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**First Lady, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and Surgeon General Benjamin Launch *MyPlate* Icon as a New Reminder to Help Consumers to Make Healthier Food Choices**

WASHINGTON, June 2, 2011 – First Lady Michelle Obama, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Surgeon General Regina Benjamin today unveiled the federal government’s new food icon, *MyPlate*, to serve as a reminder to help consumers make healthier food choices. *MyPlate* is a new generation icon with the intent to prompt consumers to think about building a healthy plate at meal times and to seek more information to help them do that by going to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov). The new *MyPlate* icon emphasizes the fruit, vegetable, grains, protein and dairy food groups.

**The *MyPlate* icon is available to view and download in [PDF](#) and [JPG](#) formats. The *MyPlate* video announcement can be viewed [here](#).**

“This is a quick, simple reminder for all of us to be more mindful of the foods that we’re eating and as a mom, I can already tell how much this is going to help parents across the country,” said First Lady Michelle Obama. “When mom or dad comes home from a long day of work, we’re already asked to be a chef, a referee, a cleaning crew. So it’s tough to be a nutritionist, too. But we do have time to take a look at our kids’ plates. As long as they’re half full of fruits and vegetables, and paired with lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy, we’re golden. That’s how easy it is.”

“With so many food options available to consumers, it is often difficult to determine the best foods to put on our plates when building a healthy meal,” said Secretary Vilsack. “*MyPlate* is an uncomplicated symbol to help remind people to think about their food choices in order to lead healthier lifestyles. This effort is about more than just giving information, it is a matter of making people understand there are options and practical ways to apply them to their daily lives.”

“The new icon is simple and easy to understand, with more emphasis placed on fruits and vegetables,” said U.S. Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin. “This new tool can be a fun way to help individuals and families makes healthier meal choices. I encourage all Americans to follow the new dietary guidelines and become familiar with the new icon because it will serve as a compass to a healthy and fit nation.”

Originally identified in the Child Obesity Task Force report which noted that simple, actionable advice for consumers is needed, *MyPlate* will replace the *MyPyramid* image as the government’s primary food group symbol as an easy-to-understand visual cue to help consumers adopt healthy eating habits consistent with the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. *MyPyramid* will remain available to interested health professionals and nutrition educators in a special section of the new website.

[ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) provides practical information to individuals, health professionals, nutrition educators, and the food industry to help consumers build healthier diets with resources and tools for dietary assessment, nutrition education, and other user-friendly nutrition information. As Americans are experiencing epidemic rates of overweight and obesity, the online resources and tools can empower people to make healthier food choices for themselves, their families, and their children. Later this year, USDA will unveil an exciting “go-to” online tool that consumers can use to personalize and manage their dietary and physical activity choices.

Over the next several years, USDA will work with First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* initiative and public and private partners to promote *MyPlate* and [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) as well as the supporting nutrition messages and “how-to” resources.

The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, launched in January of this year, form the basis of the federal government’s nutrition education programs, federal nutrition assistance programs, and dietary advice provided by health and nutrition professionals. The *Guidelines* messages include:

#### **Balance Calories**

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.

#### **Foods to Increase**

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains

#### **Foods to Reduce**

- Compare sodium (salt) in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals, and choose foods with lower numbers.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Coupled with these tested, actionable messages will be the “how-tos” for consumer behavior change. A multi-year campaign calendar will focus on one action-prompting message at a time starting with “Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables.”

“What we have learned over the years is that consumers are bombarded by so many nutrition messages that it makes it difficult to focus on changes that are necessary to improve their diet,” said Secretary Vilsack. “This new campaign calendar will help unify the public and private sectors to coordinate efforts and highlight one desired change for consumers at a time.”

As part of this new initiative, USDA wants to see how consumers are putting *MyPlate* in to action by encouraging consumers to take a photo of their plates and share on Twitter with the hash-tag #MyPlate. USDA also wants to see where and when consumers think about healthy eating. Take the Plate [<http://www.flickr.com/groups/choosemyplate/>] and snap a photograph with MyPlate to share with our USDA Flickr Photo Group [<http://www.flickr.com/people/usdagov/>].

For more information, visit [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov). Additional resources include: [www.DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://www.DietaryGuidelines.gov) and [www.LetsMove.gov](http://www.LetsMove.gov). For the MyPlate Graphics Standards (terms of use), click here: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPlate/MyPlateGraphicsStandards.pdf>

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