It’s easier than ever to get your plate in shape with MyPlate - the new symbol of healthy eating. MyPlate combines the advice of leading nutrition experts into one simple visual that can help you get healthy (or healthier).

MyPlate: The big picture
MyPlate is a whole new way to think about food. It’s based on extensive studies that show that, by simply rebalancing the food on our plates we can improve our health. It’s simple, but it’s a big difference from how most of our plates look today.

Let produce take center stage
MyPlate does not look like the average American meal. The portions of food on MyPlate turn the typical plate upside down. MyPlate makes fruits and vegetables the central focus – filling fully half the plate! It’s one of the most important things you can do to get healthier. Start planning meals with produce on center stage.

Make whole grains the rising star
Whole grains are popping up in cereal, soup and salad bowls everywhere. That’s because whole grains are the healthier choice. MyPlate recommends making at least half your grains ‘whole grains.’ So whether you prepare your meals at home or eat out, make whole grains a star on your plate.

Give healthy protein a supporting role
MyPlate shows us that a healthy plate needs less protein than we think (about a quarter of our plate). And a healthy plate has healthy protein – fish, chicken, soy and other beans, or small amounts of lean meat. Let proteins take a supporting role, with produce and whole grains leading the way.

Leave full fat dairy in the wings
Many Americans have not yet made the move to low fat dairy. As you get yourself and your plate in shape, MyPlate reminds us to get calcium from low or no fat dairy products.

Let MyPlate help you get your plate in shape.

Make MyPlate Your Plate
Make MyPlate, your plate this spring by finding delicious ways to feature the freshest of the season.

Make salads the main event
Make fresh produce the main event on your plate. Combine salad greens, fruits and vegetables for a burst of flavor. Mix fresh spinach with tropical fruits like mango, pineapple and orange slices. Enjoy fresh artichokes, asparagus, lettuces and green beans. From Swiss chard to broccoli, let fresh produce lead the way.

Give whole grains a starring role
Whole grains give salads, entrees, sandwiches and sides an extra dimension of flavor. With so many whole grain products – from brown rice to quinoa; from barley to bulgar – you shouldn’t have any trouble finding a whole grain that’s perfect for your favorite recipe. Find new ways to give whole grains a starring role – try Tabouleh, the popular Mediterranean salad with bulgar wheat; switch to whole grain pasta; try a quinoa salad with pine nuts and raisins or cranberries.

Dress it up
Dress up your favorite salads, pastas, entrees or side dishes the healthy way. Use healthy oils like canola, olive, soy or sunflower oil. Top with a sprinkle of chopped walnuts, sesame seeds or dried fruits. If you add cheese, use lower fat versions of Cheddar or Monterey Jack. Use shredded, lightly marinated vegetables to add flavor or add a handful of beans to liven-up a salad or side. Whatever you’re serving, dress it up the healthy way.
Top 10 Reasons To Get Active
MyPlate is a great guide for healthy eating. But healthy food is only part of healthy living. Physical activity is also essential to health and well being. Getting active has many benefits:

1. Boost energy – Regular exercise helps your cardiovascular system work more efficiently, which helps boost your energy levels.

2. Reduce stress – Exercise helps you relax after a stressful day. Take a 30 minute walk, or work out at the gym to unwind.

3. Get stronger – Exercise can improve your strength and endurance. Start gradually, stick with it and eventually you’ll get stronger.

4. Sleep well – A good night’s sleep can set the tone for your day. Fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly with regular exercise that’s not too close to your bedtime.

5. Lose weight – Regular exercise is a must for calorie balance. When you burn more calories than you need, the pounds begin to melt away.

6. Keep weight off – Studies show that sticking with your exercise routine is the key to avoid regaining the weight that you worked so hard to shed.

7. Boost self esteem – When you lose weight and gain muscle tone, you feel better about your appearance, as well as your health.

8. Get happy – Studies show that exercise releases brain chemicals that improve your mood.

9. Get Smarter – Some studies show that after exercise students perform better on tests that require focus and attention.

10. Live longer – By exercising regularly for as little as half an hour a day you can reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other diseases and increase your life expectancy.

Whatever reason works for you, get out, get active and get healthy.

For more information about MyPlate and active living go to the new website www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.