

Easy Diabetes Meal Planning

You already have the perfect meal planning tool in your kitchen. In fact, you probably have lots of them. They're your plates! With the plate method of diabetes meal planning, you can leave your measuring tools and calculator behind. All you need is a bit of guidance and a 9-inch plate.

Remember, whatever meal planning approach you choose, the basic principles are the same. Your meals should be tasty and nourishing. They should offer a balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fats and feature a variety of food groups. Your overall diet should help you achieve your individualized blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight goals. Check with your healthcare provider for personal advice.

Diabetes Plate	
Set Up Your Plate	Draw an imaginary line down the middle of your 9-inch plate. Mark one half of your plate for non-starchy vegetables. Divide the other half of the plate into two equal parts. Mark one section for protein-rich foods and one section for starchy foods.
Non-Starchy Vegetables	Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables. Choose one, two, or as many as you'd like. Eat salads or cooked vegetables or both. A few options include broccoli, bell peppers, carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, eggplant, fennel, kale, lettuce, radish, spinach, tomatoes, and zucchini. These foods are so low in calories and carbohydrates that you can double your serving if you're still hungry.
Protein	Select your protein-rich foods. Your choices are nearly limitless and include fish, shellfish, beef, pork, lamb, poultry, cottage cheese, eggs, tofu, black beans, and lentils. For the sake of your heart, make lean choices most often. For example, skip the sausage and hot dogs, trim the fat from beef, and discard poultry skin. Don't worry that tofu, beans, and lentils have carbohydrate in them. They are loaded with fiber and other health-shielding nutrients and can play an important role in a diabetes meal plan. If necessary, you can trim the portion of your starchy food in the next section to compensate for these carbohydrates.
Starchy/Grain Foods	Place a starchy vegetable or a grain in the other small section. Some choices include white, red, purple, and sweet potatoes, lima beans, corn, grits, pasta, wheat berries, farro, quinoa, rice, and barley. It's smart to opt for whole grains over refined grains most of the time.
Dairy/Fruit	Round out your meal with a glass of low-fat milk or a piece of fruit or both, depending on your individualized carbohydrate allowances and blood sugar goals.