

Eating Issues and Nutrition Tips for Educators Using

MY NATIVE PLATE

My Native Plate provides a visual guide to help your clients and patients eat balanced meals of reasonable portion sizes. Use it as a starting point for nutrition education, a daily reminder, and a way to introduce healthy eating to family members of all ages. Read the following five *Issues to Consider* prior to using *My Native Plate*. Download and distribute *Ten Tips to a Great Plate** when your clients are ready for more information.



Issues to Consider

Understanding a few issues that affect people's eating habits can help you introduce *My Native Plate* to your clients. Keep these points in mind and discuss them in a positive, supportive way:

- 1. Emotions and stress can impact your clients' food selection and portion sizes.** The reasons why people eat certain foods, and why they overeat, are often linked to depression, anxiety and stress.
 - Ask your clients what they are eating, how much and possible reasons why.
 - Refer them to other health care professionals, spiritual leaders or counselors if needed.
- 2. Not consistently having enough money to buy good quality food will affect your clients' eating habits.** Food insecurity can cause your clients to overeat available foods, skip meals and/or choose unhealthy foods that are less expensive.
 - Find out if your clients have consistent access to nutritious foods and are getting enough nutrition from the foods they usually eat.
 - Refer them to community food resources program if needed.
- 3. Family and social gatherings are important to your clients and can affect healthy eating.** Not eating foods brought to gatherings, potlatches and potlucks can be considered rude. Suggest ways your clients can enjoy social eating while using *My Native Plate* as a guide.
 - Explain how a small portion of several dishes from one food group (corn, pasta salad, potatoes) can be combined to make up one *My Native Plate* quadrant (grains/starch).
 - Talk about the importance of stacking food no higher than 1 - 1½ inches.
- 4. Incorporating traditional foods into the plate can help your clients eat healthier.**
 - Talk about traditional foods and how they fit into the plate.
 - Consider copying the design of *My Native Plate* using traditional foods from your region and providing this version to your clients.
- 5. Eating out at fast food restaurants and convenience stores may be common and can make up a large percentage of what your clients eat.**
 - Ask your clients how often they eat out and the types of foods they eat.
 - Suggest ways to use *My Native Plate* when eating at places with very limited menus.
 - Keep in mind that healthier menu options are often more expensive and encourage your clients to ask that their choices be prepared in healthier ways.

Ten Tips to a Great Plate

Some clients may be ready for additional nutrition information. *Ten Tips to a Great Plate* provides tips on how to limit portion sizes, foods to avoid and foods to eat more often.

- Download it at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov and give to your clients.



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To print go to www.diabetes.ihs.gov and click **Printable Materials**.