

Choosing Foods at Meals and Snacks

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 of your fruit and milk servings at breakfast because this could be too much carbohydrate for your body to handle at one time.

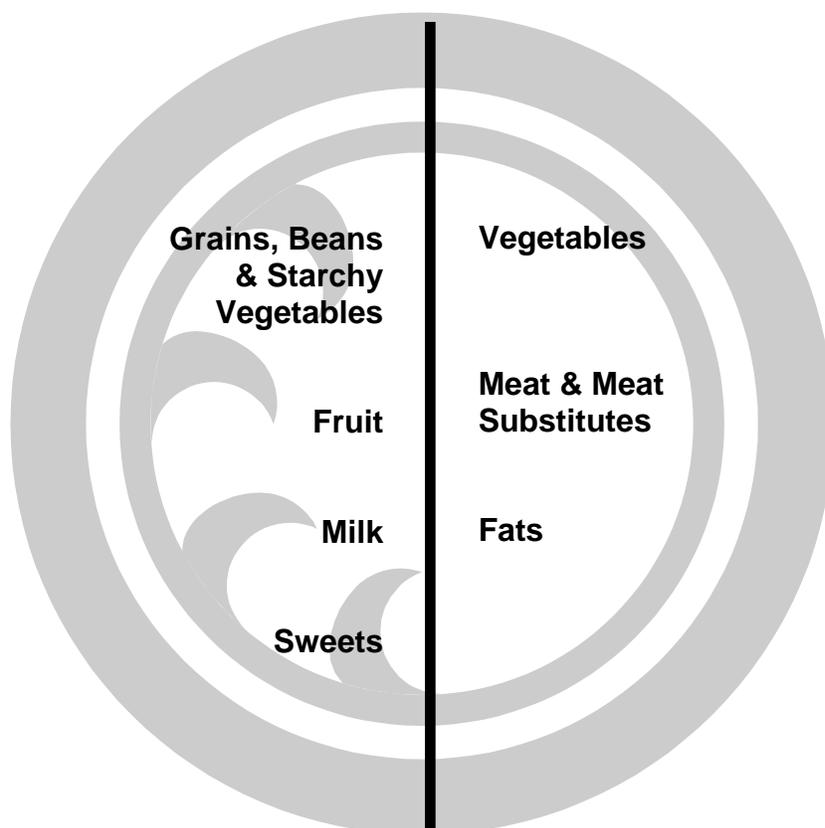
50/50 Method

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 carbohydrates are the Grains, Beans & 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 & 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? For 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 like enchiladas or pizza are made up of foods from different food groups. For these dishes, you’ll need to estimate how much is from the foods that make up the dish. (See the enchilada example on the next page.)

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 food 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 already 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 the carne adobada example below.)

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. The recommendation from your dietitian or diabetes educator is what you should follow.

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.