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# Plan Your Diabetes Plate

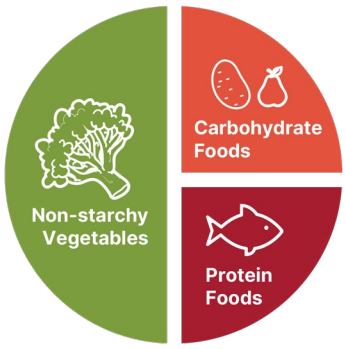
Making informed food and drink decisions is important for your health. Whether you have diabetes or prediabetes, use the Diabetes Plate as your roadmap to help guide you in creating healthy meals to manage blood glucose (blood sugar). The Diabetes Plate is a visual representatin of Low Carbohydrate eating pattern.

The Diabetes Plate uses a nine-inch plate to help you create a meal with a healthy balance of vegetables, protein, and carbs—without any counting, weighing, or measuring. There are three sections of the plate:

1. Non-starchy vegetables
2. Lean protein
3. Quality carbohydrates

For your drink, choose water or a zero- or low-calorie beverage.

## How to Portion Your Plate




**› Fill half the plate with non-starchy vegetables.**
Non-starchy vegetables are low in carbs; contain vitamins, minerals, and fiber; and may not raise your blood glucose. One serving equals one cup of raw veggies, such as salad greens, or half a cup of cooked veggies, such as cooked broccoli. The goal is to make sure at least half your plate is filled with non-starchy vegetables.

**Examples of non-starchy vegetables:**

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage (green, red, napa, Chinese)
- Bok choy
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Jicama
- Leafy greens such as kale, collards, mustard greens, and Swiss Chard
- Mushrooms
- Nopales (cactus)
- Okra
- Onions
- Leeks
- Green beans, pea pods, snow peas, and sugar snap peas
- Peppers such as bell peppers and hot peppers (jalapeño, poblano, and others)
- Salad greens such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, endive, and other salad mixes
- Squash such as zucchini, yellow squash, chayote, or spaghetti squash
- Radish or daikon
- Tomatoes
- Tomatillos

**› Fill one-quarter of the plate with lean protein.**
Protein can help you feel full after a meal and has little impact on blood glucose levels. Eating protein with carb foods helps to slow the carb's digestion. Choose unbreaded lean cuts of protein as they are lower in both fat and saturated fat. One-quarter of the plate is a 3-ounce cooked portion, which is about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand.

**Examples of lean protein foods include:**

- Chicken and turkey without the skin
- Eggs
- Fish like salmon, cod, tuna, tilapia, and swordfish
- Shellfish like shrimp, scallops, clams, mussels, and lobster
- Lean beef cuts such as chuck, round, sirloin, flank, and tenderloin
- Lean pork cuts such as center loin chop and tenderloin
- Lean deli meat
- Low-fat cheese and cottage cheese

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**There are great plant-based sources of protein too (be sure check the label as some of these choices have both protein and carbs), including:**

- Beans, lentils, hummus, and falafel
- Edamame
- Plant-based meat substitutes
- Nuts and nut butters
- Tofu and tempeh

**› Fill one-quarter of the plate with quality carbohydrates like starchy vegetables, beans or lentils, fruits, whole grains and dairy.**

Carb foods are rich in nutrition and some choices contain fiber. These foods have the largest effect on blood glucose levels. Limiting your portion of carb foods to one-quarter of the plate may keep blood glucose from rising after meals. When eating carb foods, try to eat them with a lean protein, choose carbs that are higher in fiber when possible, and eat carbs in appropriate portions. Check your blood glucose before and one to two hours after the start of eating to see how these foods affect your blood glucose.

**Examples of quality carbohydrates:**

- Starchy vegetables such as corn, acorn squash, butternut squash, green peas, parsnips, plantains, potatoes, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes/yams.
- Beans and legumes such as black, kidney, pinto, and garbanzo beans, and lentils.
- Fruits (whole, no-added-sugar canned, dried, or juiced)
- Whole grains such as brown rice, bulgur, oats/oatmeal, polenta, popcorn, quinoa, and whole grain products (bread, pasta, and tortillas)
- Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and milk substitutes like soy milk

**› Choosing Your Drink**

Water is the best drink to choose because it contains no calories or carbs and has no effect on blood glucose. Other zero- or low-calorie drinks include:

- Unsweetened tea (hot or iced)
- Unsweetened coffee (hot or iced)
- Sparkling water/club soda
- Infused water or sparkling water without added sugar
- Diet soda or other diet drinks

**Let the Diabetes Plate Be Your Guide**

The Diabetes Plate can be used as the guide for any of the eating patterns recommended for people with diabetes or prediabetes, such as:

- Mediterranean Style
- Low Carb/Very Low Carb
- Vegetarian/Vegan
- DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)
- Low Fat

Scan the QR code or visit **diabetes.org/food-nutrition/eating-for-diabetes-management** to learn more.