

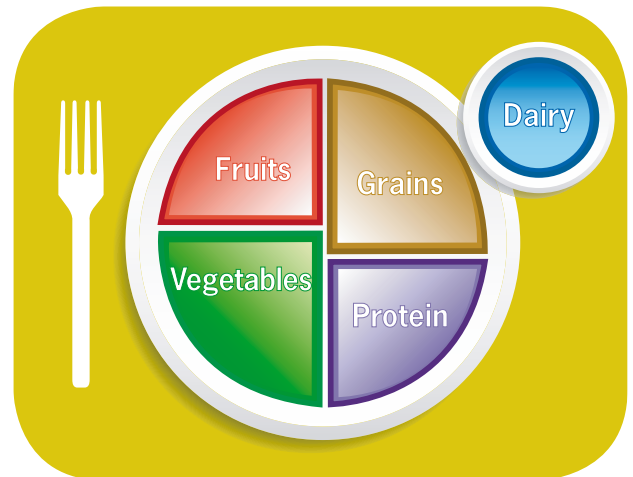
Goodbye Food Pyramid

At the beginning of June 2011 the old food pyramid was substituted by a new design which American nutrition experts believe is the perfect geometry to represent what we should eat: a plate. It's called **MyPlate**, and it has four colored sections representing fruits, vegetables, grains and proteins. Next to the plate is a smaller circle representing dairy products.

Experts think that this new design is much more simple and less misleading than the old pyramid.

The new design incorporates some key dietary messages:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less
- Avoid oversized portions
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks
- Make at least half your grains whole grains
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk



The original pyramid was released in 1992 and included the four food groups stacked in the shape of a pyramid with the number of recommended servings a person should eat from each group in a day. The widest part of the pyramid shows the foods that should make up most of the diet -- breads, cereals and grains.

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) revised the pyramid in 2005. The new symbol expanded the number of food groups to six and also included a person walking up steps on the side of the pyramid to emphasize the need for exercise.

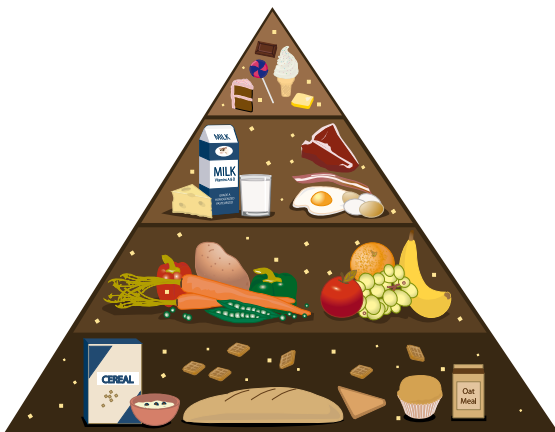
Nutrition experts believe a plate is a good choice and they are glad to see both versions of the pyramid go. They say they were complicated, and sometimes gave the wrong ideas about certain foods. It was described as difficult to understand and, as the obesity rates in America would suggest, it was completely ignored by many.



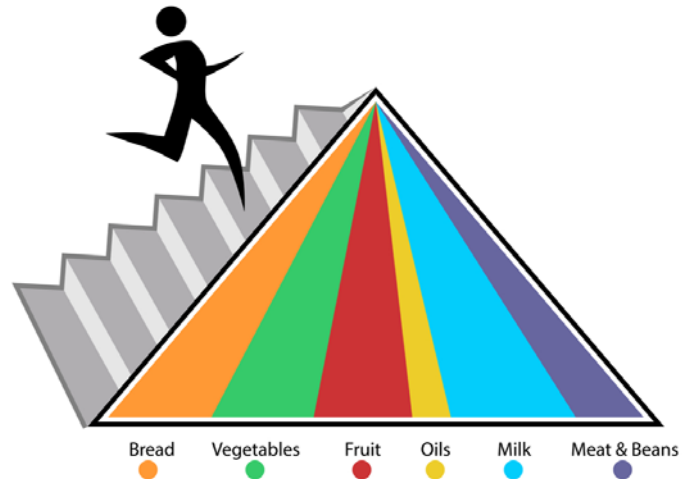
The plate makes it easier for people to understand the importance of eating healthier food and also less of it.

Portion size, even of healthy foods, plays a major role in controlling weight and reducing the risk of a number of chronic diseases. It is also recommended using a salad plate instead of a dinner plate. Research shows that using a smaller plate - or glass - can help reduce the total calories consumed in a meal.

MyPlate goes hand-in-hand with Michelle Obama "Let's Move" campaign designed to reduce childhood obesity by encouraging better nutrition and exercise. As a matter of fact physical activity is often the missing 'nutrient' in people's lifestyles.



FOOD PYRAMID 1992



FOOD PYRAMID 2005

1 Answer the following questions.

1. Analyse the 1992 food pyramid. Which part do carbohydrates occupy? Why?
2. What about vegetables?
3. Which differences can you notice in the 2005 version of the pyramid?
4. Why is there a person walking up the stairs?
5. Why was the pyramid substituted with MyPlate and why is it approved of by nutrition experts?
6. What important differences have been introduced?
7. Why are portions an important factor for a healthy lifestyle?

2 Write a paragraph (about 120 words) about your lifestyle, stating what type of diet you follow and if you practice any sports.

Life expectancy rising slowly in the US

LIFE expectancy in the US is rising slower than expected and the blame lies mostly with a history of smoking and an obesity epidemic.

Children born in Japan today can expect to live about 5 years longer than their American counterparts. The gap between Europe and the US is smaller, but widening. A panel set up by the US National Research Council (NRC) has now concluded that life expectancy in the US has risen more slowly than in other rich countries because of smoking, overeating and lack of exercise.



When today's senior citizens were younger, Americans used to smoke more than people in other rich countries. This accounts for about 40 per cent of the lag in life expectancy for US men - and almost 80 per cent for US women. Obesity is the next most important factor, accounting for between one-fifth and one-third of the US shortfall in life expectancy.

While poor access to healthcare sends some Americans to an early grave, its effects pale beside the damage caused by unhealthy lifestyles, says Samuel Preston of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, co-chair of the NRC panel. "The basic message is that personal behaviours are primarily responsible," he says.

Adapted from www.newscientist.com

1 Answer the following questions in about 8 lines. Use your own words as far as possible.

1. What is the main idea expressed in the passage?
2. Do you agree that personal behaviours are the main cause for the decrease in life expectancy?