

The Plate Method

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An easy way to plan nutritious meals is to use the plate method. If you have diabetes, the plate method can help you choose healthy meals and manage your blood sugar. You can also use the plate method if you want to lose or maintain weight.

Most people can follow the plate method. However, if you are following a specific eating plan prescribed for a medical condition, such as diabetes, be sure to check with your health care provider before making any changes in your eating plan.

To use the plate method, follow these easy steps to plan your meals:

1. Start with a 9-inch plate. A 9-inch plate may be smaller than the plate you usually use.
2. Pretend you are drawing a line down the middle of your plate. Fill half the plate with nonstarchy vegetables.
3. Divide the other half of your plate into two equal sections.
4. Fill one of the sections, or one quarter of your plate, with a carbohydrate food.
5. Fill the remaining section, or the remaining quarter of your plate, with a protein food.

6. For foods that include both carbohydrates and protein, like pasta with meat sauce, fill half of your plate with the mixed dish and half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables.
7. Use small amounts of healthy fats. Healthy fats might be the cooking oils, like olive oil, used to prepare foods or might be foods like nuts or seeds added for flavor.
8. If you choose a drink other than milk to go with your meal, choose a calorie-free option like water, unsweetened tea or coffee.



Calorie Free Drinks, such as:

- Water
- Unsweetened Coffee
- Unsweetened Tea



Carbohydrate Foods, such as:

Grains, such as

- White or brown rice
- Breads, tortillas, rolls or pastas
- Hot and cold cereals
- Crackers
- Snacks: Pretzels, popcorn, chips

**Choose whole grains at least half of the time.*

Starchy Vegetables, such as

- Potatoes (white and sweet potatoes)
- Green peas
- Corn
- Winter squash
- Dried beans and peas (navy beans, pinto beans, kidney beans)

Fruits, such as

- Berries
- Apples
- 100 percent juice
- Peaches
- Banana
- Grapefruit

**Choose fruits that are fresh, frozen or canned in juice.*

Dairy Foods, such as

- Milk
- Calcium-fortified soy milk
- Yogurt

**Choose low-fat or fat-free and unsweetened dairy foods*

*As you choose your meals and snacks, choose a variety of different types of carbohydrate foods. Talk with your healthcare provider to determine the types and amounts of carbohydrate foods you need at meals and snacks.



Protein Foods, such as:

- Fish and seafood
- Poultry
- Lean pork or beef
- Tofu
- Eggs
- Low-fat cheese

Nonstarchy Vegetables, such as:

- Spinach
- Carrots
- Tomatoes
- Green Beans
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Cucumber
- Onions
- Salad Greens
- Greens (Turnip, Mustard, Collard, Kale)

**Choose fresh, frozen or reduced-sodium canned vegetables.*

References

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