

The Idaho Plate Method for Diabetes Management

The Idaho Plate Method is a visual guide for healthy eating with diabetes. All foods can fit into the Idaho Plate Method. It encourages you to eat a variety of different foods and includes servings from all food groups in each meal. The meal plan is designed to provide approximately 1400 calories for the entire day. Each meal has 45 grams of carbohydrate or 3 carbohydrate choices. The foods that provide these carbohydrates are starches, fruits, and dairy.

To eat according to the Idaho Plate Method, begin with a nine-inch plate. This may be considered a small plate by some people's standards, but a nine-inch plate allows for just the right size in food portions. Even if you only have a nine-inch plate, you may be thinking that you can stack a lot of food on that plate. Well, in order to take control of your diabetes, you do not want to go overboard with the food. The Idaho Plate Method suggests that your food should be no greater than one-inch high on the plate.

Below lists what to eat if you want to follow the Idaho Plate Method:

Fill 1/2 of the plate (approximately 1 cup) with non-starchy vegetables:

- Lettuce, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, mushrooms, onions, garlic, beets, green beans, broccoli, celery, carrots, cauliflower, and/or tomatoes.

Fill 1/4 of the plate with high protein foods:

- 3 ounces meat, poultry, fish, or tofu
- 1-2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1/3 cup nuts
- 2 ounces cheese

Fill 1/4 of the plate with starchy foods

- 1 slice of bread
- 1/2 cup cooked or 3/4 cup dry non-sweetened cereal
- 1/3 cup cooked pasta or rice
- 6-inch tortillas
- 1/2 cup dried beans or lentils
- 1/2 cup potatoes, corn, or peas

Add a small serving of fruit:

- A small piece of fruit (similar in size to a tennis ball)
- 1/2 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit.

Add a serving of dairy:

- 1 cup milk
- 6-8 ounces light yogurt
- 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding.

You may be thinking that you will not always want to eat according to the Idaho Plate Method? The Idaho Plate Method is flexible and allows you to substitute one type of carbohydrate for another. For example if you want two starches at one meal, you would then omit the fruit or dairy to make up for the addition. However, eating according to the original method gives you the most variety and nutrition.

What about dessert? Dessert may occasionally be substituted for the fruit serving. However, because desserts often contain a lot of sugar and fat, eat them in moderation. Moderation means eating small portions every once in a while, like one or two times a week.