

## Diabetes and Nutrition

Many people with diabetes are prescribed special diets to control the level of sugar in their blood. If they do not follow their special diet, they may get sick due to too much or too little sugar in their blood. Here are two different tools that direct support professionals (DSPs) can use to assist the people they support to plan meals.

### Carbohydrates (Carbs) Counting

People can use this plan to count the number of carbs in a meal. Carbs are one of the three main nutrients found in foods and drinks along with proteins and fats. Carbs have a direct effect on your blood sugar.

#### For foods that have a nutrition label

Add up the grams of carbs per serving.  
 This nutrition label tells you:

- Serving size - 1½ cups.
- Servings in the container - 2.
- **Total carb grams per serving - 46.**
- Other nutrition information, including calories, protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals per serving.

#### For foods that don't have a nutrition label

Like fruits and vegetables, use an app, website, or book to estimate the amount of carbs.

#### Remember to count carbs in beverages.

Fruit juices, soft drinks, fruit drinks, sports drinks, and energy drinks can contain many carbs.

### The Plate Method

The plate method is a visual way to make sure that your meal consists of low-carb (non-starchy) vegetables and lean protein. It can help limit the serving size of higher-carb foods to prevent spikes in blood sugar levels.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
2 servings per container	
<b>Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)</b>	
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>240</b>
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	<b>5%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>8%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 5mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 430mg	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 46g	<b>17%</b>
Dietary Fiber 7g	<b>25%</b>
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	<b>4%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

### Start with a 9-inch dinner plate:

- Fill half with **non-starchy vegetables**, such as salad, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and carrots.
- Fill one quarter with a **lean protein**, such as chicken, turkey, beans, tofu, or eggs.
- Fill a quarter with a **grain or starchy food**, such as potatoes, rice, or pasta (or skip the starch altogether and double up on non-starchy veggies).



Source: Centers for Disease Prevention and Control

### Portion Sizes Make a Difference

It's important that portion sizes be limited to one serving, this can help with managing weight and blood sugar. Here is a guide for estimating portion sizes anywhere!

1. **3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry**  
Palm of hand (no fingers)

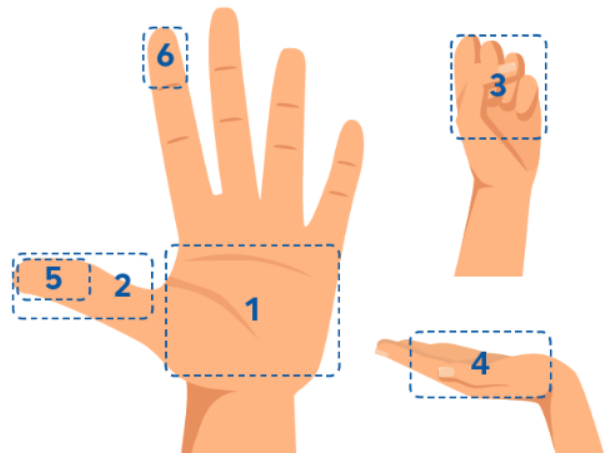
2. **1 ounce of meat or cheese**  
Thumb (tip to base)

3. **1 cup or 1 medium fruit**  
Fist

4. **1–2 ounces of nuts or pretzels**  
Cupped hand

5. **1 tablespoon**  
Thumb tip (tip to 1<sup>st</sup> joint)

6. **1 teaspoon**  
Fingertip (tip to 1<sup>st</sup> joint)



Source: Centers for Disease Prevention and Control

### Additional Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/index.html>
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/>