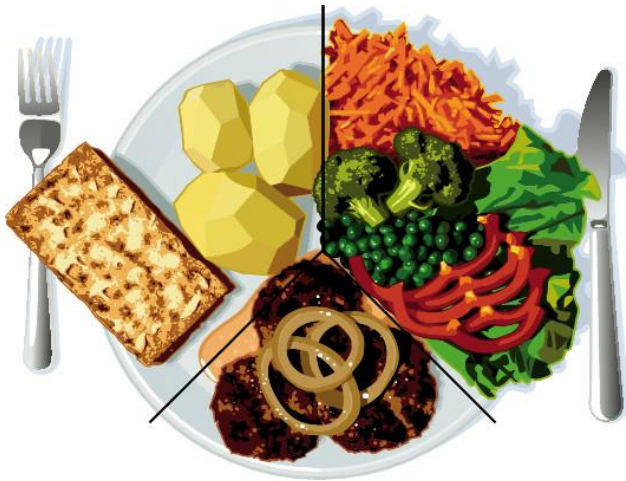


# THE PLATE MODEL & FOOD PORTIONS



The trend of counting calories can be a useful tool to recognise what you eat over a day. But long-term calorie counting is a one way street towards disordered eating behaviours where your app can have a greater influence on what you eat over your own body. An alternative to calorie counting is the Plate Model which splits your dinner plate into a well-balanced meal where a quarter of the meal is a protein source (red meat, chicken, fish, tofu & legumes), a third is carbohydrates (grains, bread, potato & kumara), and the rest is filled with a variety of vegetables. This Plate Model can be tricky to interpret and personalise as we are all different sizes and require different amounts of energy from food. The Heart Foundation therefore recommends using your hands as a gauge to portion foods for the Plate Model.

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An appropriate serving size of red meat or chicken (sources of protein) is the size of your palm. A serving of fish would be the size of your hand (palm and fingers). Two hands cupped together make an appropriate portion of vegetables, and a closed fist acts as an appropriate portion of carbohydrates. These hand portions closely relate to the food groups of the Plate Model but make the portions more personalised. For example, a big man is going to require more nutrients than a petite woman and will also have very different hand sizes. This does not mean that hand size and portion size are directly related, it is more of an easy, accessible, affordable tool for thinking about food portions rather than counting calories. This tool is easiest for dinner meals which is a great starting point, from there you can begin to think about the sources of protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables that make up your breakfast and lunch and plan some adaptations.