



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **LEADER TRAINING GUIDE**

#### **Eating Healthy with Diabetes**

##### **Objectives:**

After this lesson, participants will be able to:

- 1) Understand the importance of eating healthy with diabetes
- 2) Understand how the foods we eat affects our blood sugar
- 3) Plan meals using The Plate Method
- 4) Know how to use The Plate Method at home, at restaurants, and during special occasions

##### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

Eating a healthy, well balanced diet is important for people with Diabetes. The food we eat directly affects our blood sugar levels. The Diabetes Plate Method was developed by the American Diabetes Association to help people living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes but it can be used by anyone wanting to follow a healthful eating plan. Eating portioned, balanced meals that include whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and lean proteins can help people manage their blood sugar levels.

##### **Lesson:**

#### **Healthy Eating with Diabetes**

##### **What is Diabetes?**

Diabetes is a condition that causes your blood sugar levels to rise too high. Glucose, which is the main type of sugar found in your blood, is the body's main source of energy. During the digestion process, the food you eat is broken down into nutrients your body needs. Carbohydrates (breads, grains, and pasta) breakdown into sugar (glucose) which is released into the bloodstream.

Insulin, which is a hormone made in the pancreas, helps the sugar in your blood enter your cells to be used as energy.

When a person has type 1 or type 2 diabetes, their body either does not produce insulin or does not use the insulin it does produce effectively. This causes the blood sugar levels to rise too high.

##### **How does food affect your blood sugar?**

A healthy lifestyle is important when living with diabetes. A healthful eating plan can help you better manage your blood sugar levels and reduce your risk of developing diabetic complications.

## What should someone with diabetes eat?

The American Diabetes Association has stated that there is not one specific diet or meal plan that is specific for people with diabetes. This is because everyone is different; what works for one person may not work for someone else.

Instead, the American Diabetes Association recommends eating nutritious, well-balanced meals that include whole foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. It is also important to limit highly processed foods and avoid foods that contain trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oils.

## What other factors should someone consider when developing a healthy eating plan?

### Portion Control

Portion control is also important when establishing a healthy eating pattern. Portion control focuses on eating the amount of food your body needs to lose or maintain a healthy weight. Portion control also helps us manage the amount of carbs we eat, which helps prevent our blood sugar from spiking after we eat. Each person is different, so it is important that you talk to your doctor to determine how much food your body needs each day.

When eating prepackaged foods or drinks, read the nutrition label to determine what the recommended serving size and amount of carbs, protein, and fat is per serving. Remember, for most people with diabetes no food is off limits, but moderation is key!

### Meal Timing

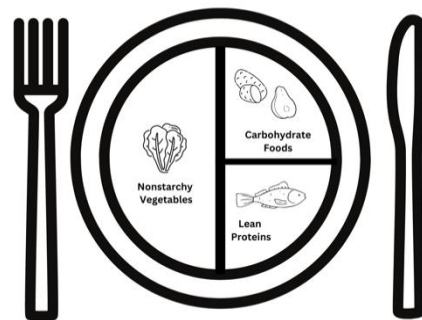
Meal timing is also important when managing your blood sugar. For most people with diabetes, it is recommended that you eat breakfast within one hour of waking up. Meals should then be eaten every 4 to 5 hours after that. Snacks should be eaten in between meals if you are hungry.

### The Diabetes Plate Method

The Diabetes Plate Method is a simple way to plan nutritionally balanced meals that can help you manage your blood sugar levels. The plate method helps you create portioned meals that include a healthy balanced of nonstarchy vegetables, carbohydrates and lean proteins.

To create a healthy plate, follow these five simple steps:

1. Start with a 9-inch round plate
2. Fill half the plate with non-starchy vegetable  
Examples: lettuce, spinach, green beans, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, and cauliflower



3. Fill a quarter of the plate with a lean protein  
Examples: chicken, lean beef or pork, tofu, fish, and other seafoods
4. Fill the last quarter of the plate with carbohydrates or starchy vegetables  
Examples: Whole grain breads, rice, pasta, beans, peas, potatoes, green peas, corn, whole grain high fiber cereal.
5. Have a low-calorie drink with little to no artificial sweeteners or sugar  
Examples: water, unsweetened tea, or coffee

#### Additional Notes about the Plate Method

- \*On the side, you may have a small bowl of fruit or dairy such as yogurt with fruit.
- \*Try to cook with healthy fats like olive oil or canola oil instead of butter or margarine.

### Group Discussion

#### Discussion Topic 1:

As a group, brainstorm healthy meal ideas using the Plate Method. (see examples below)

#### **Meal 1:** Lemon Rosemary Chicken with Collards and a Sweet Potato

**Lean Protein:** Lemon Chicken with Rosemary and Garlic

**Nonstarchy Vegetables:** Collards

**Carbohydrate foods:** Sweet potato

#### **Meal 2:** Avocado Toast with Turkey Bacon and Tomatoes with a side of Greek Yogurt topped with Blueberries

**Lean Protein:** Turkey Bacon, Greek Yogurt

**Nonstarchy Vegetables:** Tomato, Avocado

**Carbohydrate foods:** Whole-wheat Bread, Blueberries

#### **Meal 3:** Turkey Meatloaf with Mashed Red Potatoes and a Green Salad with Orange, Avocado, and Onion

**Lean Protein:** Ground Turkey

**Nonstarchy Vegetables:** Salad Greens, Onions

**Carbohydrate foods:** Potatoes, Orange

Meal Ideas and Recipes found at:

<https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/articles/create-your-plate-simplify-meal-planning-with-the-plate-method.html>

## **Discussion Topic 2:**

We can utilize The Plate Method at home, fast-food restaurants, buffets, social events, and more. As a group, discuss ways you can use The Plate Method in your everyday life. (see examples below)

### **Example 1: Using the Plate Method at Fast Food Restaurants**

When eating at a fast food restaurant, consider ordering your hamburger on a lettuce wrap or whole grain bun. Swap the fries for a side salad or sliced apples.

### **Example 2: Using the Plate Method when Planning Weekly Lunches**

If you meal prep, consider buying pre-portioned containers that model The Healthy Plate or use measuring cups and spoons to help you correctly portion out your meals. Chicken Salad with Whole Wheat Pita is one lunch idea that can be packed ahead of time and enjoyed on the go. Keep your favorite sugar-free salad dressing in a separate container to add when you are ready to eat. (Important: Some dressings can be high in carbohydrates and sugar. Check out the [DiabetesFoodHub.Org](http://DiabetesFoodHub.Org) for diabetes friendly salad dressing recipes.)

### **Example 3: Using the Plate Method at Social Events, Pot Lucks, or Buffets**

When going through the buffet line, keep the healthy plate in mind. Fill up half of your plate with nonstarchy vegetables like green beans, steamed broccoli, or a side salad. Choose a lean meat to fill up another quarter of your plate and then fill up the last quarter of your plate with a carbohydrate, bowl of fruit, or whole grain roll. Consider using a salad plate for your main entrée to help with portion control.

## **Lesson Summary:**

It is important to follow a healthful eating plan when living with diabetes. The food we eat directly affects our blood sugar. Using The Diabetes Plate Method, watching our portion size, and paying attention to our meal timing are all tools we can use when establishing a healthy eating pattern.

## **Suggested Activities:**

As time allows, use the following activity to help reinforce topics discussed during the lesson. This activity can be done individually, in groups, or as an entire class.

### **Activity: You're Invited! Planning the Perfect Dinner Party Menu**

For this activity, separate the group into teams. Each team will be tasked with planning a dinner party menu using The Plate Method. At the end of the activity, all menus will be read aloud and the group will vote on which menu they like best.

Instructions: Provide each team with a paper plate and crayons, colored pencils, or other writing utensil. Have participants draw lines separating the plate into the three sections represented on The Healthy Plate;  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the plate will be for Vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  for Carbohydrates,  $\frac{1}{4}$  for Lean Protein.

Inform participants that each group is part of a “Catering Team” that will be competing for the chance to cater your upcoming dinner party. Task the teams with coming up with a dinner party menu that incorporates all parts of The Healthy Plate. They can use their paper plate to plan and write out their menus. Give teams between 10-15 minutes to create an enticing menu that they will pitch to the group. Participants can use the paper plates to write out their menu and jot down any other notes. Once all teams have created their meals, have one person from each group “pitch” their catering menu to the rest of the class. After all groups have given their catering pitch, the group votes (by a show of hands) which menu they like the best.

\*Groups are encouraged to be creative when pitching their menu to the rest of the group. Encourage participants to use flavorful language to entice the group into choosing their menu.

(Example: If you choose our catering team, your dinner party guest will be served zesty lemon peppered salmon, with freshly steamed asparagus and garlic parmesan roasted sweet potatoes.)

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**Sources/References:**

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Session 2 HED Resource Guide, Health Extension for Diabetes curriculum developed by Clemson University Extension Service