

Tips for Educators

Using My Native Plate

My Native Plate is a visual guide to help your adult clients eat healthy meals. Use it to engage discussion about eating practices such as food choices, meal preparations, and portions.

My Native Plate can also help educators with the following:

- Encourage individuals to set nutrition-related goals.
- Work with individuals and their families to develop a basic meal plan that includes traditional and cultural preferences.
- Use examples and tips to encourage eating a variety of foods.



Issues to Consider

Understanding and addressing issues that influence a client's eating behaviors are important to consider as you use *My Native Plate*.

1. Food Insecurity

Individuals and families with food insecurity can be predisposed to overeating available foods, skipping meals, or choosing foods that are less expensive and unhealthy.

- ✓ Not having enough money to buy good quality food affects eating habits. Provide information on how to use *My Native Plate* on a limited budget.
- ✓ Assess the individuals' access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious foods. Start by using the [IHS Food Insecurity Assessment Tool and Resource List](#).
- ✓ Provide individuals with information on the resources available in their community to address food insecurity issues.

2. Traditional foods

- Talk with Tribal members, such as elders, about traditional foods in their community and how these foods are harvested, prepared, and preserved. Partner with them to offer food demonstrations and cooking classes.
- Discuss how traditional foods can work with *My Native Plate*.



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3. Family and community gatherings

- Social gatherings are important to your clients and may affect health eating regimens.
- Keep in mind that not eating foods offered at gatherings, potlatches, feasts, and potlucks may not be socially or culturally acceptable.
- Help clients plan ahead by using *My NativePlate* as a guide in selecting types of foods commonly found at gatherings.
- For more tips, see the handout [Ten Doable Ways You Can Enjoy Meals on Special Days](#) located on the IHS Division of Diabetes website.

4. Emotions and stress

- Food can often be used as a coping agent or to fill a void in some conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and stress.
- If the issues presented are beyond your scope of practice, refer clients to a behavioral health professional.

5. Fast food, restaurants, take-out, and corner stores

- Assist clients with ideas on how to compare food choices and select the healthier option.
- Keep in mind that menu options labeled “healthy” may cost more.
- Suggest ways to use *My Native Plate* when eating away from home.

6. Special nutrition needs

- Refer clients with special nutrition needs (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease) to a registered dietitian for medical nutrition therapy.

Resources

Education Materials and Resources (Online Catalog):

www.ihs.gov/diabetes/education-materials-and-resources/

IHS Food Insecurity Assessment Tool and Resource List:

www.ihs.gov/sites/diabetes/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/clinicaldocs/FoodInsecurityAssessTool.pdf

Ten Doable Ways You Can Enjoy Meals on Special Days:

www.ihs.gov/sites/diabetes/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/printmat/TenWaysSpecialMeals_508c.pdf

