



# The new healthy eating plate

**A**s a practising Naturopath, I don't care much for diets nor the many health fads that are heavily promoted which often promise much and deliver so little. One diet doesn't fit all, due to the many individual biochemic variations and lifestyle considerations, not to mention genetic activity humming in the background. These genetic expressions need to be respected! I do have a favourite all round nutritional approach, which you will read at the end of this article. But for now, please keep reading.

When it comes to food, quality does count. Whether you are eating to lose weight, regulate blood glucose levels, wanting to keep your heart happy or simply to feel better, your food choices each day will either complement your health objectives or they won't. Dietary guidelines have changed over the years as research has

become more accurate and less faddish. The strongest evidence to date shows that calories do matter, but focusing on food quality is an equally important part of preventing disease, promoting excellent health and maintaining correct weight.

Consider quality, not just calories. Rather than choosing foods based only on caloric value, think instead about choosing high quality, healthy foods and minimising low quality foods. Think low chemical, low preservative, locally grown.

High-quality foods include unrefined, minimally processed foods such as vegetables and fruits, whole-grains, healthy fats like butter, cold pressed olive oil, nuts and avocados and healthy sources of protein. The foods recommended in the new Healthy Plate concept developed by the Harvard School of Public Health were designed to address deficiencies in the previous eating food pyramids.

Lower-quality foods include highly processed snack foods such as crackers/muesli bars/cakes, sugar-sweetened beverages, refined white grains, refined sugar, fried foods, foods high in saturated and trans fats (margarine) and high glycemic foods such as potatoes.

The type of carbohydrate in the diet is more important than the amount of carbohydrate because, some, like vegetables (not potatoes) and fruits, whole-grains and beans, are healthier than others.

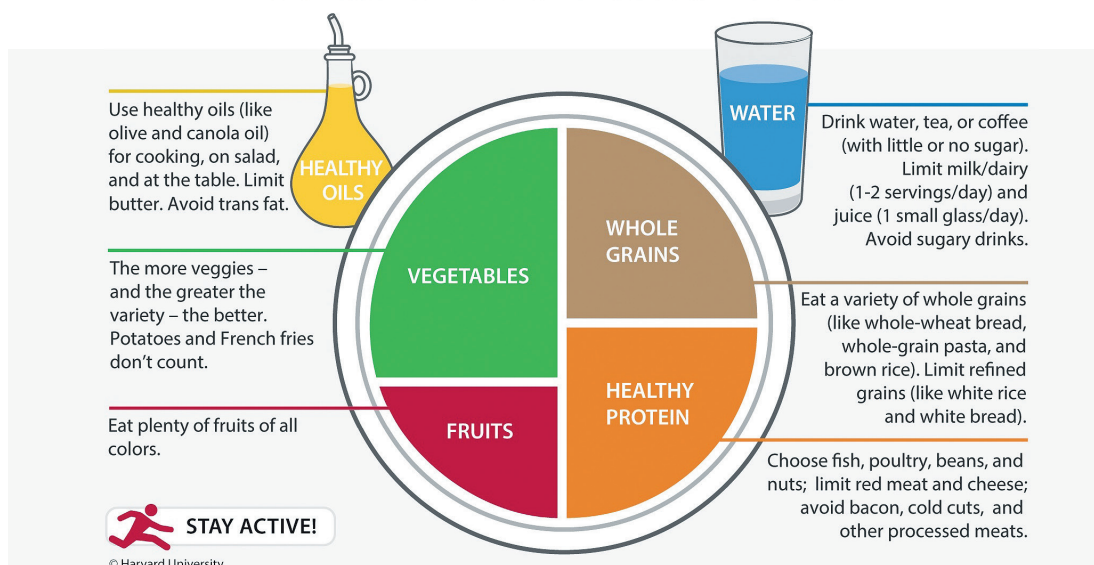
The Harvard Eating Plate doesn't define a certain number of calories or servings per day from each food group, because an individual's calorie and nutrient needs will vary. This guideline is much closer to satisfying the nutritional needs of most of us than any previous eating plan that has been promoted in the past.

I will rationalise the Eating Plate a little further by suggesting that my favourite two diets, when blended, would maximise most macro and

micro nutrients for all humans, these being the traditional Mediterranean diet and the traditional Japanese diet. I would go further by suggesting we limit fruits to low glycemic types and only have two fruit serves daily, with 5-7 vegies, including salads. A small amount of alcohol, as in scotch or red wine, is healthy, as is a cup of coffee or tea enjoyed regularly. Natural Greek sugarless yoghurts, butter and fetta cheeses are good options; but avoid soy/tofu based products as they interfere with the gut and thyroid function.

One diet fits all is not achievable, but the above guidelines will certainly go a long way towards keeping most of us brimming with energy and well each day.

For *Nutritional and Health consultations*, call Kim Piper N.D. (Naturopath) on 0412 496 125. [www.kimthenaturopath.com](http://www.kimthenaturopath.com).



Naturopath, Kim Piper N.D. (Hons) speciality areas include hormones for men and women, diet and lifestyle rebalancing, gut function, children's ailments and daily wellness protocols. With 30 years' experience she is also the author of a best-selling book, 'Woman to Woman...managing your hormones safely and naturally'. She invites you to follow her at Kim Piper - Naturopath on Facebook where she shares more health tips.



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