

What Can I Eat?

Healthy Choices for American Indians and Alaska Natives with Type 2 Diabetes



Class 1:

Introduction to Carb Foods
and the Diabetes Plate

Participant Booklet





Introduction

One of the first things people ask when they get diabetes is “what can I eat?” In this class, we will discuss how Native people with diabetes can eat better and be healthier.

We will:

1. Show you tools that make it easy to choose healthy foods
2. Practice physical activities that can improve your blood glucose
3. Teach you about mindfulness, which can help you make better food choices
4. Set goals to help you stay on track

We will be practicing these skills in class.

Class 1:

Introduction to Carb Foods and the Diabetes Plate

In this session, we are going to:

- Define what carbohydrates (carbs) are
- Identify foods that have a lot of carbs
- Practice using the Diabetes Plate
- Try a new type of physical activity
- Try a mindful practice that can help people make healthy nutrition choices
- Set a goal to work on over the coming week



Table of Contents

- My Health Goals.....6

- Definitions.....7

- Diabetes Plate.....8

- Food Lists.....10

- Physical Activity.....14

- Mindful Nutrition Choice Activity.....16

- Goal Planner.....19

My Health Goals

In each class, you will set health goals for yourself. Think about your health goals and put a check box next to one or more of your goals. You can also write in your own under "other."

- Lose weight
- Lower my blood glucose
- Feel better physically
- Have more energy
- Move easier
- Learn more about healthy foods for me and my diabetes
- Feel like I can better manage my diabetes
- Feel less stressed about my diabetes
- Other(s):



Definitions

Below, we define different kinds of foods.

Carbohydrate Foods (also just called “carb foods”):

- Carb foods give us energy.
- To keep blood glucose healthy, it is best for people with diabetes to limit the amount of carb foods they eat.
- Examples of healthy carb foods are listed on the next page.
- Limit the amount of carb foods you eat at one time.

Protein Foods:

- Protein foods help build muscle and help us feel full.
- Protein foods can also help keep our blood glucose steady.
- Protein foods include meat, fish, chicken, beans (black, kidney, pinto), nuts, nut butters, cheese, and tofu.
- Some foods high in protein are also high in carbs, like beans. Because beans are high in carbs, they are in the carb group.

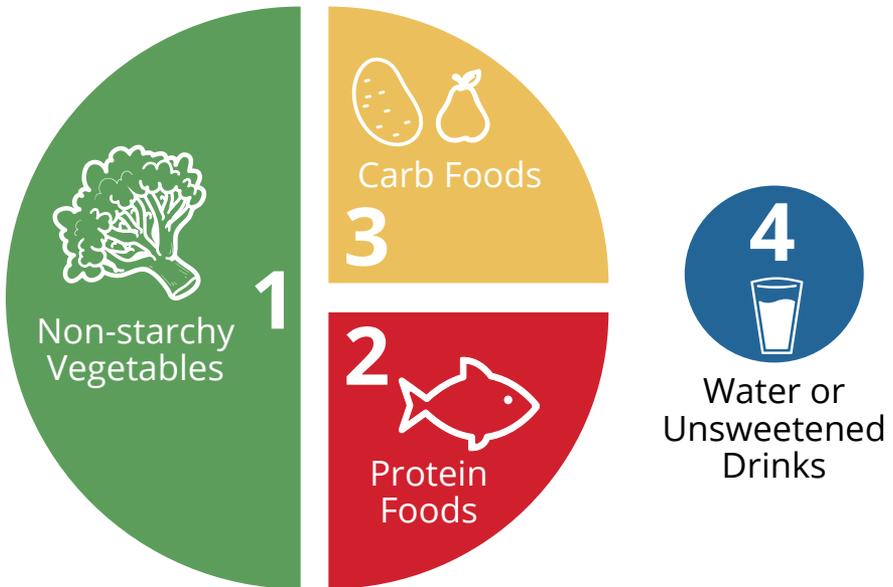
Vegetable Foods (also just called “veggies”):

- Some veggies, like potatoes, corn, squash, and peas, are called “starchy” veggies and they are in the carb food group.
- The rest of the veggies are “non-starchy” and do not have carbs in them. There is a list later in this booklet with non-starchy veggies.
- Vegetables give us vitamins and minerals. They also help us feel full.

Try to choose at least one traditional
carb food each week.

Diabetes Plate

What you eat has an impact on your blood glucose. Making healthy choices can help keep your blood glucose levels healthy.



Plan Your Portions

The Diabetes Plate has 3 sections, 1 big and 2 small.

1. Fill the big section of your plate with non-starchy veggies.
2. Fill 1 small section of your plate with protein foods.
3. Fill the other small section of your plate with carb foods.
4. Choose water or an unsweetened drink.

Indian Health Service Diabetes Plate

MY NATIVE PLATE

Fruit

Water

**Grain/
Starch**

Vegetables

Protein

Use your plate as a guide to help you eat in a healthy way!

1. Fill half of your plate with veggies
2. Fill the other half of your plate with a grain/starch and a protein.
3. Add a side of fruit.

Pictured here:

- Mixed berries
- Cooked spinach
- Baked squash with peppers and herbs
- Steamed wild rice
- Baked deer meat with sage
- Water

Take a picture with your cell phone. Look at the picture later as a reminder!

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Remember:

- Stay active
- Drink water
- Use a 9-inch plate

Notes:

More Ideas for MY NATIVE PLATE

**Fruit/
Dairy**

**Grain/
Starch**

Vegetables

Protein

Fruit

**Grain/
Starch**

Vegetables

Protein

Fruit

**Grain/
Starch**

Vegetables

Protein

Retrieved from: https://www.ihs.gov/sites/diabetes/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/printmat/IHS_MyNativePlate_Letter.pdf

Healthy Carb Foods

Fill 1 small section of your plate with healthy carb foods.



Grains

- Breads
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat/buckwheat flour
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Corn
- Grits
- Millet
- Oatmeal
- Polenta
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- Tortillas
- Triticale
- Whole grain barley
- Whole grain corn/cornmeal
- Whole grain couscous
- Whole grain rye
- Whole oats
- Whole wheat flour
- Whole wheat pasta
- Wild rice



Starchy Veggies

- Acorn squash
- Butternut squash
- Corn
- Green peas
- Parsnips
- Plantain
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Sweet potato/yam





Beans and Lentils

- Beans, such as black, pinto, and kidney
- Chickpeas
- Dried peas
- Fat-free refried beans
- Lentils
- Vegetarian baked beans

Tip: Drain and rinse canned beans to reduce sodium.

Add additional carb foods here:

Fruits

Fresh, frozen, and canned fruit without added sugars, such as:

- Apple
- Banana
- Blueberries
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Melon, all types
- Orange
- Peach
- Pear
- Plum
- Raspberries
- Strawberries



Tip: Drain canned fruit in syrup and rinse with water to remove the extra sugar.



Non-starchy Vegetables

Fill half of your plate with non-starchy veggies.

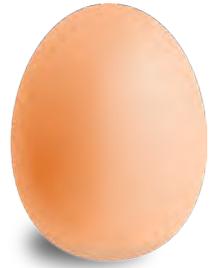
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Eggplant
- Green beans
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Peppers
- Spinach
- Tomatoes



Protein Foods

Fill 1 small section of your plate with protein.

- Cheese
- Chicken
- Duck
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lean red meats
- Lunch meat
- Rabbit
- Seafood
- Turkey
- Tofu
- Venison



Drinks

Choose water or an unsweetened drink.

- Water
- Seltzer water
- Fruit-infused water
- Sugar-free flavored water
- Coffee
- Unsweetened tea



Physical Activity

To manage your blood glucose, it is best to do 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

What counts as physical activity?

Anything that gets your body moving counts!

Try to do things that get you breathing a little faster than normal or that make your heart rate go up a little bit. You should be able to talk while you exercise but not sing.



How can I get 30 minutes of physical activity every day?

You could:

- Take a walk
- Dance
- Work in the garden
- Do chores around the house and yard
- Play outside with your kids or grandkids
- Get up and move for a few minutes every hour
- Take “dance breaks” with your kids/grandkids with fun music
- Park your car at the far end of the parking lot
- Take stairs when you can, instead of the elevator (even for one flight)
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way
- Set a timer to remind yourself to move every hour

You may want to start with just 5 minutes a day and work your way up to 30 minutes a day.

You can do 5-10 minutes several times a day to add up to 30 minutes each day. Your activity does not all have to be at one time.

Mindful Nutrition Choice Activity

Sometimes we make unhealthy food choices without meaning to. We might eat more or make unhealthy choices when we:

- feel stressed, or
- don't stop to think about making a good choice.

You can make healthier food choices by being more mindful.

Being mindful means paying attention to what is happening here and now. It also means paying attention to how your body is feeling right now.





Focusing on your breathing can help you make better food choices. Before you make a choice about what to eat, try this:

1. Sit down
2. Sit up straight and place your feet flat on the floor
3. Rest your hands on your lap
4. Close your eyes (or softly gaze about an arms length in front of you on the ground)
5. Breathe in for a count of 5 (count in your head to yourself 1...2...3...4...5...)
6. Breathe out for a count of 5 (count in your head to yourself 1...2...3...4...5...)

Breathe in and out like this 5 times.

Try using this breathing exercise before you make choices about what to eat. At first, you can try it just a few times a week. Eventually, it would be great to try it before every meal.

Summary

To be healthy, you can:

1. Try not to eat too many carbs at one time.

2. Use the Diabetes Plate to help you eat fewer carbs.

3. Be physically active for 30 minutes a day.

4. Focus on your breathing to help you feel calm and balanced when making food choices.



Goal Planner

To be successful in changing behaviors and learning new skills, it is helpful to make goals. Planning out the details of your goal can help you to achieve it.

1. Choose a goal listed below, or make a goal of your own.
2. Prepare for your goal.

Choose A Goal

Please choose a goal and fill in the blanks. Or, you can write a different goal related to class that isn't listed.

Choose one change you can make for the next week.

Be more physically active.

I will be physically active on _____ days next week.

I will be physically active for _____ minutes each time.

A good time of day for me to be active is _____.

The activity I would like to try first is _____.

Use the Diabetes Plate to reduce how many carbs I eat.

I will try using the Diabetes Plate _____ times this week.

I can start on this day _____ with this meal

_____.

Teach a family member or friend how to use the Diabetes Plate to reduce the amount of carbs they eat.

A person I would like to teach is:

_____.

Use the mindful breathing exercise to help me make healthy food choices.

A good time for me to practice mindful breathing is:

_____.

Other:

This is a goal to help with:

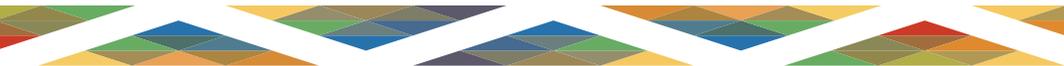
Food Choices Drink Choices

Being Active Being Mindful

Other _____

Goal Details: _____

What days of the week will I do this goal? Monday Tuesday
Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday (circle all that apply).



Prepare for Your Goal

What do you need to do to get ready for your goal? For example, will you need to go to the grocery store? Will you need to have a family meeting?

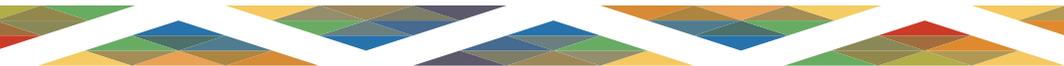
The steps I need to take to prepare for my goal:

Tell someone about your goal.

I will tell _____ about my goal.

For next week, please:

- 1. Work on your **goal**.
- 2. **Bring in a food item** that represents a time you or your family made a healthy food choice. You can also bring in a photo of a food item.



- 3. Come ready to **share** your food item or photo and to talk about how you did with your goal.
- 4. **Bring an example** of something that you drank or a drink that you saw in the store. You can bring in the whole bottle, can, or label, or you can bring a picture on your phone. We will use this in the next class.

Our next class is on _____ at _____.
(Day of week and date) (time)





What Can I Eat?®

Centers for American Indian & Alaska Native Health

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Healthy Choices for American Indians and Alaska Natives with Type 2 Diabetes

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