



Lesson 5: Let's Plate It Out- The Plate Method Approach to Diabetes Meal Planning

This lesson contains meal-planning information that can be useful to those with or without diabetes. For those with diabetes, this general information is to be adapted to a participant's meal plan as recommended by their health care provider.

Getting Ready

1. Review lesson plan before each session.
2. Copy handout and follow-up questions.
3. Gather supplies needed for lesson and activities.

Supplies Needed

1. Plate or Tupperware™ with raised dividers.
2. Food drawings (to be downloaded with this lesson).
3. Handout: Make black and white copies of any of the Food Drawings for your participants.

Beginning the Lesson

1. Introduce yourself by name and the organization you represent.
2. Summarize the lesson by giving the objectives. Let the group know the lesson will be informal and they can ask questions anytime.

Objectives

Participants will:

1. Learn benefits of weight loss and following a healthy eating plan.
2. Learn the meal planning strategies used in the "plate method."
3. View portions of commonly eaten foods.

Activity

"A Picture is worth a 1000 Words." Descriptions below.

Script

There are many wonderful benefits to following a healthy meal plan. The most noticeable benefit is losing weight. A weight loss of 10-20 pounds can improve blood sugar control as well as lowering your blood pressure. Once you have shed those pounds, it is likely that you will need less diabetes or blood pressure medicine. Weight loss also lessens the pain of arthritis by relieving the pressure of your joints...plus you will have more energy!

**“Let’s Plate It Out!”**

Using the container with raised dividers, you will demonstrate a meal plan known as the “plate method.” This demonstration provides a visual for healthy eating, and was created for diabetic meal instruction. However, it is the healthy way for everyone to eat, which is why we included it in this particular lesson.

Hold up the container. You can see that this nine-inch plate is the size of an average plate you might use at home. The nice thing about having the plate divided is that it helps you portion out your foods while encouraging you to eat a variety. I am going to show you a way to plan your meals without measuring or weighing your food. This method can be used for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Since this plate is divided for us, we can just fill in each section. Here’s what you want to remember:

1. Use a nine-inch plate or one of similar size to the one here (*hold up*).
2. For lunch and dinner: fill one fourth of the plate with starchy foods such as a roll, a piece of cornbread, mashed potatoes, corn, pastas, rice or any kind of peas or beans. Your portion sizes of these foods should be about the thickness of your finger (which is about 1/2 inch).
3. Next, fill one fourth of the plate with a serving of protein. The best choices are lean meats (tenderloin, flank steak, ground round or ground chuck), fish (grilled or broiled), poultry (baked or grilled). Other meat alternatives that count as a protein source are lower fat cheeses (usually the white cheeses such as mozzarella, Swiss, provolone) and beans, peas and lentils. If you want peanut butter as your protein source, limit the serving to two tablespoons.
4. Fill the remaining half of the plate with non-starchy vegetables like tomatoes, green leafy vegetables such as spinach, turnip or collard greens, or other low-carbohydrate vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes, zucchini, green beans, and broccoli. These foods are low in carbohydrate and high in vitamins and minerals.



5. Side dishes include a serving of fruit: one cup fresh, 1/2 cup canned fruit (such as fruit cocktail or canned peaches in light syrup or own juice) or four ounces fruit juice and one-cup serving of low- fat milk or yogurt.

6. Planning a breakfast is slightly different. Half of the plate can have two servings of starch such as a cup of cereal and a cup of milk. Another option is a one piece of toast and one small piece of fruit or four ounces of juice. You may include a side dish such as a one-cup serving of low-fat milk or yogurt. The protein and vegetables are optional.

Other Tips:

1. Choose high fiber foods that will help you to feel full longer and have other health benefits for your cholesterol and digestive tract. Fruits, vegetables, beans, and nuts, oatmeal, and whole wheat breads are all high in fiber. For extra fiber, eat apples, and other fruits and veggies with their skins on.

2. The meal planning technique we discussed today is a way to portion out foods without measuring them, but it is a good idea to measure your foods in the beginning to educate yourself.

3. Watch the added fat that can creep into the foods you eat. Eat fewer fried foods. Use diet margarine and lower fat salad dressings in small amounts if desired.

Remember the benefits of having a healthy, balanced diet! Eating well can help improve blood glucose control, which will help to prevent the complications of diabetes we have discussed in a previous lesson. A recent study showed that people with diabetes who followed a healthy meal plan, similar to that of the plate method, decreased A1c as much as 1%. *Does everyone remember what A1c is? It is like an average of your blood sugar levels from the past three-six months.* People with diabetes want their A1c to be 6.5% or less, but a 1% decrease will benefit you even if your A1c isn't 6.5% !

**The Diabetes Alphabet**

Today we talked about ways to eat well by using the plate method, which can help us to keep our meal portion at their proper size. Let's go over the diabetes alphabet, which "spells" the important ways to manage your diabetes. Let's say the alphabet now.

A for A1c Test- Check twice a year

B for Blood Pressure- Check at each doctor's visit

C for Cholesterol- Check once a year

D for Daily Exercise- Be physically active every day

E for Eating Well- Take down portion sizes, stay on your meal schedule

F for Foot Care- Check your feet for sores, blisters, or injuries every day

S for Sugar Testing- Check your blood sugar daily or as recommended by your doctor

Activity: "A Picture's worth a 1000 Words."

Hold up the downloadable pictures provided with this lesson.

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner Option #1

Dinner Option #2



References

Eating Out with Diabetes. The University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Services. Connie Crawley, MS, RD, LD- Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist. 13 May 2003

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