

Hello St. Michael Families,

Below is an article from www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org. It is about a new way of looking at all we have learned through our “*GET HEALTHY, GROW STRONG, & HAVE FUN!*” challenges. Check it out! We will continue our health challenges this year. Any thoughts or suggestions from you or your child are greatly appreciated. Nurse Sullivan

About The Buzz: *The New Food Icon MyPlate Helps You Make Healthier Food Choices?* June 22, 2011

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

To make healthy eating much simpler to understand, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has replaced the food pyramid with a plate diagram to improve the understanding of proportions of each food group for healthy eating.

WHAT WE KNOW

Good news ... eating healthfully just got even easier! Over the years the USDA has provided Americans with various illustrations of food guides to encourage healthy eating. However, with the ever-increasing obese population and the oh-so-confusing MyPyramid of 2005, it was time for a change.

What can you expect to see with the new plate image?

- Grains & Protein. Grains and protein each represent less than one quarter of the plate. While the protein group was once known as the meat group, over time it has transitioned to incorporate other protein-rich foods such as fish, shellfish, poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- Dairy. The dairy group has been moved to a circle next to the plate and defined as fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.
- Fruits & Vegetables. The biggest star of the MyPlate debut is fruits and vegetables, winning half the available real estate on the plate. The plate stresses the key concept of filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables (that doesn't mean potato chips!).

Overall, the new plate image encourages a more plant-based diet.

And the best part ... the plate icon is an easy enough tool for children to use too! Children and parents can learn to eat healthfully while sitting around their dinner plates.

OUR ADVICE

Creating a healthy eating plan doesn't have to be complicated! Instead, focus on these key guidelines:

- Fill half your plate with fruits & vegetables
- Enjoy your food, but eat less
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks
- Make at least half your grains whole grains
- Avoid oversized portions
- Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals, and choose the foods with lower numbers
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

Visit www.chooseMyPlate.gov to create a balanced eating plan specific to you, and take the Pledge to eat MORE fruits and vegetables! Also check out our weekly Healthy Menu Ideas—they all meet the key recommendations, and remember that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans stresses the move to a more plant-based diet, specifically instructing Americans to fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables.