



THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians

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For immediate release

Dietitians hail return of balanced diet plate

Dietitians and their professional body, the British Dietetic Association (BDA), have hailed the newly-launched 'Eatwell Plate', the Food Standard Agency's visual guide to a healthy balanced diet, as a useful tool in the fight against obesity.

The Eatwell Plate – a revised version of the original 'Balance of Good Health Plate' – has been updated to suit today's lifestyle and will help consumers make better food choices to enable them to have a healthy, balanced approach to their everyday diet.

Used by dietitians and other health professionals in consultation with their patients, the Plate is easy to use and understand by individuals of all ages who want to make sure they are on the right track with their diet.

Pauline Douglas, the BDA's Chairman, said: "The FSA's new Eatwell Plate is a welcome update to a proven teaching resource that is widely used in healthcare, schools, and community settings to help people understand practically how to balance the different foods they eat. It clearly shows that we need to eat more of some foods than others. When the original plate was launched in 1995 dietitians made great use of it and we have been campaigning for the return of an updated version of this really useful tool. Used appropriately, it will be a key tool to help combat the rise in obesity, malnutrition and other nutrition problems across the population."

Whilst giving a visual guide to eating a balanced diet, the Eatwell Plate does not consider portion sizes, which is an important tool that dietitians are calling for. A study¹, in the latest issue of the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* found that there was considerable confusion in the interpretation of portion sizes of fruits and vegetables. Children's perception of the average portion size varied considerably, with fruit portions being generally greater than vegetables. Satumas, for example, weighed in at around 120g compared to just over half that (60g) for peas.

Pauline added: “The FSA’s Plate is a welcome development, but to make it even more useful, we would like to see further work done on establishing portion sizes. It is important that people meet their five-a-day target but if the portions sizes are too small then it is unlikely have any real benefit.”

- Ends -

Media enquiries to The British Dietetic Association should be directed to our media hotline on 0870 580 2517 or pr@bda.uk.com.

Notes to Editors

1. Reference: Mullarkey D, Johnson B, Hackett A. Portion size selection of fruits and vegetables by 9-to10-year old children in Liverpool. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* 2007, volume 20, page 459-466. www.blackwellpublishing.com/jhn. Dietitians examined the food portion size judgements of over 90 Liverpool children. During the research, a selection of commonly eaten fruits and vegetables was cut into small pieces and put into large bowls, and the children were asked to place a portion into an empty bowl, which was then weighed.
2. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation’s largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 6,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.
3. Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognised graduate qualifications in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.
4. Registration, awarded by the Health Professions Council, is an indication that a Dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct. For further details about The British Dietetic Association, please visit our websites: www.bda.uk.com www.bdaweightwise.com www.teenweightwise.com.