



# Size Matters

A talk, “Diabetes and You”, organised by Rotary Club of Raffles City was attended by its members on 15 June. While DSS Nurse Clinician Angie Lee encouraged those with diabetes to go for complications screenings, she urged those without diabetes not to ignore regular health checks.

Angie also stressed the importance of a healthy balanced diet even for a person without diabetes and introduced meal planning tools such as the Plate Method and portion control which works well for seniors, people with busy lifestyles and those who dine out often.

## 5 Easy Steps To Create Your Plate

The Plate Method is simple and effective for both managing diabetes, improving blood glucose and lipids and losing weight. Creating your plate allows you to choose the foods you want, but only changes the portion size so you get larger portions of non-starchy vegetables and a smaller portion of starchy foods. Start by putting a line down the middle of your dinner plate:

1. On one side, cut it again so you will have three sections on your plate.
2. Fill the largest section with non-starchy vegetables such as:
  - spinach, carrots, lettuce, greens, cabbage, bok choy
  - green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, cucumber, mushrooms
3. On one of the small sections, put starchy foods such as:
  - whole grain breads, such as whole wheat or rye
  - whole grain, high-fibre cereal
  - cooked cereal such as oatmeal, rice, pasta, potatoes, green peas, corns, sweet potatoes
4. On the other small section, put your meat or meat substitutes such as:
  - chicken or turkey without the skin
  - fish such as tuna, salmon, cod or catfish
  - other seafood such as shrimp, clams, oysters, crab or mussels
  - lean cuts of beef or pork, such as sirloin or pork loin, tofu, eggs, low-fat cheese
5. Add a piece of fruit, fresh or frozen, or half a cup of fruit salad.

And voila, your meal planning is now complete!

Your plate will look different at breakfast but the idea is the same. If you use a plate or bowl for breakfast, keep your portions small. Use half your plate for starchy foods. You can add fruit to the small part and a meat or meat substitute to the other.

The Rotary Club at Raffles City members fielded several questions about the glycaemic index of the food they can eat and should avoid. Angie had much to say about the topic as it is closely linked to meal planning.

## What Is Glycaemic Index?

According to Angie, the glycaemic index or GI classifies carbohydrate-containing foods according to their potential to raise your blood sugar level. Foods with a high GI value tend to raise your blood sugar faster and higher than do foods with a lower value.

Some people with diabetes use the GI as a guide to select foods — especially carbohydrates — for meal planning. Meal planning with the GI involves choosing foods that have a low or medium GI. If eating a food with a high GI, you can combine it with low GI foods to balance the meal. Examples of carbohydrate-containing foods with a low GI include dried beans and legumes (kidney beans and lentils), all non-starchy vegetables and some starchy vegetables, most fruit, and many whole grain breads and cereals (barley, whole wheat bread, rye bread, and all-bran cereal). Meats and fats do not have a GI because they do not contain carbohydrate.

It can be difficult to follow a GI diet on your own. For one thing, most foods are not ranked by GI. Packaged foods do not generally list their GI ranking on the label, and it can be hard to estimate what it might be. Still, basic principles of the GI diet may help you better manage and control your blood sugar:

- Choose high-fibre foods, such as whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables
- Choose fresh or raw foods over canned or processed foods

If you have diabetes, the GI diet is just one tool to consider employing when determining your diabetes diet. If you would like to find out more the GI diet, talk to a registered dietitian.