

Think Your Plate

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Making the right food choices is a great way for people with diabetes to control their blood glucose. Managing blood glucose helps reduce the risk for health complications.

What does healthful eating mean if I have diabetes?

- Eating the right amount of whole grain foods, vegetables, fruits, low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products, lean cuts of meat, fish or poultry and beans each day.
- Paying attention to portion size (the amount of food you eat in one sitting).
- Eating three small meals and two healthy snacks each day.
- Planning meals ahead of time.
- Having healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables available in your home.

Why is eating healthfully important if I have diabetes?

- Helps you manage blood glucose
- Reduces your risk for heart disease, stroke, eye disease and other complications
- Helps you better manage moods and feelings
- Gives you energy throughout the day

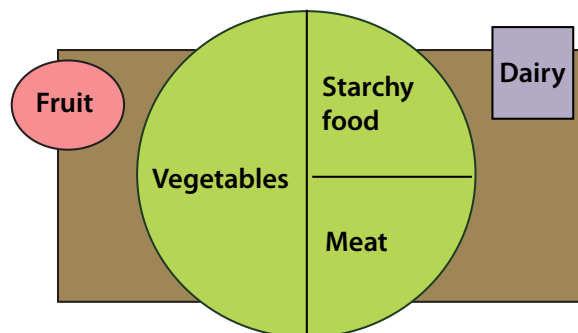
What are the benefits of using the plate method?

The plate method helps you:

- Make healthy food choices
- Eat more dietary fiber, which helps control your blood sugar
- Manage your weight
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Control the amount of carbohydrate foods you eat

How can I “think my plate”?

1. Use a dinner plate that is nine inches in diameter. (Using a plate larger than that may encourage you to eat larger portions of food.)
2. Imagine that your plate is divided into three sections as shown in the diagrams below.
3. Fill your plate according to the following proportions:
 - Use the large section, or half of the plate, for non-starchy vegetables (green salad, cooked or raw broccoli, carrots, green beans, or cauliflower). Eat both raw and cooked vegetables at each meal, and vary your veggies.
 - Use one of the smaller sections, or one quarter of your plate, for starchy food such as pasta, rice, cooked beans, or a starchy vegetable (potatoes, corn, beans, butternut squash and peas).
 - Use the other quarter of your plate for protein (chicken, turkey, fish, beef, pork, eggs, cheese, or tofu). Bake, grill, steam, or broil lean cuts of meat. Eat about 3 to 4 ounces of protein twice a day.
4. Add an 8-ounce glass of fat-free or low-fat milk.
5. Add a serving of fruit. Choose 1 small fresh fruit, 1 cup of melon (cantaloupe or honey dew), or half a cup canned fruit (in its own juice).



Lunch or Dinner Plate

What do I do if I am eating mixed dishes?

When using mixed dishes such as meat-based casseroles or lasagna, one cup counts as a serving. Your serving of the mixed dish takes up the meat and starchy food section on the plate—that is, half of your plate. Fill the other half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables.

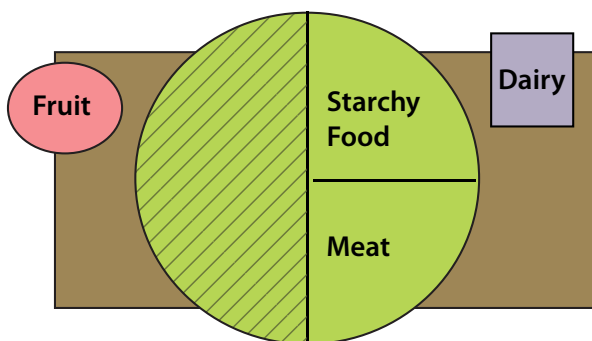
Where do sweets and dessert fit?

Serving sizes of sweets and desserts are small. For example, a half a cup of ice cream or two small cookies equals one serving. When you have dessert with a meal it should replace similar servings of starchy food, fruit, or milk.

Sweets and rich desserts often contain carbohydrates and fat with few other nutrients. Many of these foods will raise blood glucose quickly. They also contribute to weight gain because they tend to be high in calories. These foods should be used only as a treat or for special occasions. Remember, fruits in the correct portion size can be used for dessert as they add a sweet taste without adding many calories, and they also are a source of vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.

What do I do for breakfast?

- Use one quarter of your plate for protein such as one hard-boiled or scrambled egg.
- Use one quarter of your plate for cereal or bread.
- Add fruit and milk.



Breakfast Plate

Ways to stay healthy with diabetes

- Do not skip breakfast.
- Eat slowly and enjoy the taste of your food.

- Have a glass of water before you begin to eat and drink more water throughout the day.
- Eat your non-starchy vegetables and salad first.
- Put away leftovers as soon as you finish eating.
- Identify situations that cause you to overeat and find ways to solve the problem.
- Do not use food as a source of comfort when you are stressed. Take a walk or talk with a friend.
- Enjoy the foods you love. Do not deprive yourself of all sweet or rich foods. Just have these foods in very small portions and only once in a while.
- If you are hungry before a meal, snack on some veggies.
- Keep a journal of the things you eat each day.
- Eat at about the same time each day.

Resources

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