The **Plate Method** is a simple way to keep carbohydrates to a moderate amount to improve blood sugar control.

Calories come from carbohydrate, protein or fat. Carbohydrates have the largest and quickest effect on blood sugar. High carbohydrate foods groups include:

- Whole grains and starchy vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk and yogurt

Sugar is a concentrated form of carbohydrate. Limit foods high in sugar in your diet.
Follow these 5 steps to eat meals with the Plate Method

1. Divide an 8 or 9-inch plate in half and fill half of the plate with non-starchy vegetables.
   These include:
   - Artichoke
   - Asparagus
   - Bean sprouts
   - Beets
   - Bok choy
   - Broccoli
   - Brussels sprouts
   - Cabbage
   - Carrots
   - Cauliflower
   - Celery
   - Cucumber
   - Green or yellow beans
   - Salad greens
   - Mushrooms
   - Onions
   - Peppers
   - Radish
   - Snow peas
   - Sugar snap peas
   - Tomatoes
   - Turnips
   - Yellow squash
   - Zucchini

   Choose fresh or frozen vegetables that have no added salt, sugar or fat in a variety of colors to get a variety of vitamins and minerals.

   Non-starchy vegetables:
   - Provide your body some carbohydrates, but much less than the high carbohydrate food groups.
   - Help fill you up without having a large effect on your blood sugar.
   - Provide the fiber, vitamins and minerals your body needs to function well.

2. Divide the other half of the plate in half again.
   - Fill one section with whole grains or starchy vegetables:
     Whole grain options include:
     - Barley
     - Brown rice
     - Bulgur
     - Oats, oatmeal
     - Polenta
     - Quinoa
     - Whole grain breads
     - Whole grain cereals
     - Whole wheat couscous
     - Whole wheat pasta
     - Wild rice

     Starchy vegetable options include:
     - Beans, such as black, great northern, kidney, navy and pinto beans
     - Black-eyed peas
     - Corn
     - Lentils
     - Peas
     - Potatoes with skin
     - Sweet potatoes with skin

   - Fill the other section with protein foods.
     These include:
     - Beef, round and loin cuts, fat trimmed
     - Cheese
     - Chicken, no skin
     - Cottage cheese, low-fat
     - Eggs
     - Fish (eat fish at least 2 times per week)
     - Pork, loin cuts, fat trimmed
     - Turkey, no skin
3. **Add a serving of fruit, milk or yogurt to your meals or eat a serving for a snack.**

Aim for 2 to 4 servings of fruit and 2 to 3 servings of milk or yogurt each day.

**1 serving of fruit includes:**
- 1 cup fresh melon, raspberries or strawberries
- ¾ cup fresh pineapple, blueberries or blackberries
- ½ cup fresh grapes
- 1 small fresh fruit, such as an apple the size of a baseball
- ½ of a large piece of fresh fruit, such as ½ of a large banana or ½ of a large pear
- ½ cup canned fruit in juice or light syrup
- 2 tablespoons of dried fruit
- 4 ounces of fruit juice with no sugar added

**1 serving of milk or yogurt includes:**
- 8 ounces fat free milk
- 6 ounces light or plain yogurt
- 6 ounces light or plain Greek yogurt

4. **Keep added fats to small amounts.**

Fats improve the taste of many foods, help us feel full longer and provide essential nutrients. All fats are high in calories, so keep portions small:
- 1 to 2 teaspoons of oil, margarine, butter or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon of salad dressing
- 1 to 2 tablespoons of avocado
- ¼ cup of nuts or seeds

5. **Drink mostly water with meals and snacks.**

Aim for at least 8, 8-ounce, glasses of water each day.

Water:
- Is calorie-free and has no carbohydrates.
- Is essential for your body’s cells, tissues and organs.

Plain coffee and tea are also calorie-free and will not raise your blood sugar.

**General tips**

- Cook at home as much as possible, using low fat cooking methods, such as bake, broil, microwave, roast, steam, sauté or grill. Restaurant foods and processed foods often have added sugar and more sodium.
- Choose fresh fruit or yogurt for dessert, or try a low carbohydrate dessert recipe.
- Eat breakfast daily and space meals about 4 to 5 hours apart. Eat snacks if meals are more than 4 to 5 hours apart. Do not skip meals.
- Read food labels and ingredient lists on packaged foods. Avoid foods that have trans fats and partially hydrogenated oils.