

Diabetes: Using the Plate Format to Plan Meals

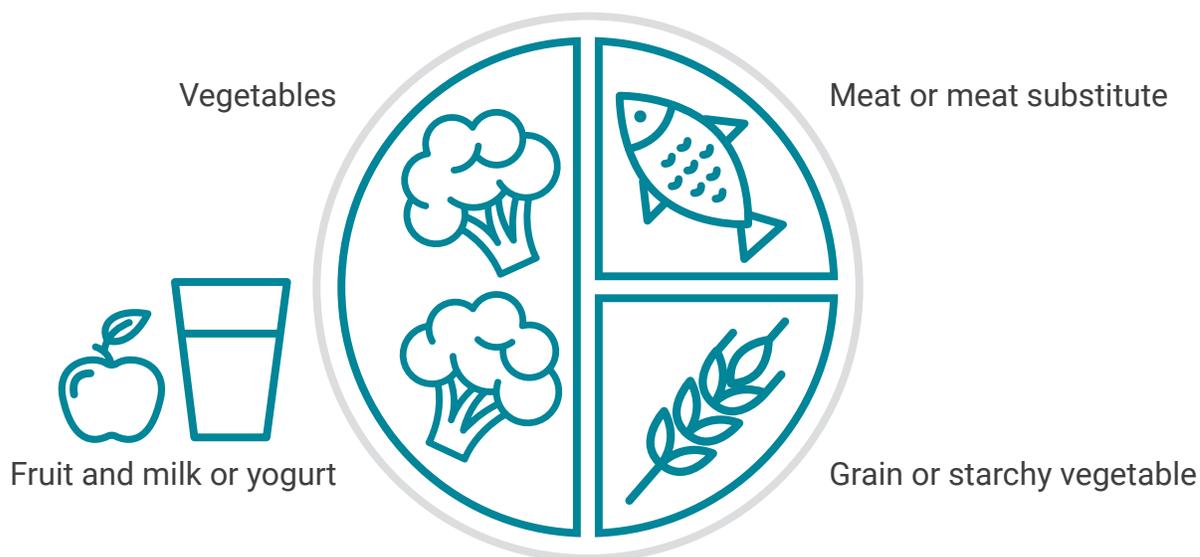
What is the plate format?

The plate format is a simple way to help you manage how you eat. You plan meals by learning how much space each food should take on a plate.

Using the plate format will help you spread carbohydrate throughout the day, which will help keep your blood sugar level within your target range.

How do you use it?

In general, you put vegetables on half your plate. Add meat or meat substitutes on one-quarter of the plate, and put a grain or starchy vegetable (such as brown rice or a potato) on the final quarter of the plate. To this you can add a small piece of fruit and some low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt, depending on your carbohydrate goal for each meal.



TIPS FOR USING THE PLATE FORMAT

- Make sure that you are not using an oversized plate. A 9-inch plate is best. Many restaurants use larger plates.
- You can estimate serving size using the size of your fist as about 1 cup or about 1 medium whole fruit.
- Once you get used to using the plate format, you can use it when you eat out.
- If you have questions about how to use the plate format, keep a list. Talk to your doctor, a dietitian, or a diabetes educator about your concerns.

What are your choices?

A dietitian or diabetes educator can help you learn how many servings or portions of each food you need each day. See the table that follows for a few examples in each food group:

Food groups for the plate format	
Non-starchy vegetables (½ of the plate)	Choose some (but you can leave vegetables out at breakfast): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup raw leafy vegetables• ½ cup other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw
Bread, starch, grains (¼ of the plate)	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 slice of bread• 1 6-inch tortilla• ½ cup cooked cereal, pasta, rice, or other cooked grain• 1 small potato
Lean protein (¼ of the plate)	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish• (Counts as equal to 1 ounce of meat): 1 tablespoon peanut butter, 1 egg, 1 ounce of cheese
Milk or yogurt (every meal)	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 ounces fat-free or 1% milk• 6 ounces low-fat, sugar-free yogurt
Small piece of fruit (every meal)	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 piece of fresh fruit that's about the size of a tennis ball• ½ cup frozen, cooked, or canned fruit• Small handful of dried fruit or a half cup (4 ounces) of 100% fruit juice

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