

Navigating Holiday Meals: Culinary Strategies for Blood Sugar Control



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This activity provides 1.0 contact hour(s) of nursing professional development.

Requirements for Completion:

- Attend the session
- Complete online evaluation form

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Requirements for Completion:

- **Attend the session in its entirety**



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Learning Objectives

1. Identify common challenges individuals living with diabetes face during the holiday season related to blood sugar management.
2. Describe evidence-based strategies that support glycemic control during holiday meals and gatherings.
3. Demonstrate how to plan and modify a holiday plate to be more blood sugar–friendly while maintaining flavor and cultural relevance



Prevalence of Diabetes

Prevalence

- 29.7 million people of all ages **diagnosed** (8.9% of the US population)¹
- An additional 8.7 million are estimated to have diabetes but **undiagnosed** (total 11.6% of US population)²
- 97.6 million Americans 18+ had *prediabetes* in 2021² (29% of the US population)

Incidence

- 1.2 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes every year²

1. 2021 estimates per CDC

2. 2021 estimates per ADA

Types of Diabetes

Prediabetes

Type 1 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes (90-95% of diabetes diagnoses)

Gestational diabetes

Monogenic Diabetes⁶

- Neonatal Diabetes Mellitus (NDM)
- Maturity-onset Diabetes of the Young (MODY)

Diseases of Exocrine Pancreas (CF, pancreatitis)

Drug-and-Chemical Induced Diabetes

Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes



Non-modifiable (Things I can't change)

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Family history

Modifiable (Things I can change)

- Diet
- Physical activity
- Stress



Diabetes as a Public Health Concern

Number of deaths for leading causes of death

- Heart disease: 680,981
- Cancer: 613,352
- Accidents (unintentional injuries): 222,698
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 162,639
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 145,357
- Alzheimer's disease: 114,034
- Diabetes: 95,190
- Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis: 55,253
- Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis: 52,222
- COVID-19: 49,932

Source: [Mortality in the United States, 2023, data table for figure 4](#)

Language & Diabetes

Healthcare professionals, writers, researchers and the general public are invited to join a language movement by considering and adopting these recommendations:

Use language that...

- Is neutral, non-judgmental and based on facts, actions or physiology/biology.
- Is free from stigma.
- Is strengths-based, respectful, inclusive and imparts hope.
- Fosters collaboration between patients and providers.
- Is person-centered.

Problematic	Preferred	Rationale
<p>Diabetic (as an adjective); diabetic foot; diabetic education; diabetic person.</p> <p><i>"How long have you been diabetic?"</i></p>	<p>Foot ulcer; infection on the foot; diabetes education; person with diabetes.</p> <p><i>"How long have you had diabetes?"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the physiology or pathophysiology. • "Diabetic education" is incorrect (education doesn't have diabetes). • Put the person first and avoid using a disease to describe a person.
<p>Diabetic (as a noun).</p> <p><i>"Are you a diabetic?"</i></p> <p>Non-diabetic; normal.</p>	<p>Person with/who has diabetes.</p> <p><i>"Do you have diabetes?"</i></p> <p>Person without/who doesn't have diabetes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid labeling someone as a disease. There is much more to a person than diabetes. • The opposite of "normal" is "abnormal"; people with diabetes are not abnormal.
<p>Compliant/compliance; non-compliant/non-compliance.</p> <p>Adherent/non-adherent; adherence/non-adherence.</p>	<p>Engagement; participation; involvement; medication taking</p> <p><i>"She takes insulin whenever she can afford it."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These terms imply doing what someone else wants, i.e., taking orders. In diabetes care, people make choices in their own self-management. • Focus on facts and strengths. What are they doing well and how can we build on it?

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Control (as a verb or an adjective); controlled/uncontrolled; well controlled/poorly controlled.

Control (as a noun) glycemic control; glucose control; poor control/good control; bad control; tight control.

Manage

"She is checking blood glucose levels a few times per week."

A1C

Blood glucose levels/targets; glycemic target/goal; glycemic stability/variability; time in range or within target range.

- Control is virtually impossible to achieve in a disease where the body no longer does what it's supposed to do.
- Use words/phrases that emphasize what the person is doing or doing well.
- Focus on physiology/biology and use neutral words that don't judge, shame or blame.
- Define what *"good control"* means in factual terms and use that instead.

How the holidays affect:

- Comments from family/friends
- Comments from healthcare providers

Provider tip:

Use neutral language. Consider incorporating mindfulness and self-compassion into your counseling and treatment plan!

Self-Care Behaviors Overview

7 Self-Care Behaviors for People Living with Diabetes

- Healthy Coping
- Being Active
- Taking Medication
- Monitoring
- Reducing Risks
- Healthy Eating
- Problem Solving



Healthy Coping

Definition:

Coping is our way of dealing with difficult circumstances, e.g. chronic disease.

Healthy coping means using health-promoting behaviors to deal with situations and maintaining a positive attitude toward your DM/preDM management.

How the holidays affect:

- Stress
- Alcohol
- Overeating

Provider tip: If family is a stressor, consider encouraging a "friendsgiving" or personal day/outing. Discuss mindfulness and self-compassion.



Being Active

Definition:

Daily physical movement, whether structured or unstructured.

How the holidays affect:

- Routines
- Travel/visiting family
- Food and alcohol intake
- Shorter daylight hours in the evenings

Provider tip: Encourage patients to be the catalyst for others to exercise with them; or encourage a commitment to walking/exercise before social activities for greater consistency.

Any movement is better than no movement!



Physical Activity Recommendations for Adults with Diabetes

1. 150 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week, spread over at least 3 days/week, with no more than 2 consecutive days without activity
2. 2-3 sessions/week of resistance exercise on nonconsecutive days
3. Decrease amount of sedentary behavior
4. Flexibility and balance training are recommended 2-3 times per week for older adults with diabetes



Taking Medication

Definition:

Following prescribed medication treatment plans

How the holidays affect:

- Travel
- Routine disruptions

Provider tip: Encourage patients to set alarm reminders for medication timing; recommend travel pill containers; have a storage plan for insulin



Monitoring

Definition:

Checking blood sugar (CGM or finger-sticks) and adherence to other self-care behaviors to maintain care treatment plan and to make adjustments as needed

How the holidays affect:

- Social eating
- Caring for others

Provider tip: Help patients make a plan to bring monitoring supplies with them to meals outside their home



Reducing Risks

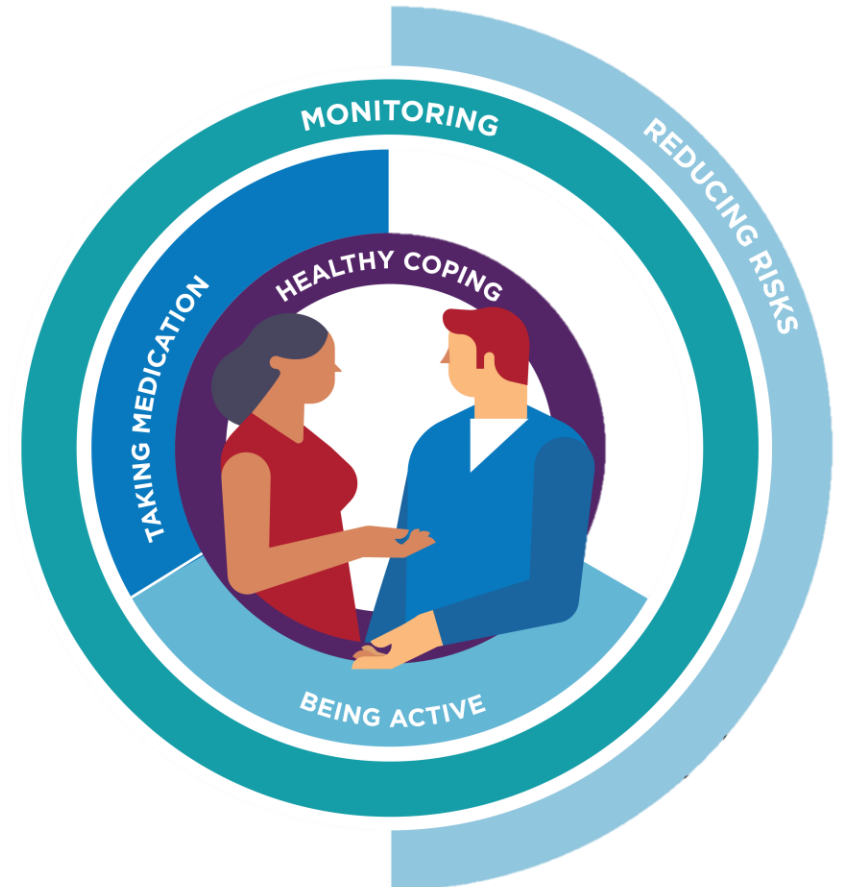
Definition:

Choosing behaviors that reduce risk of long-term complications from diabetes, e.g. scheduled health screenings, avoiding harmful behaviors, and monitoring glucose levels

How the holidays affect:

- Can get out of routine for care team visits, health screens, and vaccinations

Provider tip: Encourage consistency with routine healthy habits as able; encourage healthy coping over harmful coping behaviors



Problem Solving

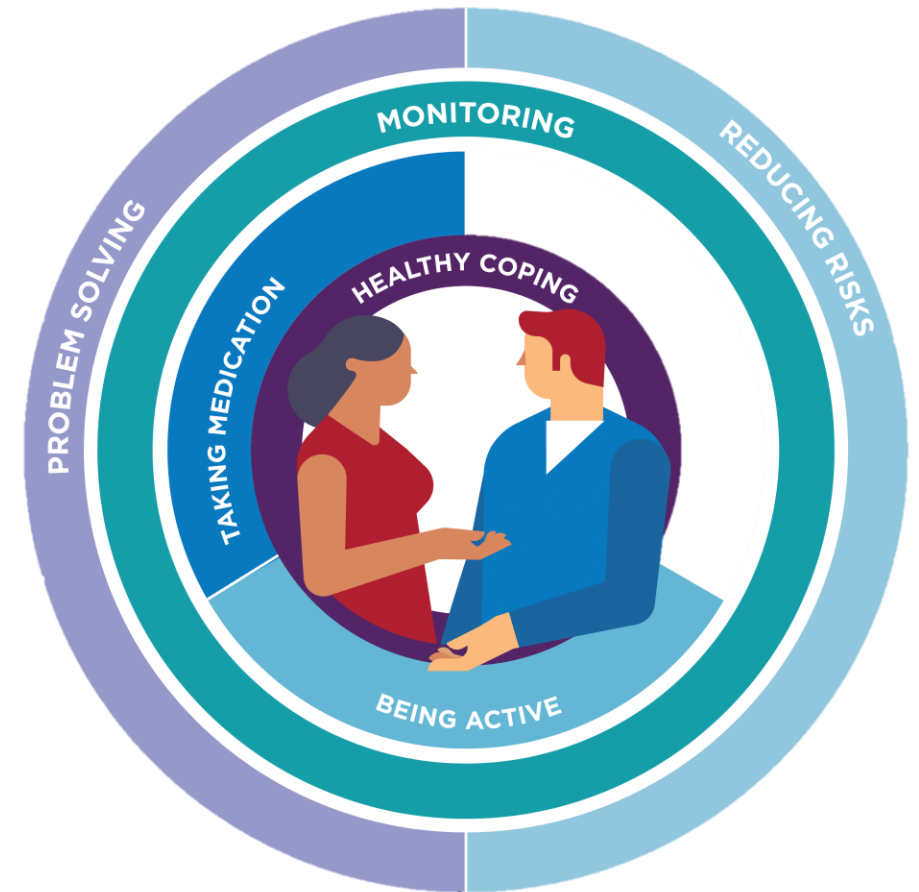
Definition:

Troubleshooting solutions to challenges in order to improve diabetes management

How the holidays affect:

- Different from our normal routine
- Helpful to plan ahead for unique meal situations or travel

Provider tip: Use the tips you learn today to empower your patients to problem solve!



Healthy Eating

Definition:

Eating a nutrient-dense diet that promotes health and wellness

How the holidays affect:

- Richer foods that are higher in calories and often carbs
- Sweets/desserts are more prevalent at work and social settings
- Possibly more dining out than home-prepared foods



Healthy Eating Goals

1. To promote and support healthful eating patterns, emphasizing a variety of nutrient-dense foods in appropriate portion sizes to improve overall health and:
 - Achieve and maintain body weight goals
 - Attain individualized glycemic, blood pressure, and lipid goals
 - Delay or prevent the complications of diabetes
2. To address individual nutrition needs based on personal and cultural preferences, health literacy and numeracy, access to healthful foods, willingness and ability to make behavioral changes, and existing barriers to change
3. **To maintain the pleasure of eating by providing nonjudgmental messages about food choices while limiting food choices only when indicated by scientific evidence**
4. To provide an individual with diabetes the practical tools for developing healthy eating patterns rather than focusing on individual macronutrients, micronutrients, or single foods

Nutrition Recommendations

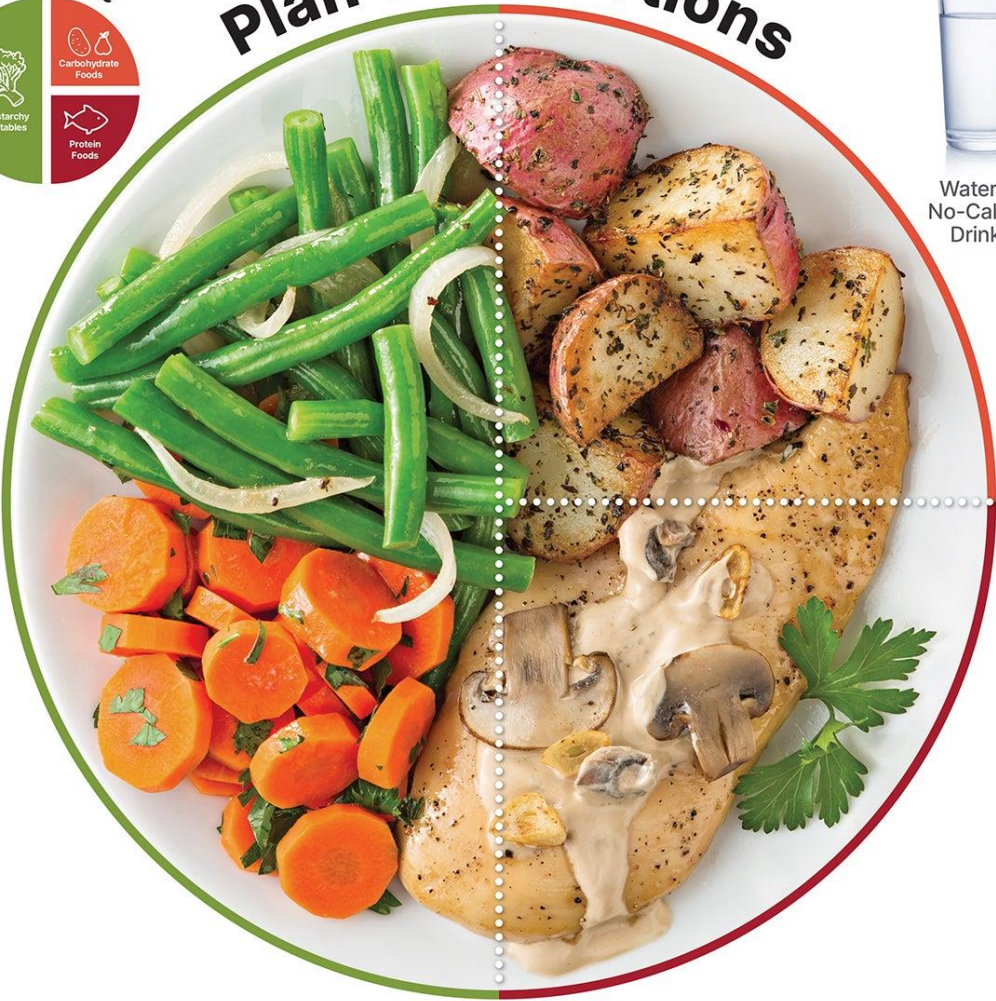
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Non-Starchy Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Dark leafy greens
- Mushrooms
- Pea pods
- Radishes
- Tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Cabbage (cole slaw)
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Okra
- Peppers
- Salad greens
- Zucchini



Plan Your Portions



Water or No-Calorie Drinks

- Corn
- Fruit
- Whole grains
- Beans, lentils, and peas
- Tortillas
- Berries
- Potato, sweet potato, winter squash
- Milk and yogurt

Carbohydrates

- Chicken
- Fish: salmon, tuna, etc.
- Shrimp
- Eggs and cheese
- Lean beef
- Tofu

Protein

Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



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For ALL cultures: Asian

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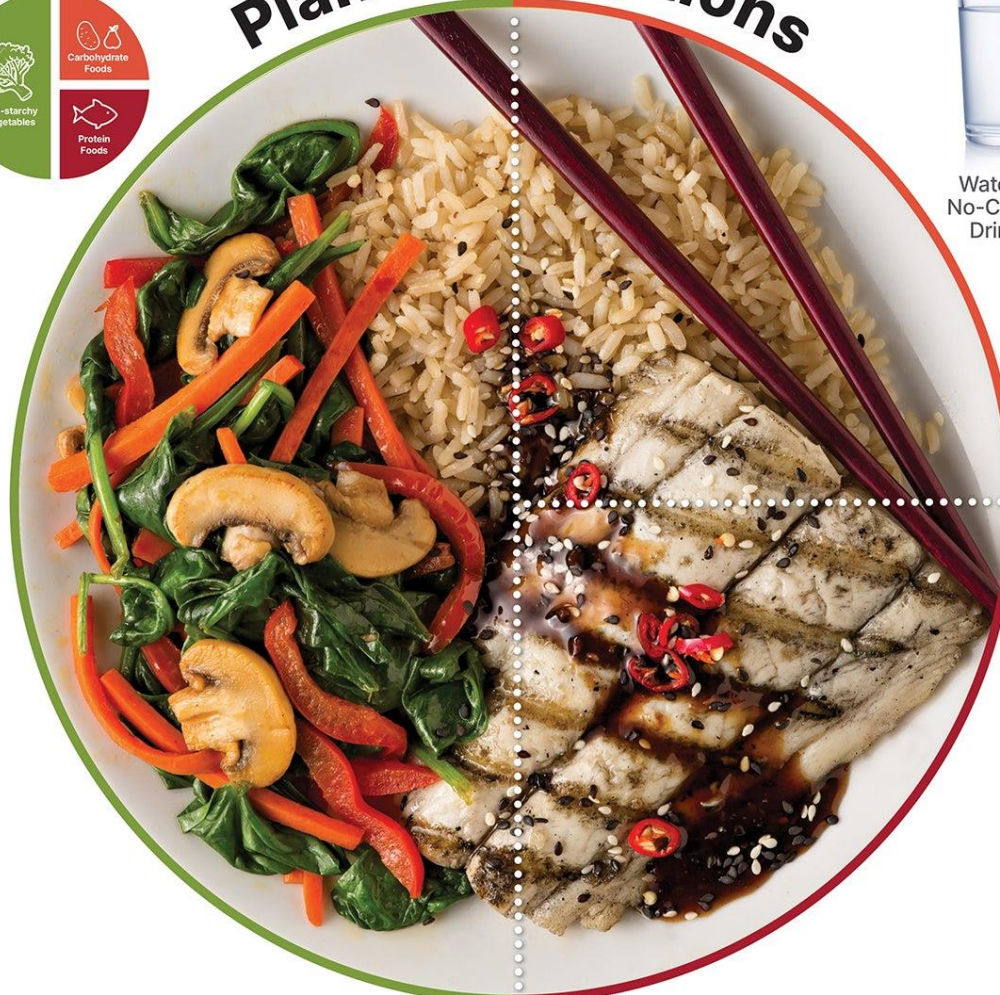
Non-Starchy Vegetables



A24



Plan Your Portions

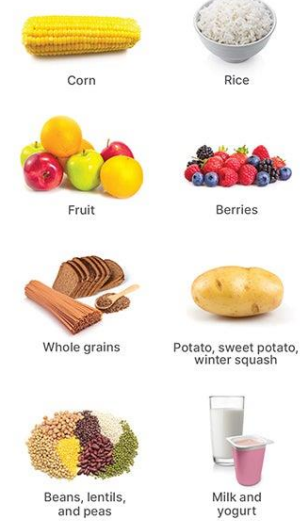


Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

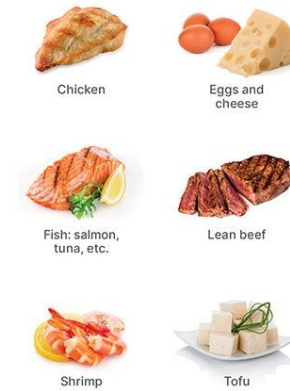
9 inches



Water or
No-Calorie
Drinks



Carbohydrates



Protein

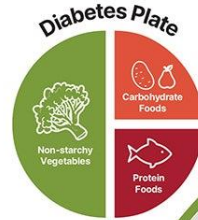


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For ALL cultures: Southern

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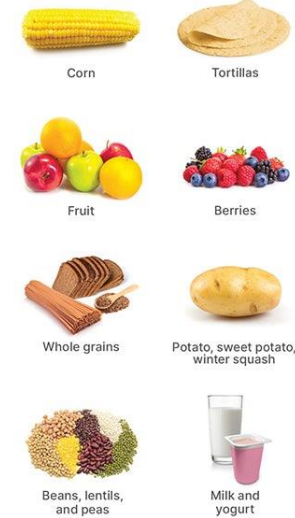
Non-Starchy Vegetables



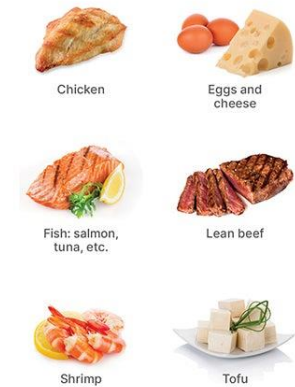
Plan Your Portions



Water or No-Calorie Drinks



Carbohydrates



Protein

Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



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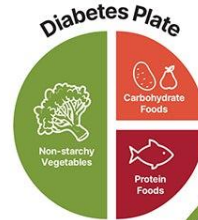
For ALL cultures: Pacific Islander

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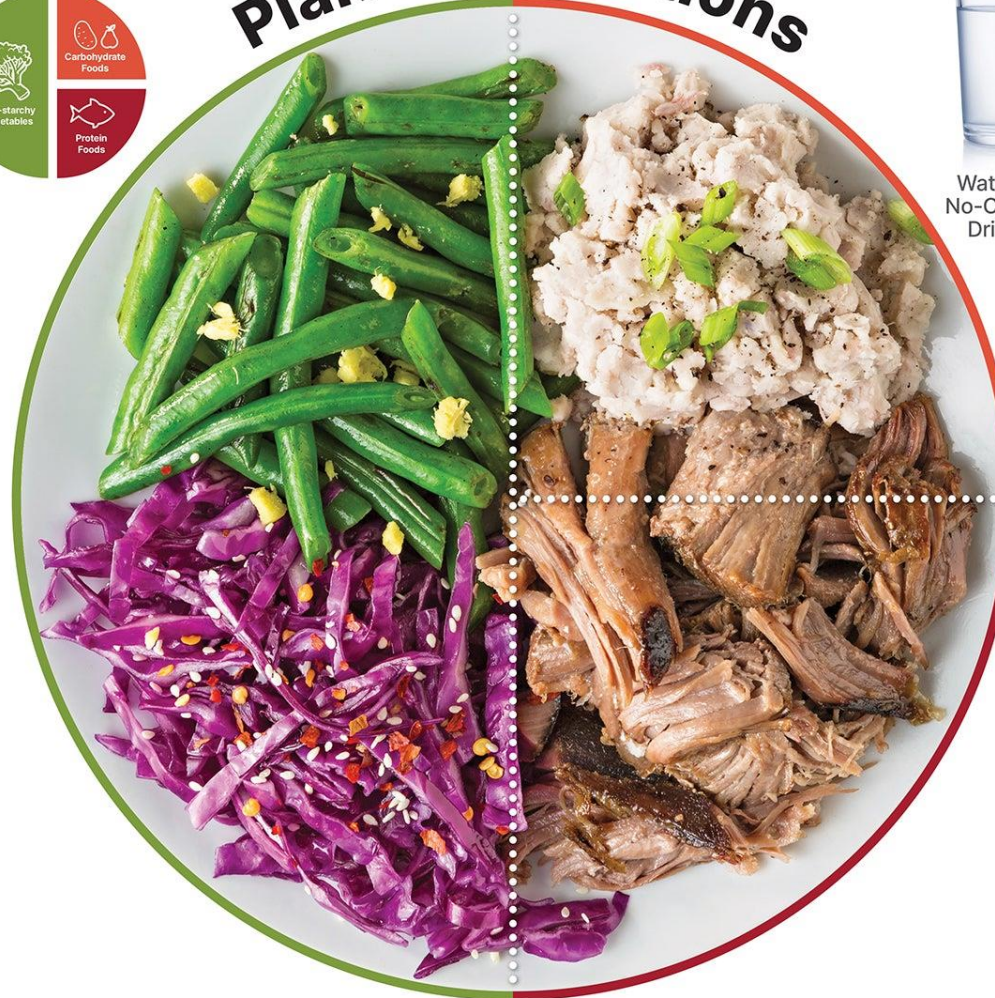
Non-Starchy Vegetables



PI24



Plan Your Portions



Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



Water or
No-Calorie
Drinks



Carbohydrates

Protein



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For ALL cultures: Hispanic

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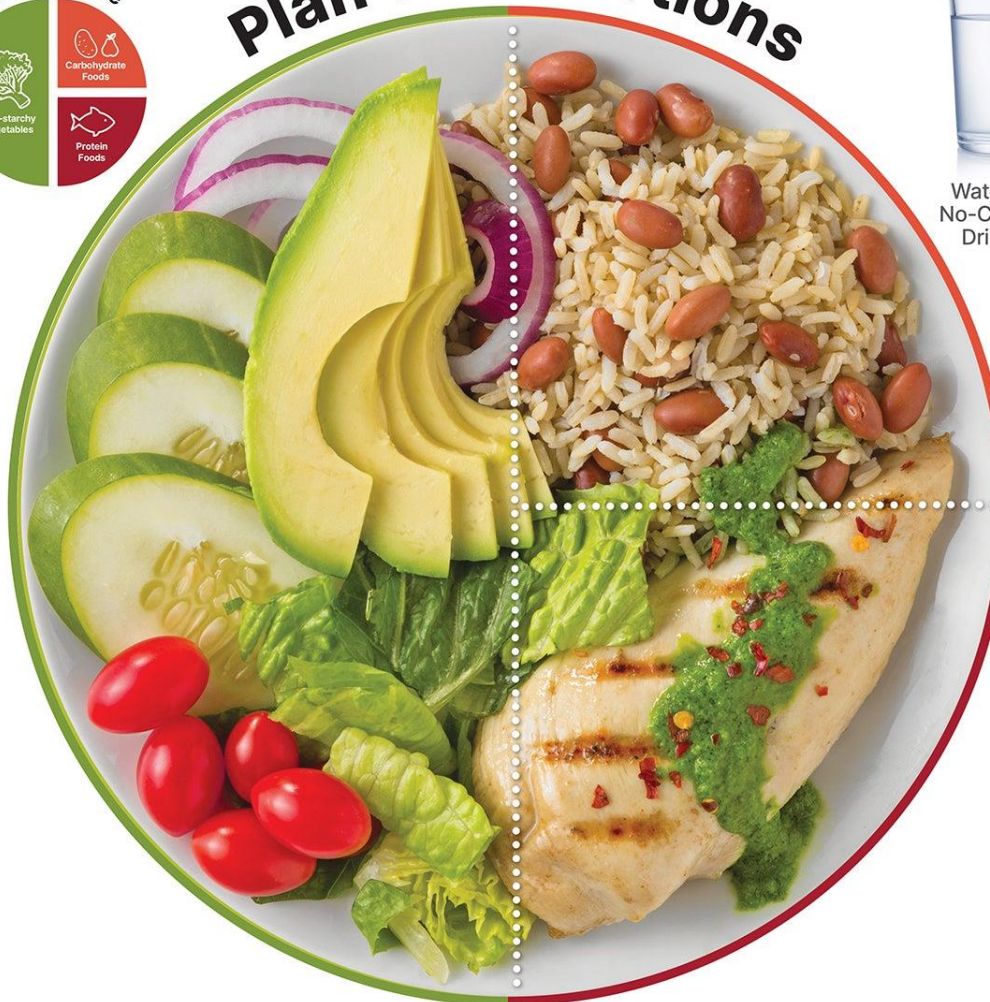
Non-Starchy Vegetables



H24



Plan Your Portions



Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



Water or
No-Calorie
Drinks



Corn



Tortillas



Fruit



Berries



Whole grains



Potato, sweet potato,
winter squash



Beans, lentils,
and peas



Milk and
yogurt



Chicken



Eggs and
cheese



Fish: salmon,
tuna, etc.



Lean beef



Shrimp



Tofu

Carbohydrates

Protein



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For ALL cultures: South Asian/Indian

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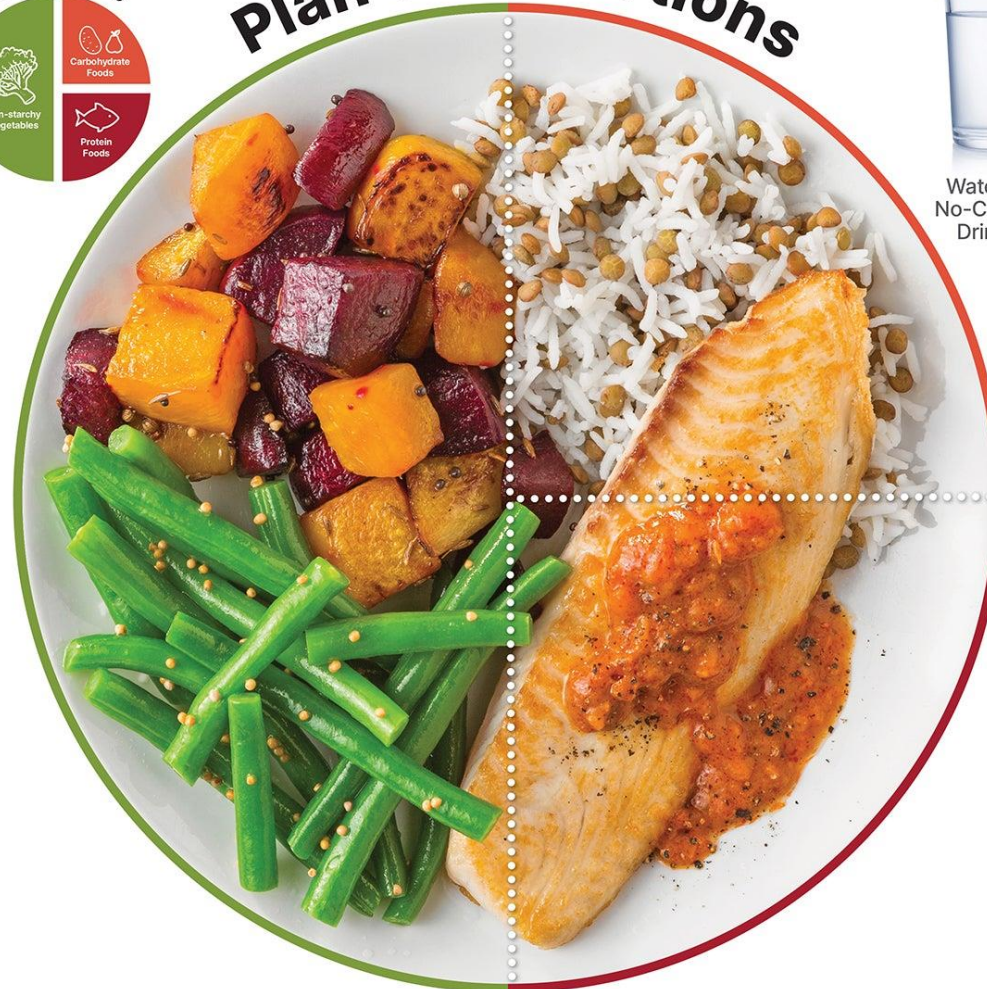
Non-Starchy Vegetables



SAS24



Plan Your Portions



Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



Carbohydrates



Protein



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For ALL cultures: Vegetarian

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Non-Starchy Vegetables



Plan Your Portions



Use a 9-inch plate to help guide your portions.

9 inches



Water or
No-Calorie
Drinks



Corn



Tortillas



Fruit



Berries



Whole grains



Potato, sweet potato,
winter squash



Beans, lentils,
and peas



Milk and
yogurt



Cheese



Eggs



Nut butters



Nuts



Tempeh



Tofu

Carbohydrates

Protein



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Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

- Pair carbohydrates with protein, fat, and fiber at meals and snacks
- Use the plate method to moderate total carb amount at meals
- Include non-starchy side dishes
- Offer to bring a healthy dish to potlucks or group gatherings
- Prioritize favorites – scope out options and choose favorites
- Avoid skipping meals to "save calories"
- Drink water or other calorie-free beverages with meals
- Take mealtime medications as prescribed
- Consider walking after meals to help reduce post-prandial BG



Let's cook!



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Questions?

**Please post your Questions in
the Q&A !**



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Tue Dec 9
11 am CT



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