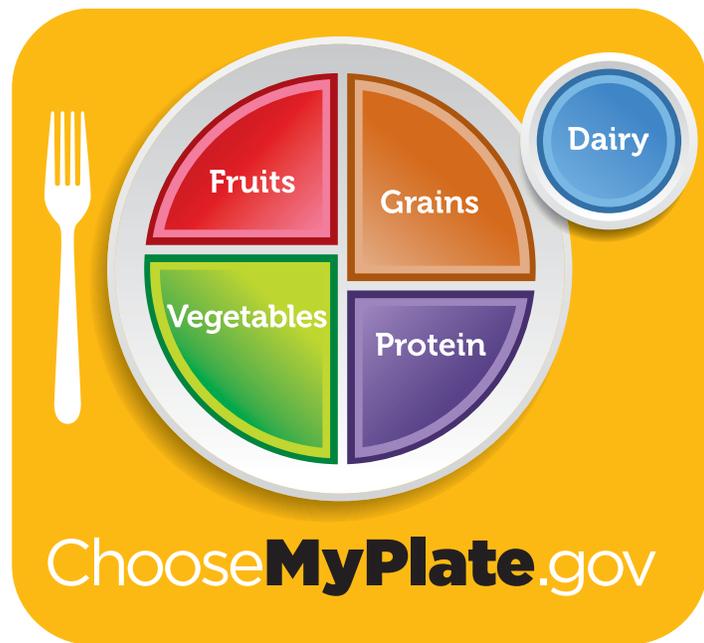


# HEALTHY EATING

## for Diabetes and High Blood Pressure

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Many of us are familiar with MyPlate as the recommended eating pattern for good health, as established by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. MyPlate focuses on including five food groups in our diets: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. There are specific recommendations for each of these food groups: focus on whole fruits, eat a variety of vegetables, make half your grains whole grains, choose a variety of protein, and move to low-fat or fat-free dairy. The idea is that these food choices, if made consistently throughout our various meals, can help us meet the dietary requirements of the various vitamins and minerals linked to good health. This is true for most Americans, hence why the Guidelines and MyPlate are so helpful.



Source: [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

There are instances, though, when the recommendation for dietary intake differs slightly, as is the case with chronic disease conditions such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. These conditions are to be managed under medical supervision, and typically include dietary recommendations that are linked with better health outcomes. Fortunately, there is also a great visual tool called the Diabetes Plate Method that can help us make better eating choices when faced with diabetes and high blood pressure.

The Diabetes Plate Method, as the name suggests, is powerful meal-planning tool for diabetics. The Plate Method has some things in common with the DASH diet, which has been shown to help lower blood pressure in both hypertensive and normotensive individuals. The Plate Method is as follows: use a 9-inch plate and divide it in half. Fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables; Divide the remaining half in two and fill one portion (a quarter of the plate) with lean proteins, and the other quarter of the plate with grain foods or starchy vegetables. You may have fruit or dairy on the side and be sure to choose healthy fats like olive oil, seeds, nuts, or avocado.



Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

By following the Plate Method, both individuals with diabetes and high blood pressure will ensure the following recommended best practices: 1. Increase consumption of non-starchy vegetables, since these provide fiber, vitamins and minerals (such as calcium, potassium, and magnesium) while minimally affecting blood sugar. 2. Choose lean proteins to minimize intake of saturated fats and cholesterol, which can lead to hardening and clogging of arteries. 3. Include fruits for added fiber, vitamins, and minerals, and dairy for calcium. 4. Include sources of good fats in the diet, as these can help cholesterol levels.

While MyPlate and the Diabetes Plate Method are both good starting points and general recommendations, it's important that you consult with your primary care provider and meet with a Registered Dietitian to develop your personalized eating plan.