Adults over the age of 70 have unique dietary needs, and Tufts University researchers have now replaced the former Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults with the new MyPlate for Older Adults icon.

**Understanding MyPlate for Older Adults**

MyPlate for Older Adults contains updated guidelines for food, fluid and physical activity.

- Includes recommended regular physical activities and fluid intake, components of particular concern for older adults.
- Emphasizes foods high in vitamins and minerals and low in fat, salt and sugar.
Using a plate icon with an inset of physical activities, the following items are represented:

- Whole, enriched and fortified grains and cereals such as brown rice and 100% whole wheat bread
- Liquid vegetable oils, soft spreads low in saturated and trans fat, and spices to replace salt
- Physical activity such as walking, resistance training and light cleaning
- Low- and non-fat dairy products such as yogurt and low-lactose milk
- Bright-colored vegetables such as carrots and broccoli
- Deeply-colored fruit, such as berries and peaches
- Fluids such as water and fat-free milk

Half of the MyPlate for Older Adults is represented by fruits and vegetables, in a variety of colors. Pre-packaged fruits and vegetables in addition to fresh examples are included, forms that for a number of reasons may be more appropriate for older adults.

These include:

- Bags of frozen pre-cut vegetables that can be resealed
- Single-serve portions of canned fruit

These choices can be easier to prepare and have a longer shelf life, minimizing waste.

Since older adults are at risk for dehydration due to a decline in thirst, multiple options for liquids are suggested, including:

- Water
- Coffee
- Tea
- Soup

With an increase in elderly obesity rates, common activities such as errands and household chores are depicted as a reminder that physical activity can be incorporated in a variety of ways.

It is also important to note the updated recommendation to achieve maximum nutrients from food, rather than nutritional supplements.

And, as always, older adults should talk with their doctor before changing diet and/or physical activity routines.