

# Diabetes Discourse

Volume 15, Issue 4

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*Quarterly Newsletter of the Bovell Cancer Diabetes Foundation (BCDF)*

*This Free Newsletter is a Vital Resource for Diabetes Prevention and for anyone Living with Diabetes*

## Our Vision

- Enriching lives, one person at a time

## Our Mission

- To enrich the lives of people living with or at risk for cancer and diabetes by providing financial resources, support, preventive and management education.

## BCDF Activities Include:

- Modest grants to individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes to enhance their quality of life
- Prevention and management education, and small-group workshops
- Advocacy and referrals to resources for individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes
- Writing grant proposals and fundraising

BCDF relies on donations to carry out its mission. We are an incorporated, charitable Foundation in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. BCDF functions with volunteers only and no paid staff. To contact us with comments, questions or articles, phone 868) 667-2576 or e-mail: [adelia@bovellcancerdiabetesfoundation.org](mailto:adelia@bovellcancerdiabetesfoundation.org); <http://www.bovellcancerdiabetesfoundation.org>

**Disclaimer:** *This newsletter is meant to educate and inform. It is not to be used as medical advice. Please consult your doctor for medical advice.*

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## WHAT IS THE DIABETES PLATE?



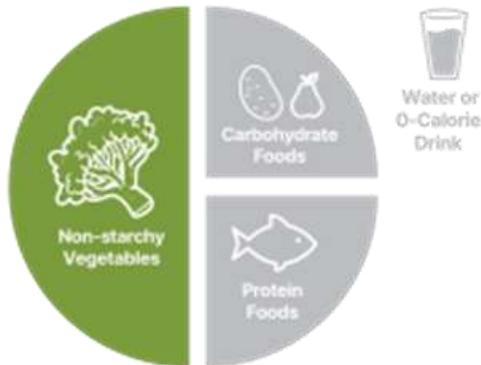
The Diabetes Plate is the easiest way to create healthy low-carbohydrate meals that can help you manage your blood glucose (blood sugar). Using the Diabetes Plate or the Plate Method, you can create a meal with a healthy balance of vegetables, carbohydrates, and protein, without any counting of calories, calculating, weighing, or measuring. **All you need is a plate!**

To start out, you need a plate that is **nine inches across**. The size of our plate is what controls the size of our portions. If your dinner plates are larger than nine inches, try using a smaller salad or dessert plate, or get a 9"-plate for your meals. Or, if your dinner plates have a lip or artwork along the edge, use that as a border for filling your plate if the area inside the border is 9 inches across. Now that you have the right plate, it is time to fill it!

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What is a Diabetes Plate? Continued from page 1

## 1. Fill 1/2 your plate with non-starchy vegetables



Non-starchy vegetables are lower in carbohydrates, so they do not raise your blood glucose very much. They are also higher in fiber, vitamins, and minerals - making them an important part of a healthy diet and what some people call “*superstar foods*”. Filling half your plate with non-starchy vegetables means you will get plenty of servings.

### Examples of non-starchy vegetables:

- ❖ Patchoi
- ❖ Pumpkin
- ❖ Lettuce
- ❖ Peppers
- ❖ Squash
- ❖ Christophene
- ❖ Broccoli
- ❖ Cabbage (green, red )
- ❖ Carrots
- ❖ Cauliflower
- ❖ Celery
- ❖ Cucumber
- ❖ Melongene/Eggplant
- ❖ Leafy greens such as bhagi, dasheen bush/callaloo, spinach
- ❖ Ochro/Okra
- ❖ Onions

Continued on page 3



## OF OUR MOTHER

**Mildred “Miss” Bovell  
(1922-2013)**



Remembering the Matriarch of Bovell Cancer Diabetes Foundation on this our 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 2025 and 12 years since she is gone.

*“Her children arise and call her blessed”  
(Proverbs 31:28).*

Since your passing in 2013, we, her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and BCDF family continue to give thanks for a life rooted in faith, love, and quiet service. We take comfort in the promise that you now rest in God’s eternal care, and in the words of the hymn, “*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.*” Your memory remains a blessing, and your legacy lives on in us. We are grateful for the example you set for us, the prayers you offered, and the values you instilled. Your life continues to bear fruit in the lives you touched and in the generations you helped shape.

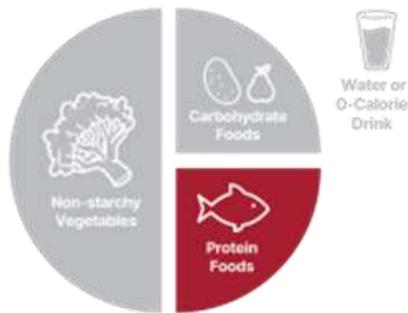
*May you continue to RIP!!*

***From your children, grandchildren,  
great grandchildren, friends and  
your BCDF Family*** ❤️

*What is a Diabetes Plate? Continued from page 2*

- ❖ Peppers such as sweet peppers, hot peppers, pimiento etc.
- ❖ Green beans such as string beans, Bodi
- ❖ Salad greens such as lettuce, spinach, watercress and others
- ❖ Tomatoes

## 2. Fill 1/4 of your plate with lean protein foods



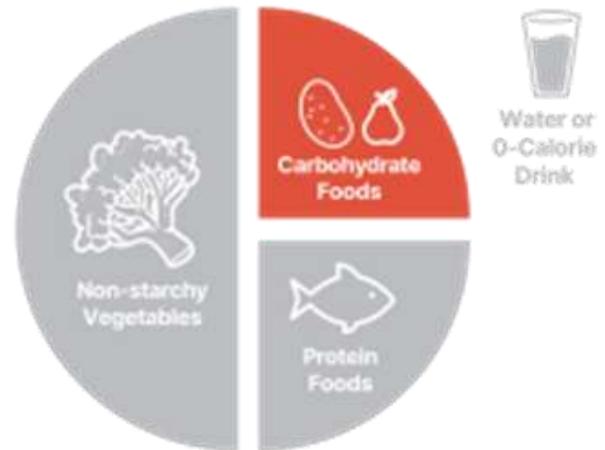
Foods high in protein such as fish, chicken, lean beef, soy foods, and cheese are all considered protein foods. Proteins foods (especially those from animal sources) usually contain **saturated fat**, which can increase your risk of heart disease. Lean proteins are lower in both fat and **saturated fat**, making them a healthier choice. Keep in mind that some plant-based protein foods (like beans and legumes) are also high in carbohydrates.

### Examples of lean protein foods include:

- ❖ Chicken, turkey, and eggs
- ❖ Fish like salmon, cod, tuna
- ❖ Shellfish like shrimp, wilks and lobster
- ❖ Lean beef cuts such as chuck, round, sirloin and tenderloin
- ❖ Lean pork cuts such as center loin chop and tenderloin
- ❖ Cheese and cottage cheese
- ❖ Plant-based sources of protein:
- ❖ Beans, lentils and split peas
- ❖ Nuts and nut butters

- ❖ Plant-based meat substitutes

## 3. Fill 1/4 of your plate with carbohydrate foods

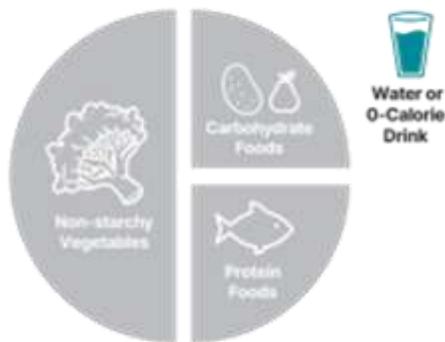


Foods that are higher in carbohydrates include whole grains, starchy vegetables, beans and legumes, fruit, yogurt, and milk. These foods have the largest effect on blood glucose. Limiting your portion of carbohydrate foods to one-quarter of your plate can help keep blood glucose from rising too high after meals.

### Examples of carbohydrate foods:

- ❖ Whole grains such as brown rice, oats/oatmeal, polenta, popcorn and whole grain products (bread and pasta)
- ❖ Starchy vegetables such as banana, breadfruit, eddoes, dasheen, cassava, plantains, potatoes, pumpkins, sweet potato/yams, corn, squash and green peas
- ❖ Beans and legumes such as red or kidney, pinto, and channa/chick/garbanzo beans and lentils
- ❖ Fruits and dried fruit
- ❖ Dairy products like milk, yoghurt, and milk substitutes (e.g., soy milk)

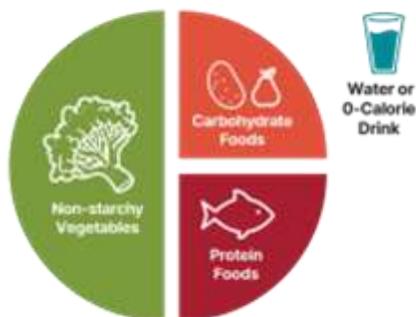
#### 4. Choose water or a low-calorie drink



Water is the best choice because it contains no calories nor carbohydrates and has no effect on blood glucose.

Other zero- or low-calorie drink options include:

- ❖ Unsweetened tea (hot or iced)
- ❖ Unsweetened coffee (hot or iced)
- ❖ Sparkling water/club soda
- ❖ Infused water or sparkling water without added sugar
- ❖ Diet soda or other diet drinks



Our meals do not always fit into the sections of the Diabetes Plate. Many dishes - like soups, pelau, roti, doubles, rice and peas, sancoche, oil down, cookup, casseroles, sandwiches, pizza, and pasta - combine the different food types together. You can still use the Diabetes Plate when you prepare and serve these types of foods.

Just identify the different foods in the dish and think about where they would fit in the Plate. Try to prepare combination dishes with proportions that follow the Diabetes Plate. So, to build a pizza using the Diabetes Plate, choose a thin or vegetable-based crust to reduce the portion of carbohydrates and top it with lots of vegetables instead of meat (or choose a lean meat). Stick to just one or two slices and serve with a side salad so half your meal is non-starchy vegetables.

The Diabetes Plate is a great place to start to create balanced low-carbohydrate meals. You can work with us to find the meal pattern that works best for you and your fits specific health goals.

Source: Modified from the American Diabetes Association

## Make A Donation



### To BCDF!



### Help Stamp Out Diabetes!



Please support us so we can support people living with or who are at risk for diabetes and cancer. Make a donation to us at:

First Citizens Bank

Account Name: Bovell Cancer Diabetes Foundation

Account #: 1814538

Thanks!

## RETHINKING YOUR LINK WITH SUGAR

If dieting had its own Disney princess movie, sugar would most certainly be the villain. It is hard to have a positive or neutral relationship with something that is constantly labeled as bad or addictive. Many of us have likely been on restrictive diets that demonize sugar and tell us to cut out or strictly limit our carbohydrate intake. This kind of restriction can lead us to feel out of control around sugar. Feeling like we are not in the driver's seat when we find ourselves, say, eating birthday cake can lead to outsized panic about how much sugar we are eating. **It is true that eating 'too much' sugar is not great for your health.** But in truth, eating some sugar every day is actually perfectly fine.

Telling ourselves that sugar has no place in our diet can actually result in the ingredient feeling "forbidden" and cause bingeing behaviours when we are presented with dessert. For example, maybe you eat a whole sleeve of cookies today so that you can start your diet with no sugar in the house tomorrow. If you have ever felt out of control around sweets or like you could not stop eating them, consider how any food rules or restrictions could have played a role.

- 1. Resist the urge to label foods as "good" or "bad".** The language we use to talk about sugar tends to worsen our relationship with it. Labeling foods as 'good' and 'bad' keeps you stuck with anxiety about every detail of your diet. Labeling foods as 'bad' can cause us to rebel against our own rules and eat them in quantities that are out of sort with what our body actually wants. Take a moment to reflect on how you currently think about sugar. Does it bring on fear or anxiety? Does it make you feel out of control? What 'rules' do you have around it? See if you can shift your thoughts to be more neutral

toward the ingredient. For example, try telling yourself, *'Sugar is just one of the many types of food in my diet.'* While it may be hard to rewrite your inner script in one go, sending yourself neutral messages about sugar can lessen your sweet-related stress over time.

- 2. Understand the vital role glucose plays in your body.** [Sugar] is the preferred source of energy for your body. Carbohydrates found in grains, dairy products, fruits, and veggies are broken down by the body into **glucose**, a simple sugar, which serves as fuel for your cells. When we deprive our bodies of **glucose**, they do not function properly. A preference for sugary foods (carbohydrates more generally) is deeply programmed into human physiology since so many of our body processes depend on carbohydrates to function properly. It makes sense that it would be wildly disruptive to try to deprive our body of a core **macronutrient**. Glucose is especially useful for people who love activities such as walking, hiking, or running. In fact, the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) recommends consuming about one gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight one hour before a workout to help you perform your best. For example, someone who weighs 155 lbs. or about 70 kilograms, should consume about 70 grams of quality carbohydrates before a workout. Pre-workout supplements or whole food sources such as whole grain bread, nut butter, or bananas are great options for hitting this goal and respecting the role sugar has to play in your body.
- 3. Eat well-rounded meals.** If you are not eating enough in general, you may end up craving foods that you would not if you were adequately fed. Serving yourself meals that include protein, carbohydrates and

vegetables will help you feel satiated. Over time, this style of eating can help you regain trust with your body. You respond to hunger cues with nourishing food; your body gives you the energy to show up cognitively and physically for your life. Be sure you are eating enough throughout the day. Under-eating could be another reason why you fixate on sugar or feel out of control around it, so make sure you are eating enough throughout the day. For most people, this will look like several meals with a snack or two in between as needed.

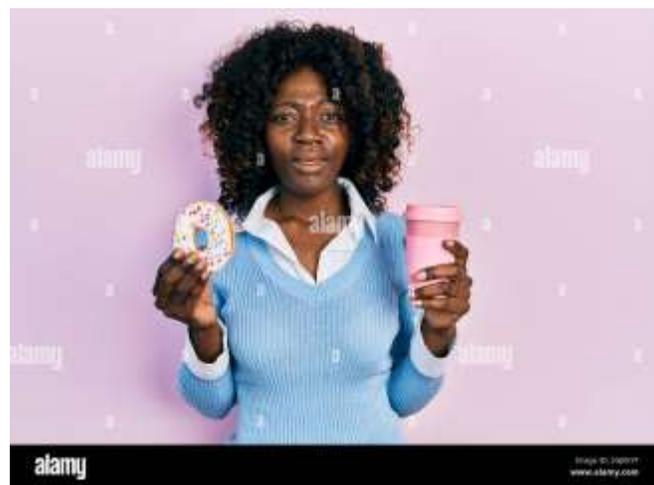
**4. Practice mindful eating.** Another way to reconnect with yourself at mealtime is to practice mindful eating. Pay attention to how your body feels during and after eating. The more you can observe your body without placing judgment on the outcome, the easier it will be to make changes you want to make. While this practice may feel challenging at first, it will eventually help you pick up on hunger and fullness cues and enjoy the flavors of what you are eating even more. If it feels daunting to focus on your food for an entire meal, challenge yourself to do it for the first bite, then the first three bites, and so on. Start small.

**5. Combine sweets with other foods.** Rather than telling yourself that you cannot have sugar when you are craving something sweet, try combining a cookie or a piece of chocolate with other ingredients. Practice letting yourself eat sugar when you want it but also keep in mind that your body will likely feel better, especially on an empty stomach, if you also have some fiber and protein. For example, if you like chocolate in the afternoon, have some fruit and nuts with it. Not only will combining your sweets with other foods help you feel satisfied, but it will also help you realize that all foods can fit on one plate. In other words, the fruit,

nuts, and chocolate are not *'bad' or 'good'*, they are just elements of your diet, each with a role to play.

**6. Make small changes.** If you have ever picked up a fitness routine or tried to meditate, you know that Rome was not built in a day. Improving your mindset about sugar takes ongoing work, so it is recommended choosing one of the tips above and focusing on that before moving on to the next tip. *'Healing your relationship with sugar is not going to happen overnight, especially if this has been a decades-long struggle'*. Be patient and remind yourself why reshaping your relationship with desserts mattered to you in the first place.

Source: Modified from Kells McPhillips  
<https://fortune.com/well/article/sugar-healthy-diet/>



## LET'S TALK CANCER

Dr. Liselle Bovell

### Exercise and Cancer

The infographic features a black background with pink icons of a swimmer, a person lifting weights, a person walking, a person on a bicycle, a person running, and a person using a walker. The text is in pink and white.

**EXERCISE**  
AFTER A BREAST CANCER  
DIAGNOSIS CAN REDUCE  
THE RISK OF  
**RECURRENCE BY  
ABOUT 24%**  
AND LOWER BREAST  
CANCER-RELATED DEATHS BY  
**AROUND 34%**

### Facts You Should Know



The infographic features a black background with white icons of five women walking in a line. The text is in white and pink.

IN 2025, A STUDY OF  
**OVER 500,000 WOMEN**  
FOUND THAT REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
LOWERED THE RISK OF **PREMENOPAUSAL  
BREAST CANCER BY 10%**

Source: <https://www.abcf.org/about-abcf/newsletters/>

### How does cancer cause signs and symptoms?

❖ A cancer can grow into, or begin to push on nearby organs, blood vessels, and nerves. This pressure causes some of the signs and symptoms of cancer. A cancer may also cause symptoms like fever, extreme tiredness (fatigue), or weight loss. This may be because cancer cells use up much of the body's energy supply. Or the cancer could release substances that change the way the body makes energy. Cancer can also cause the immune system to react in ways that produce these signs and symptoms.

❖ **Prostate cancer** is a disease where some prostate cells have lost normal control of growth and division. They no longer function as healthy cells. It is important to note that not all clusters of cells growing in a mass are cancerous, and that a prostate with an irregular shape is not necessarily cancerous either.

### ❖ #KnowCancer Tip

A cancerous prostate cell has the following features:

- ❖ Uncontrolled growth
- ❖ Abnormal structure
- ❖ The ability to move to other parts of the body (Invasiveness)

# AICR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

## A Blueprint to Beat Cancer

To prevent cancer, people should aim to follow as many of the 10 Cancer Prevention Recommendations as possible. However, any change you make that works toward meeting the goals set out in the Recommendations will go some way to reducing your cancer risk.

### BE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life



### BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Be physically active as part of everyday life - walk more and sit less



### EAT A DIET RICH IN WHOLE GRAINS, VEGETABLES, FRUITS AND BEANS

Make whole grains, vegetables, fruits and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet



### LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF RED AND PROCESSED MEAT

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat



### LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR-SWEETENED DRINKS

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks



### LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF 'FAST FOODS' AND OTHER PROCESSED FOODS HIGH IN FAT, STARCHES OR SUGARS

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight



### LIMIT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol



### FOR MOTHERS: BREASTFEED YOUR BABY, IF YOU CAN

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby



### AFTER A CANCER DIAGNOSIS: FOLLOW OUR RECOMMENDATIONS, IF YOU CAN

Check with your health professional about what is right for you



### DO NOT USE SUPPLEMENTS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone



Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.

Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.



### Eat a Diet Rich in Grains, Fruits & Vegetables

