

UN-L for Families  
Nancy Frecks, Extension Educator  
UN-L Extension  
SW 4 Counties  
Chase-Dundy-Hayes-Hitchcock

### Basic Dietary Guidelines Remain, Come with Focused Messages

Every five years, the U.S. departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services form new dietary guidelines for everyone age 2 and older. The 2010 dietary guidelines were influenced by the health conditions of obesity and heart disease, reports Wanda Koszewski, UNL Extension nutrition specialist.

The new guidelines are focused on three basic messages: eating wholesome foods, eating at home and watching simple sugars and salt. Eating at home is a focus because people are eating out more and more in today's world. Restaurant portions are large, resulting in more calories consumed, more sodium and hidden fats and sugars. Parents used to tell their children to clean their plates, but that may not be the best statement today. Plates used to be six to eight inches, but now they are eight to 12 inches, encouraging larger portions.

When eating out, consider cutting the food portion on the plate in half. Put half in a to-go box right away, then eat the other half that is left on the plate. This will eliminate the feeling that it is necessary to clean the plate.

When eating at home, try to stay away from processed foods and follow these suggestions:

- cover half of the plate with fruits and vegetables
- switch to nonfat or 1 percent milk
- reduce sodium to one teaspoon or 2.3 grams
- drink water instead of sugary drinks; this doesn't have to be bottled water; tap water is recommended, if it is safe

For more information, go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's website at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) or contact your local UN-L Extension office. UNL Extension is committed to helping Nebraskans know how—and know now.