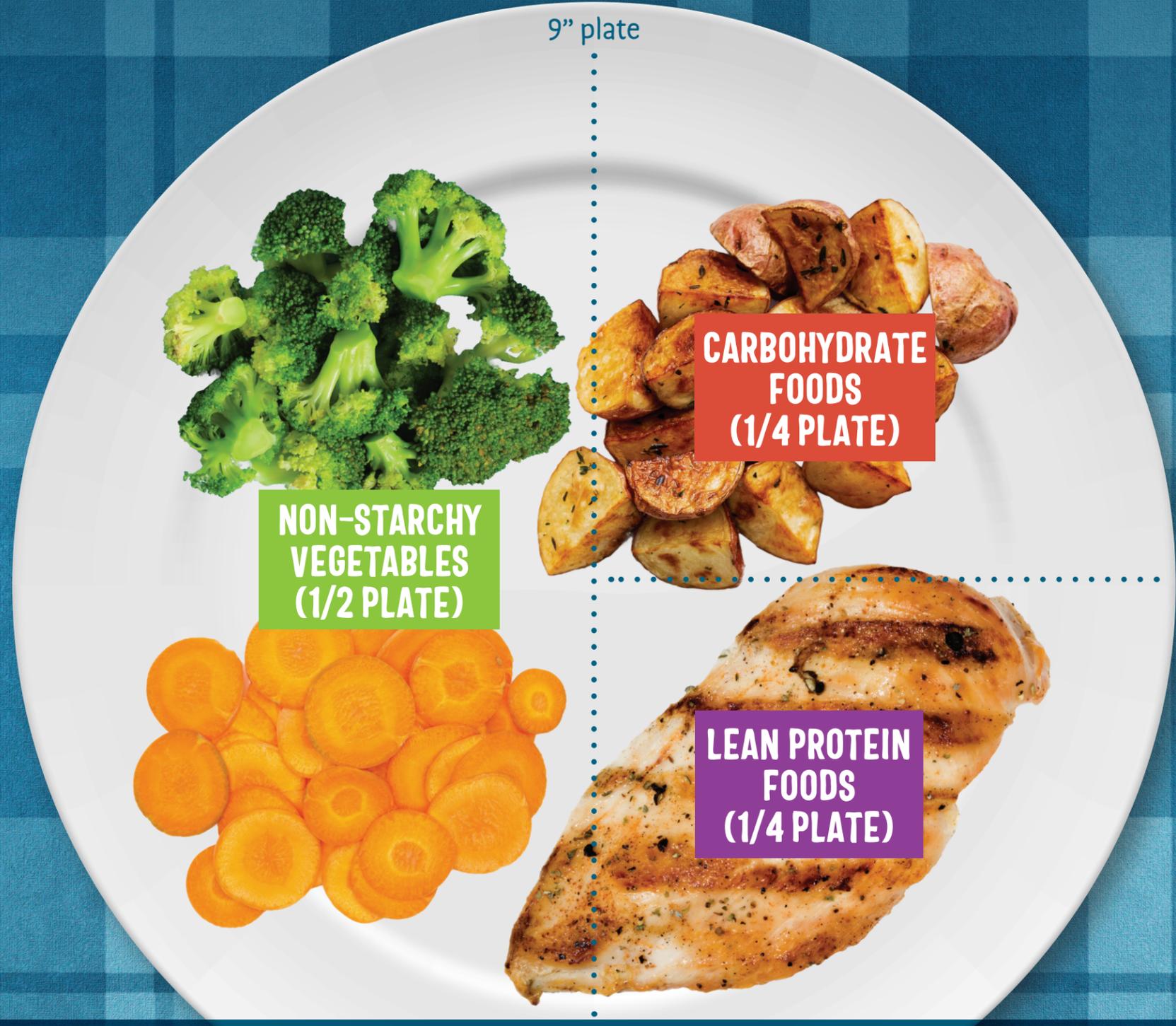




# PLAN YOUR PLATE FOR DIABETES



Choose low-cost recipes and meals. Recipes with fewer ingredients are often cheaper and quick to make. A great place to look for recipes is [diabetesfoodhub.org](http://diabetesfoodhub.org).

For more diabetes resources, visit [alabamapublichealth.gov/diabetes/self-management.html](http://alabamapublichealth.gov/diabetes/self-management.html). Here you can also find a list of Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support classes being offered across Alabama. Talk to your healthcare provider for a referral.

## DIABETES INFORMATION

- There is no “diabetes diet.” See a registered dietitian (RD) to address your individual nutrition needs.
- Special or diabetic foods are not necessary to manage blood sugar.
- Aim to eat the same amount of foods at about the same time each day.
- Check your blood sugar often to see how your body reacts to certain foods. Keep a record of your numbers to share with your healthcare team.
- Be physically active and work towards a healthy weight. Modest amounts of weight loss can improve your blood sugar and health outcomes.
- Some people can manage their diabetes with diet alone, while others may need medications to help manage their blood sugar. Be sure to take all medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- Caring for your feet is very important to avoid serious foot complications when you have diabetes. Take good care of your feet and see your doctor right away if you see any signs of foot problems.

## TIPS FOR PLANNING A HEALTHY PLATE:

- Fill your plate with colorful foods for a diet rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Non-starchy vegetables and fruits are great food choices – aim for 5-9 servings each day.
- Limit foods with a lot of sugar such as cakes and candy. Save these for special days.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, fruit drinks, sport/energy drinks, and sweet tea, which can spike your blood sugar and offer no nutritional value.
- Replace whole milk with 1% low-fat or skim milk.
- Use herbs and spices in place of salt when cooking and eat fewer salty foods like bacon and potato chips. Rinse canned vegetables before cooking.
- Replace refined grains like white rice and white bread with nutritious whole grains such as brown rice and whole wheat bread.
- Reduce calories by baking, grilling, boiling, steaming, or roasting foods instead of frying. Incorporate healthy fats by using canola or olive oil when cooking and including avocados and nuts into meals and snacks.
- Including non-starchy vegetables at breakfast can help fill you up and manage your blood sugar. Try an egg sandwich with sauteed spinach or kale, a veggie omelet, or veggie hash. Experiment with it and see what works for you.



## NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES (1/2 PLATE)

These are lower in carbohydrates, so they do not raise blood sugar very much. They are also high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber, making them an important part of a healthy diet.

- Asparagus
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage (Green, Red, Napa, Bok Choy, Chinese)
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Leafy Greens (Kale, Collards, Mustard Greens, Swiss Chard)
- Green Beans (Pea Pods, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap Peas)
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Onions
- Peppers
- Salad Greens (Lettuce, Spinach, Arugula, Endive, etc.)
- Squash (Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Chayote, Spaghetti Squash)
- Tomatoes

## BEVERAGES

- Water is the best choice of drink because it contains no calories or carbohydrates and does not affect blood sugar.
- Other sugar free drink options include:
  - Carbonated or mineral water
  - Club soda
  - Coffee, unsweetened or with sugar substitute
  - Diet soft drinks
  - Drink mixes (powder or liquid drops), sugar free
  - Tea, unsweetened or with sugar substitute
  - Tonic water, sugar free
  - Flavored water, sugar free

## PROTEIN FOODS (1/4 PLATE)

Lean proteins are lower in fat and saturated fat, making them a heart healthy choice. Keep in mind that some plant-based protein foods (like beans and legumes) are also high in carbohydrates.

- Low-Fat Cheese and Low-Fat Cottage Cheese
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Fish (Salmon, Cod, Tuna, Tilapia, Swordfish, etc.)
- Shellfish (Shrimp, Scallops, Clams, Mussels, Lobster)
- Lean Beef (Chuck, Round, Sirloin, Flank, Tenderloin)
- Lean Pork (Center Loin Chop or Tenderloin)
- Lean Deli Meats
- Turkey
- **Plant Based Sources of Protein**
  - Beans
  - Lentils
  - Field Peas (Black Eye, Crowder, Purple Hull)
  - Hummus
  - Falafel
  - Nuts and Nut Butters
  - Edamame
  - Tofu and Tempeh
  - Plant-Based Meat Substitutes

## COMBINATION FOODS

- “Combination” foods combine different components together. When choosing these, identify the different foods in the dish and think about where they would fit on the plate.
- For example, in a slice of pizza, the crust would be the carbohydrate, the tomato sauce and any vegetable topping would be the non-starchy vegetables, and the cheese and meat toppings would be the protein. Try to prepare portions the same way you normally would if the components were not combined. If eating pizza, choose a thinner crust to reduce the carbohydrate portions and stick to only one or two slices. Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables or a salad.

Examples of combination foods include:

- Casserole-type entrees (tuna noodle, lasagna, spaghetti with meatballs, macaroni and cheese)
- Chili with beans
- Stews
- Burrito
- Pizza
- Pocket sandwich
- Pot pie
- Coleslaw
- Pasta salad
- Potato salad
- Tuna/chicken salad
- Soups

## CARBOHYDRATE FOODS (1/4 PLATE)

These foods are higher in carbohydrates and have the greatest effect on blood sugar. Limiting portions to 1/4 your plate helps keep blood sugar from rising too high after meals.

### Whole Grains

- Brown Rice
- Bulgur
- Oats/Oatmeal
- Polenta
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Whole Grain Bread, Pasta, and Tortillas

### Starchy Vegetables

- Acorn Squash
- Butternut squash
- Green Peas
- Parsnips
- Plantain
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Sweet Potato/Yam

### Beans and Legumes

- Black Beans
- Kidney Beans
- Pinto Beans
- Garbanzo Beans

### Fruit and Dried Fruit

### Some Dairy Products

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Milk Substitutes (e.g. Soy or Almond Milk)

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