than carbs. Trouble sleeping, lack of energy, inability to do physical activity, catching colds, breaking out with acne — imagine all these problems disappearing by following one rule: don't follow the rules! Yet until recently, no one ever stopped to think that the very food pyramid we copied into our notebooks in 7th grade health class could be the source of our ongoing health problems. Whether it is sinuses or a coronary bypass, most resort to prescriptions made by doctors whose very income depends on people getting sick.

The rest of the world looks at us and sees an overweight, sick country continuing to eat the same thing and expecting different results — the definition of insanity. But we are not a nation of stupid fools. We are actually in theory better educated than most other countries, but the wealth of education we receive hinders us. We are trained from preschool to college to obey rather than think independently, to trust authority rather than challenge it, and spend years of schooling memorizing stuff others come up with rather than making our own discoveries. When it comes to our health, it is no wonder we end up searching for authority to provide us with advice.

We grew up trusting the NIH, ADA and USDA, and invest our tax dollars in them because we believe they have the most current scientific facts. Therefore, we take any advice they shove our way without questioning it, storing it in our brain. Then somewhere down the line we forget where we heard it but know it must be true and teach it to our children. Throughout their educational career, the food pyramid is taught to children who then grow up to become doctors, teachers and other influential people in society, who then promote it to their patients and own children as a healthy way to eat. This is the very naïve ignorance we endured most of our lives and still continue to today.

Foolish instincts such as choosing low-fat labels and swapping natural foods for “whole grains” are all part of our conventional wisdom. We don't believe nutrition science

evidence because the USDA's nutrition guidelines tell us the opposite. Food companies label their packages with trendy phrases such as "low fat", "whole grains" and "fiber" which are plastered onto processed food packages containing goods made with grains that have been pulverized into a refined flour even worse for you. The truth is the top executives and scientists of such food companies have publically admitted that they personally avoid eating their own foods because of the negative health risks. If that isn't a red flag, then I don't know what is.



A new updated food pyramid was released in 2005, but the corporate interests behind it just want us to keep following the same bad dietary rules that got us into trouble in the first place. The major corporations selling us an abundance of unhealthy products want to keep us continually confused about nutrition so that we will consume more grains, milk, butter and so on, convinced we are making healthy choices and doing the right thing.

But what about the new *MyPlate*? The current edition of the nutrition guide published by the USDA, *MyPlate*, replaced *MyPyramid* with a food circle depicting a plate divided into five food groups. Sure, grains, which had previously been made the prominent food group, are less dominant on the new plate, now being equal to vegetables. However, this doesn't signify the end of corruption. You may be smart enough now to

load your plate with as much veggies as pasta, but do you know that your vegetables

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Additional flaws of the new plate include way too many fruits, its recommendation that half of your grains be whole (when the truth is ALL your grains should be whole), low-pasteurized dairy as a healthy choice, and fat, which was once at least recommended to eat in very little amounts, is now completely removed from our diet altogether. So, even though the new food plate has grasped the concept that grains should not make up the majority of your diet, it still has a long way to go before it conveys a meal plan that supports optimal health.

As a result what continues to unfold is years of expanding waistlines, arthritis, diabetes and other health risks that Americans have come to accept as normal and natural parts of aging. As a member of the younger generation, I am attempting to interrupt the

natural flow of society by speaking up about the truth of the traditional American diet. However, older citizens, such as my parents, their parents and beyond, argue that they've been eating this way forever and aren't dead yet, so why stop now? Since they've endured it, they think it is normal and okay because it's the way things always were. Exposing the truth asks such victims of the food pyramid scam to enter a vulnerable place that most aren't willing to because it requires a significant change in diet. This is why people refuse to acknowledge and confront the horrors of the truth, misunderstanding and ridiculing those to whom healthy eating becomes an obsession, and creating rationalizations in order to maintain their unhealthy way of life. (One example is the argument that eating an organic plant-based diet is too expensive, when in reality it saves thousands on future medical bills for obesity and other negative consequences of an unhealthy diet) (cdc.gov). So long as we greedy, selfish Americans continue to get what we want, we will continue to deny any truths that stand in the way of our hamburgers, bread and that daily glass of milk (Yes, "Got Milk?" is a scam, too!) that we continue to convince ourselves is healthy.

If we continue down the road of amnesia, "forgetting" the truth because it is too hard to believe, the pattern of denial and silence on this issue will occur. It is time to take our health, and our future, into our own hands. We should focus on individually tailoring our diets and not trying to conform to any one strict spend-a-lot-of-money-to-get-fatter-then-spend-more-money-on-pills diet. Nutritionists know and promote that the secret to better health is simple: eat real food. So in the end, as we swim through all the fad diets, health books, nutrition podcasts and corrupt media out there trying to sell the American public on this and that way being the right way to eat, they can all pretty much agree on one thing: the USDA food pyramid is a lie.

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