

NHA/WASHINGTON

update*

Supplements Are Foods

The USDA's omission of nutritional supplements continues a disturbing trend.

This month, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) dismantled its Food Pyramid and replaced it with a graphic of a plate—cleverly named MyPlate. What does this accomplish? In theory, the new graphic makes it easier for consumers to adhere to a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy. Unfortunately, the USDA forgot to include the one daily food serving that Americans may need the most: nutritional supplements.

When Congress passed the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) in 1994, it classified nutritional supplements as foods. Puzzlingly, despite this classification supplements were never included in the USDA's Food Pyramid... and now that snub continues with MyPlate's omission of supplements. This is particularly egregious considering the nutritional state of our food supply, which could make supplements more important than ever.

Hollow Foods

According to the Earth Summit Statistics meeting of 1992, farmland in the United States is over 85% micronutrient depleted—a figure that may be considerably worse in 2011. That means the fruits and vegetables on MyPlate may be nutritionally diminished by factory farming. In addition, some experts suggest that these foods may be depleted even further by processing, microwaving, canning, cooking and freezing. Ultimately, the USDA's MyPlate graphic might be

more like an empty plate, loaded with food that simply isn't as nutritionally vital as we expect it to be.

If our foods are diminished, what about our bodies? Drugs are increasingly known to interfere with the absorption, synthesis and utilization of



nutrients in the body. And as we age, we have an even harder time absorbing and using nutrients, which increases our risk of nutritional deficiency. Supplements are a solution.

Elephant in the Room

MyPlate appears to be following the same trend set by the American Dietetic Association's National Nutrition Month. Here are two official organizations that are supposed to be steering Americans toward healthy dietary choices. But both these groups seem to pretend that dietary supplements do not exist.

Nutritional supplements are widely accepted by health experts for their

usefulness in making up potential nutritional shortfalls in regular diets. That alone is reason enough to include supplements on MyPlate. The real elephant in the room may be the discrepancy between what the USDA believes about the nutrient levels in produce and how much nutrition is actually present. Perhaps the funds spent on changing a pyramid to a plate would have been better served in finding out exactly how nutritionally deficient our food supply might be.

With superior-quality nutritional supplements that provide independent laboratory assays, Americans get guaranteed nutrition at precisely calibrated levels. Can that bunch of broccoli or shiny apple say the same? Despite the USDA's slick new MyPlate graphic, factory farming in depleted soil continues to make the actual nutrient content of conventionally farmed fruits and vegetables a mystery. And while milk, cereal and even salt are fortified with nutrients, the USDA refuses to fortify its daily diet recommendations with safe, natural nutritional supplements.

Do you feel the USDA should include supplements as part of a daily recommended diet? Make your voice heard! And always fight for your right to take nutritional supplements. Patronize the natural health food stores that are committed to providing you with quality products and reliable information. Take control of your health knowledge, and transcend the USDA's simplistic MyPlate graphic with a truly healthy diet, one that includes supplementation. For more information on health freedom, visit www.nha2011.com. ♦

*This editorial is a public service announcement sponsored by the Nutritional Health Alliance (NHA).