Nutrition for Life: Diabetes Plate Method

The Diabetes Plate Method is a helpful tool for anyone who wants to eat better and learn about variety and portion sizes, including people with prediabetes. Each section (based on a nine-inch plate) is for the following three food groups: vegetables, carbohydrates, and protein. These three food groups are the foundation for healthy eating.

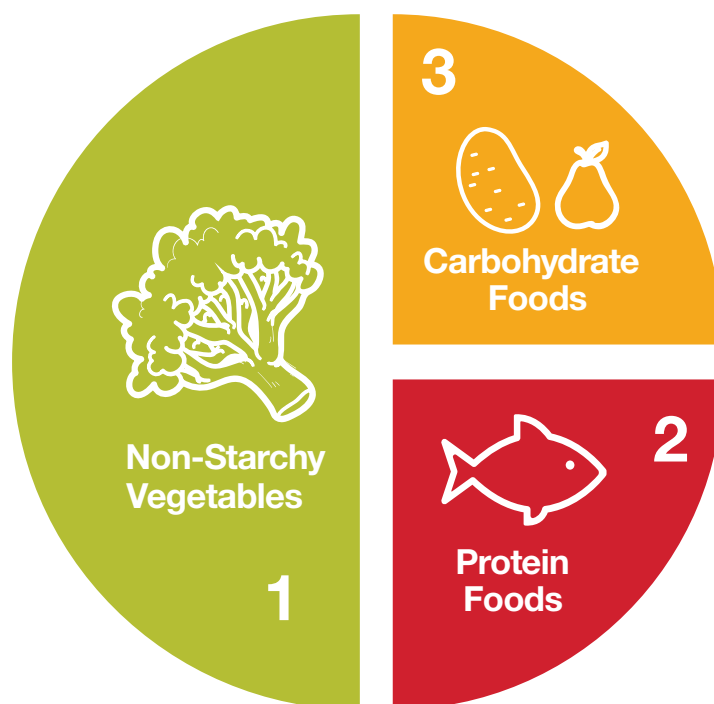### Fill 1/2 of the plate with non-starchy vegetables

Non-starchy vegetables are low in carbohydrates. One serving amounts to one cup raw veggies, such as a salad greens, or ½ cup cooked, such as broccoli. You can have as many non-starchyvegetables as you like, but make sure at least half of your plate is filled with things like green salad, broccoli, or asparagus.

Fill 1/4 of the plate with carbohydrates

Choose whole grains such as brown rice or quinoa which are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Beans and lentils contain both starch and protein with good amounts of fiber. Low-fat or fat-free dairy and fruits are also included in this section.

Fill 1/4 of the plate with protein

This section includes lean animal and plant-based protein sources, such as eggs, fish, and tofu. Look for lean cuts of meat or reduced-fat cheeses. 1/4 of the plate is equivalent to a three-ounce cooked portion (about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand).

3 Carbohydrate Foods

1 Non-Starchy Vegetables

2 Protein Foods

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GRAINS AND PASTA	BREADS	CEREALS	STARCHY VEGETABLES	DAIRY	BEANS, PEAS, AND LENTILS	FRUITS
1/3 to 1/2 cup cooked	1 slice (1 oz)	1/2 cup cooked	1/2 cup cooked	2/3 to 1 cup	1/2 cup cooked	1/2 cup fresh

These measurements are based on estimates and each has about 15 grams of carbohydrate. Please see the nutrition label or talk to your health care provider or a registered dietitian for questions relating to serving sizes.

Protein

- Beef
  - Ground beef, 90% or higher, lean 10% or lower fat
  - Choice grades such as chuck, round, and rump
  - Loin cuts such as sirloin and tenderloin
- Cheese, preferably low-fat varieties
- Curd-style cheese, cottage, and ricotta
- Eggs
- Pork, rib, loin chop, roast, and tenderloin
- Seafood, such as fish, clams, crabs, and shrimp
- Tofu
- Turkey and chicken (without the skin)

Dairy

Choose low-fat (skim), non-fat, or reduced-fat varieties. One serving (which is one cup) of the milk products below contains 12 grams of carbohydrate.

- Fat-free (skim) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, buttermilk, and soy milk
- Yogurt, plain or Greek. You can sweeten this with an artificial sweetener.

Fruit

Fruit is a power food packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Don't forget, fruits are part of the carbohydrate portion of the plate.

Fats

In the Diabetes Plate Method, healthy fats are used for cooking and as condiments. It's best to choose unsaturated fats, which are usually liquid rather than solid. One serving of these healthy fats (which is about one teaspoon) contains five grams of fat and 45 calories each.

- Vegetable oil, olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil, safflower oil, and corn oil
- Avocado
- Nut butters
- Nuts, such as almonds, peanuts, and pecans
- Olives
- Non-dairy spreads such as margarine, which contains vegetable oil. Make sure your spreads are trans fat-free!

Beverages

To complete your meal, add water or another zero-calorie beverage such as diet soda, diet tea, plain tea, or coffee.

Make the Diabetes Plate Method your method!

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