

What should your Food Plate have?

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A 'Food Plate' symbol has replaced the traditionally recommended 'Food Pyramid' of the USDA. Elaborating on this, Padma Shri and Dr B C Roy Awardee **Dr KK Aggarwal**, President Heart Care Foundation of India said that these guidelines break down a healthy diet into 4 main quadrants on a plate: red for fruits, green for vegetables, orange for grains and purple for protein. A small circle attached to the plate signifies dairy. Fruits and vegetables occupy half of the plate space, with the vegetable portion being a little bigger than the fruit section. Eating more fruits and vegetables means consumption of fewer calories on the whole, which helps to maintain a healthy body weight. Fruits and vegetables are also a rich source of fiber along with vitamins and minerals. The other half is divided between grains and proteins. Grains, with emphasis on whole grains make up one quarter of the plate. Protein is a smaller quarter of the plate. The recommendation is to aim to eat different kinds of protein in every meal. In a major shift from the food pyramid, the Plate does not mention the number of servings for any food group or portion size. Nor does it mention fats and oils. Remember the following tips for a healthy meal: - Eat less and enjoy your food by eating slowly - Fill half your plate with fruit and vegetables. - Avoid oversized portions which can cause weight gain. - At least half of your grains should be whole grains. - Reduce intake of foods high in solid fats and/or added sugar. - Use fat-free or low fat milk and/or dairy products. - Drink plenty of water. Avoid sugary drinks. - Avoid foods that have high sodium levels such as snacks, processed foods. - Above all, balance your food choices with your activity level.

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