Control your diabetes For Life:

NUTRITION SERIES

Choosing Foods at Meals and Snacks

■ People with diabetes must balance foods high in carbohydrates and foods low in carbohydrates.

■ Low-carbohydrate foods include vegetables, meats and nuts, and fats.

■ High-carbohydrate foods include grains, fruits, milk, and sweets. These foods raise blood glucose.

■ In the 50/50 method, half of each meal is taken from the low-carbohydrate groups and half from the high-carbohydrate groups.

■ It helps to divide up high- and low-carbohydrate foods visually, keeping each on its own side of the plate or the table.

■ Eating extra vegetables can help you feel fuller and more satisfied after meals without raising your glucose levels.

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The Diabetes Food Guide Pyramid is very helpful as a guide for food choices during the course of a day. However, you want to balance these food choices during the day so that foods high in carbohydrate are not eaten *all at once.* For example, two to four servings of fruit and two to three servings of milk every day are recommended. But you would not want to consume all your fruit and milk servings at breakfast because this could be too much carbohydrate for your body to handle *at one time.*

50/50 Method

The purpose of the 50/50 method is to make meal planning and food selection easy for people with diabetes. The 50/50 method balances foods high in carbohydrate with foods low in carbohydrate. It works particularly well for lunch and dinner meals.

For most people, a good balance is to have about 50% (half) of servings from foods high in carbohydrate and about 50% (half) of servings from foods low in carbohydrate.

The food groups that contain significant amounts of carbohydrate are the grains, beans and starchy vegetables group; the fruits group; the milk group; and sweets. These foods raise blood glucose.

The food groups low in carbohydrate are the vegetables group; the meat and meat substitutes group; and fats. These foods do not cause blood glucose to go up.

It can help to think of placing foods high in carbohydrate on one side at a meal and foods low in carbohydrate on the other side.

How does this actually look when you sit down to eat? With some foods, you could actually place them on different sides of your plate and look to see if your plate is "balanced." Often, though, not everything we eat at lunch or dinner is on our plate. So we need to remember those foods—like salads, milk, a piece of fruit or dessert—that often aren't served on the plate. These foods also need to fit into the overall balance of a meal.

Here is another thing to remember: many dishes, such as enchiladas or pizza, are made up of foods from different food groups. For these dishes, you'll need to estimate how much is from each of the foods that make up the dish (see enchiladas, Example 6).

Vegetables can help you feel fuller and more satisfied after meals. An easy way to be sure to eat enough low-carbohydrate foods is to serve up double portions of vegetables. For example, a serving of cooked green beans on the Diabetes Food Guide Pyramid is 1/2 cup. If you take 1 cup of green beans, you've already got two servings on the low-carb side of your plate! Green salads are another case where it's easy to eat two servings. A serving of salad on the Diabetes Food Guide Pyramid is 1 cup. Fill a good-sized salad bowl, and you've likely dished up two cups. So again, you've got two servings of low-carbohydrate foods and are well on your way to getting the recommended servings of vegetables for the day. It's fine to have an extra low-carb serving from vegetables (see *carne adobada,* Example 8).

Here are nine examples of meals that you might commonly have for lunch or dinner. Each of these examples has two to three servings of foods that are high in carbohydrate and at least three servings of foods that are low in carbohydrate. Two to three high-carbohydrate foods are used as examples. The diet plan from your dietitian or diabetes educator may differ in the number of high-carbohydrate foods recommended for your meals. You should follow the recommendation from your dietitian or diabetes educator.

Even so, the 50/50 plan can be used for different levels of carbohydrate serving recommendations. For example, if four servings of carbohydrate foods are recommended for lunch for an active person, then four servings of low-carbohydrate foods provide a good balance.
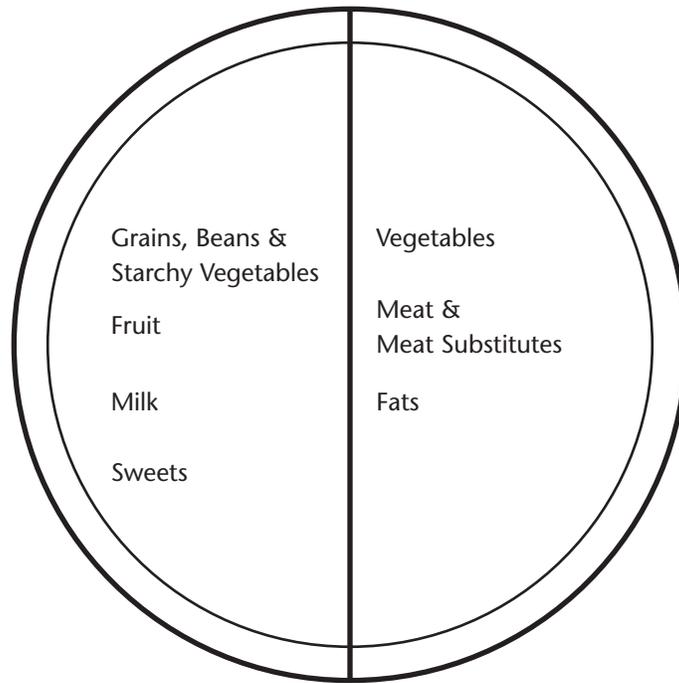
The 50/50 method doesn't work as well for breakfast because a lot of breakfast foods are high in carbohydrate. Try to include some protein at breakfast. Protein doesn't affect blood sugar, but it does increase satiety (feeling full). Most people can have 3 eggs per week. Add nuts to dry or cooked cereal. Have toast with peanut butter or a slice of cheese. Put peanut butter on pancakes or french toast. Control the overall amount of high carbohydrate foods eaten at breakfast. Follow the recommendations of your dietitian or diabetes educator. Table 1 gives examples of breakfasts that have 3 servings of high carbohydrate foods.

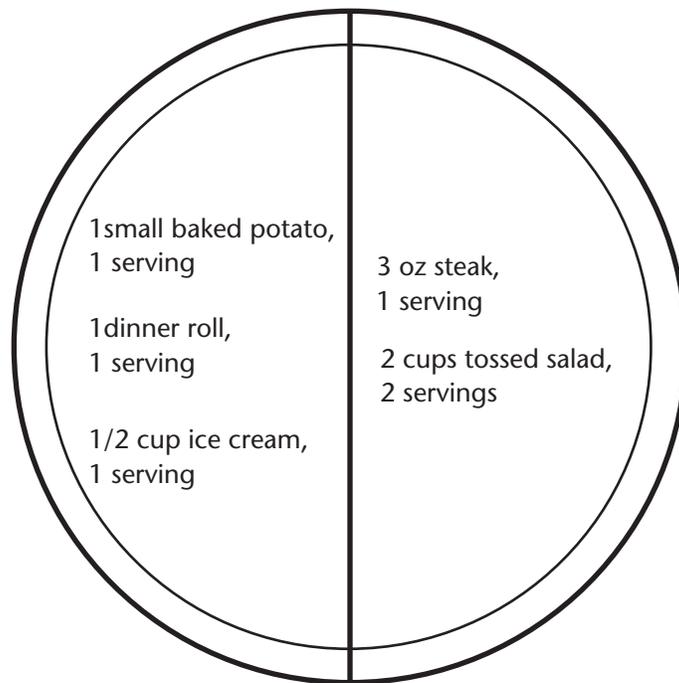"Remember those foods—like salads, milk, a piece of fruit or dessert—that often aren't served on the plate."
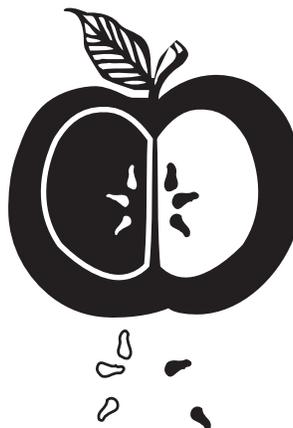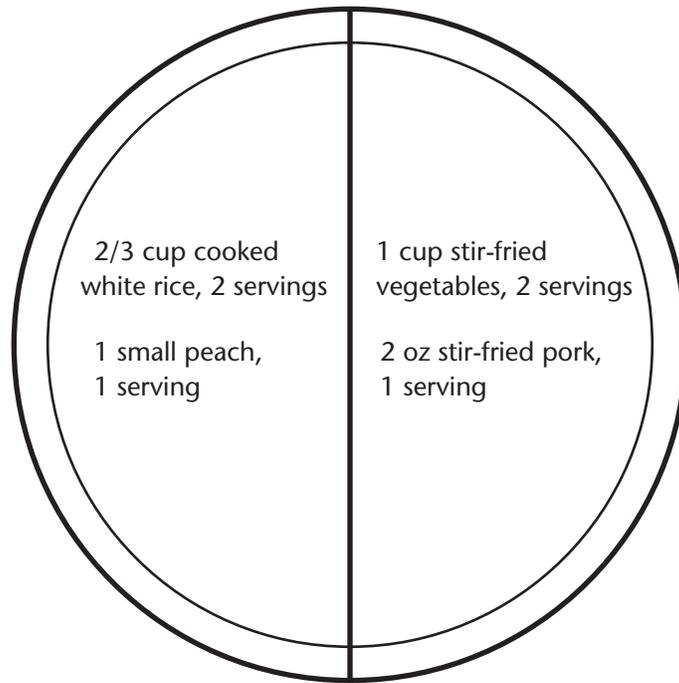
Table 1. What about breakfast?

		Calories	Carbohydrate (grams)	Servings
Oatmeal		347	41	
½ cup	Cooked oatmeal			1
½ cup	Milk			1
1 slice	Toast			1
1 handful	Pecans (low-carbohydrate food)			½
Dry Breakfast Cereal		350	44	
¾ cup	Oat rings			1
1 cup	Milk			1
1 slice	Toast			1
1-oz slice	American cheese (low-carbohydrate food)			½
Pancakes		450	38	
Three	4-inch pancakes			3
2 tablespoons	Peanut butter (low-carbohydrate food)			½
Egg and Breakfast Potatoes		322	40	
One	Poached egg (low-carbohydrate food)			½
1 slice	Toast			1
1 small	Potato, diced and cooked in non-stick skillet			1
1 cup	Milk			1
Breakfast Burrito		427	56	
One	Flour tortilla			2
One	Scrambled egg (low-carbohydrate food)			½
One	Small potato, diced			1
2 tablespoons	Green chile (low-carbohydrate food)			—
1 sprinkle	Grated cheese (low-carbohydrate food)			—

Example 1. 50/50 Method

Left half:
Grains, Beans &
Starchy Vegetables

Fruit

Milk

Sweets

Right half:
Vegetables

Meat &
Meat Substitutes

Fats

Example 2. Steak Dinner

Left half:
1small baked potato,
1 serving

1dinner roll,
1 serving

1/2 cup ice cream,
1 serving

Right half:
3 oz steak,
1 serving

2 cups tossed salad,
2 servings

2/3 cup cooked white rice, 2 servings

1 small peach, 1 serving

1 cup stir-fried vegetables, 2 servings

2 oz stir-fried pork, 1 serving

Example 4. Stir Fry

1/2 cup mashed potatoes, 1 serving

1/2 cup peas, 1 serving

1/2 cup milk, 1 serving

3 oz chicken breast, 1 serving

2 cups tossed salad, 2 servings

1 tablespoon salad dressing

Example 3. Chicken Dinner
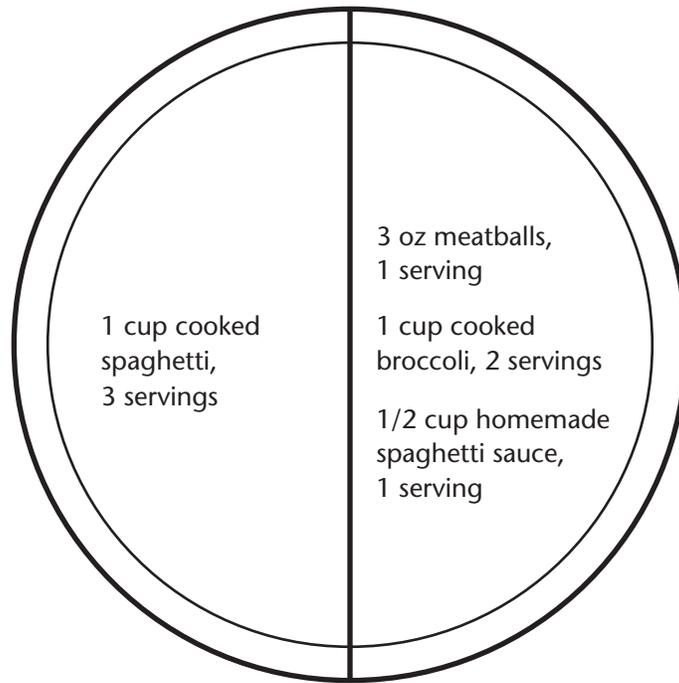
Example 5. Spaghetti Dinner

Left half: 1 cup cooked spaghetti, 3 servings

Right half:
3 oz meatballs, 1 serving

1 cup cooked broccoli, 2 servings

1/2 cup homemade spaghetti sauce, 1 serving

Example 6. Enchiladas

Left half:
2 corn tortillas, 2 servings

1/2 cup refried beans, 1 serving

Right half:
1/2 cup diced green chile, 1 serving

1/4 cup grated cheese, 1/2 serving

1 oz chicken, 1/2 serving

1 cup *quelites*, 2 serving

1 flour tortilla,
2 servings

1/2 cup refried beans,
1 serving

1/2 cup diced
tomato, 1 serving

1/2 cup chopped
lettuce,
1/2 serving

1 cup jicama slices,
2 serving

1/2 cup grated
cheddar cheese,
1 serving

Example 7. Bean Burrito

1/3 cup Spanish rice,
2 servings

1/2 cup refried beans,
1 serving

3 oz *carne adovada*,
1 serving

1 cup cabbage slaw,
2 servings

Example 8. *Carne Adovada*

1 piece fry bread,
2 servings

1/2 cup beans,
1 serving

1/2 cup diced
tomatoes,
1/2 serving

1/4 cup grated cheese,
1/2 serving

1/2 cup chopped
lettuce,
1/2 serving

1/2 cup cooked
summer squash,
2 servings

Example 9. Navajo Taco

1/2 cup potatoes,
1 serving

1/2 piece fry bread,
1 serving

1 small apple,
1 serving

3 oz mutton,
1 serving

3/4 cup squash
(in stew),
1 1/2 servings

1/4 cup carrots
(in stew),
1/2 servings

Example 10. Mutton Stew

Where to go for more information

■ Your health care provider

■ American Diabetes
Association:
 1-800-DIABETES

■ National Diabetes Education
Program:
 1-800-438-5383
 or visit the World Wide Web
 at **ndep.nih.gov** or
 www.cdc.gov

■ Your county Extension office