
Eating to Manage Your Diabetes

If you have diabetes, your strategy is to select a variety of healthful foods in the appropriate amounts in order to control your glucose, manage your weight and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and other diabetes-related complications. Below are tips for healthy eating when you have diabetes.

Choose good carbohydrates – Carbohydrates are necessary for energy and should be part of every meal and snack. Spread your carbohydrates throughout the day by eating three small meals and one to three snacks. You may follow carbohydrate-counting guidelines as described in the carbohydrate counting handout.

Choose unprocessed carbohydrates:

- Whole grains (brown rice, barley, quinoa)
- 100% whole grain bread and pasta
- Legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils)
- Fresh and frozen vegetables
- Whole fruit

Choose non-fat and low-fat dairy products:

- 2% ,1% or non-fat milk
- Low-fat or non-fat unflavored or plain yogurt

Limit processed and high-sugar foods:

- White rice, bagels, bread and crackers
- Fruit juice
- Cakes, candies and cookies

Include protein - Protein is necessary for building muscle and blunting blood glucose spikes.

Choose lean protein:

- White meat poultry with no skin
- Nonfat or low-fat cheese
- Fish
- Whole eggs, egg white and egg substitute
- Pork or beef tenderloin
- Soy products

Limit fatty protein:

Sausage
Ribs

Salami
Bacon

Regular/full fat cheese
Regular ground beef (86% lean)

Include fat - Fat does not raise blood glucose, but too much can contribute to weight gain. Excess weight can make it more difficult to control your blood glucose. Limit portions of high-fat foods.

Choose heart healthy fats in small amounts:

Olive oil	Peanut oil	Avocado
Nuts	Seeds	Canola oil
Tub margarines made with healthy oils and no trans fats		
Salad dressing made with healthy oils		

Avoid unhealthy (trans and saturated) fats, which may worsen insulin resistance and increase the risk for heart disease:

Fatty meats	Whole fat dairy	Pastries
Poultry skin	Cheese	Cookies
Sausage	Sour cream	Some crackers
Bacon	Creamer, half & half	Ice cream

How Much to Eat - Adjust your diet according to your weight, blood glucose and blood fats. A registered dietitian can help tailor a food plan to your needs. With the right amount of food, your blood glucose will rise up to 50 points one to two hours after eating a meal and return to the pre-meal or target levels three to four hours later. For most people the following levels are appropriate.

- Per meal: Choose 2 to 4 servings of any combination of starch, fruit or milk (30 to 60 gm. of carbs.)
- Per snack: Choose 1 to 2 servings of any combination of starch, fruit or milk (15 to 30 gm. of carbs.)
- Per day: Choose 4 to 6 ounces of lean protein (about two decks of cards) and 1 to 2 tablespoons of heart-healthy fat.
- Per day: Choose at least three servings of non-starchy fruits and vegetables.

Additional Tips:

- These healthy-eating recommendations are good for you and your family whether or not they have diabetes.
- Periodically check your portion sizes by using measuring cups, spoons and scales.
- Use unsweetened or non-caloric beverages.
- Limit alcoholic beverages.
- Use sugar substitutes in place of sugar, honey or syrup
- Eat fish twice a week.
- Choose colorful foods, such as dark green and orange vegetables and blue and red fruits.
- Enjoy your meals.
- Balance your meals with whole grains, vegetables, fruit and lean protein that are naturally high in fiber and low in fat.
- Check your glucose regularly to see if your diabetes is controlled.